



Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose

This document details HORLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB (HLTC) ('the Club') policy on bullying.

Statement of Intent

HLTC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members and guests so that they can play tennis in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club. If bullying does occur, everyone involved with HLTC (members, visitors, coaches, volunteers, parents/guardians/carers and anyone acting *in loco parentis*) should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

HLTC is a TELLING Club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club's Welfare Officer or a member of the committee.

Throughout this document reference to parent(s) includes carer(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) acting *in loco parentis*. Where the victim is an adult the term parent(s) will include any person(s) the victim nominates to support him or her.

Objectives of this Policy

- To make sure that HLTC finds out about bullying and deals with it as well as possible.
- To ensure that all committee members, coaches, volunteers, players and parents know what bullying is, understand this policy and follow it, and therefore understand what to do if bullying arises.
- To assure players and parents that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- To promulgate that HLTC will not tolerate bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be carried out by children or adults, and both children and adults can be victims.

Bullying can have lots of different forms:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages or posts on social media, tormenting (e.g. hiding racquets/other equipment, threatening gestures)
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, any use of violence or threat of such (actual or implied)
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- Genderphobic – because of, or focussing on, issues of gender or gender identity
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Here are some examples of what we call 'bullying':

- Someone calling you names
- Being threatened
- Being pressured to give someone your money or your things
- Being hit or pushed

- Having your possessions damaged or broken
- Someone spreading rumours about you or about your family
- Someone posting hurtful comments or pictures on the web (such as on Facebook)
- Overly assertive behaviour, particularly in the competitive sporting environment

Why do we care about bullying?

Bullying is a serious problem. You have the right to stop it.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Players who are bullying need to learn a different way of behaving.

The Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

How to spot if someone is being bullied?

A victim might show that he or she is being bullied in lots of ways. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to Club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with torn/damaged clothes or damaged possessions
- Has possessions "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives unlikely explanations for any of the above

In more extreme cases

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviour may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying is not confined to children and young people; adults can also be victims of bullying. They may not show the same signs but fellow players should be aware nonetheless.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club's Welfare Officer, a member of the Club committee or ring the LTA Safeguarding Team
2. In cases of serious bullying, the Club may contact the LTA for advice
3. Where the alleged bully or the alleged victim is a child, his or her parents will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour and threats of bullying will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour and disciplinary action will also be considered where there have been serious acts of misconduct.

7. The Club will initiate disciplinary action under the Club Complaints Policy if the bully does not change his or her behaviour.

How we will work with the bully and the victim

If we decide (if necessary after receiving advice from the LTA) that it is appropriate for us to deal with the situation, we will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Where the victim is comfortable to do so and the bullying has not become very serious, reconciliation will be attempted by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/ or is not appropriate a small panel (made up from Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, Committee members) will meet with the parent and child, or adult, alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Notes/minutes will be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same panel will meet with the alleged bully (and parent(s) where relevant) and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has, in their view, taken place, the panel will consider whether it is serious enough to take disciplinary action immediately under the Club's normal procedures.
5. If disciplinary action is not taken immediately, the bully (through his/her parent where relevant) should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
6. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The Club committee would monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
7. All coaches involved with both alleged bully and alleged victim should be made aware of the concerns and outcomes of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying players under 18

1. We will contact the LTA for advice on the action to be taken. Bullying by an adult is child abuse and allegations will be treated very seriously.
2. In most cases in which adults are found to have bullied children, child protection awareness training is the minimum likely outcome. Serious disciplinary action by the Club and/or the LTA could also be taken.
3. More serious cases may be referred to statutory services such as the police or social services. We will consult statutory services at an early stage if we think that this could be relevant.

Prevention

- The Club has a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which this anti-bullying policy is one part.
- It is a condition of membership of HLTC that the constitution and policies embodied in it or which may be adopted from time to time are accepted.
- The Club's Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of child bullying arise in the Club, will consider meeting with alleged bullies and victims to discuss the issue openly and constructively, seeking support from the LTA as necessary.

Further information

This policy has been drawn from guidelines provided by the LTA, who were assisted by ASA who shared their Anti-Bullying Policy for Clubs with the LTA. The ASA policy drew closely on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 020 7730 3300

Contact Details

The name and contact details for HLTC's Welfare Officer are on the poster in the HLTC clubhouse main entrance hallway.

Contact details for Surrey County Council's Child and Adult Services, including an out-of-hours phone number, are at Appendix D of HLTC's Safeguarding Policy

Review and Approval

This Policy was approved by the HLTC Committee on 20 Feb 2020.