

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

Readstone United Junior Football Club ("the Club") is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment where all children, young people and adults are treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Everyone involved with the Club has a responsibility to help create a culture where individuals feel safe, supported and confident to speak up if something is wrong.

The Club encourages a "Speak Up" culture. Any player, parent/carer, coach, volunteer or member who is concerned about bullying is encouraged to report concerns to the Club Welfare Officer, Team Manager or a member of the Club Committee.

All concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, sensitively and appropriately.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that intentionally hurts, intimidates, excludes or harms another person. It can happen once or repeatedly and may occur face-to-face or online.

Bullying may include:

Emotional Bullying

- Deliberately excluding someone.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Intimidation or humiliation.
- Deliberately hiding possessions or equipment.

Physical Bullying

- Pushing, kicking, hitting or violence
- Damaging belongings.

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling
- Teasing or sarcasm
- Spreading rumours
- Insults or threats.

Discriminatory Bullying

Bullying linked to protected characteristics, including:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Age or background.

Discriminatory language or behaviour will not be tolerated.

Sexual Bullying

- Unwanted physical contact
- Inappropriate sexual comments or behaviour.

Cyberbullying

Bullying through technology including:

- Social media
- Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp)
- Text messages
- Online gaming platforms
- Group chats
- Sharing images or videos to embarrass, exclude or upset someone.

Trolling, harassment and online abuse are unacceptable and may, in serious cases, constitute criminal behaviour.

Why It Is Important to Respond

Bullying can have a significant impact on a child or young person's confidence, wellbeing and enjoyment of football.

No one deserves to be bullied, and everyone has the right to feel safe and respected.

The Club is committed to responding promptly and effectively to concerns.

Signs That a Child May Be Being Bullied

Possible signs may include:

- Becoming withdrawn or anxious.
- Reluctance to attend training or matches.
- Loss of confidence.
- Unexplained injuries or damaged belongings.
- Changes in mood or behaviour.
- Illness or anxiety before football.
- Changes in friendships.
- Sleeping difficulties or distress.

These signs may indicate other issues, but bullying should always be considered and concerns explored appropriately.

Reporting Concerns

Anyone concerned about bullying should report it to:

- The Club Welfare Officer.
- A Team Manager or Coach.
- A member of the Club Committee.

Reports should be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

In serious cases, or where safeguarding concerns arise, the matter may be referred to:

- Lancashire FA Welfare Officer.
- The FA Safeguarding Team.
- Police or Children's Social Care where appropriate.

How the Club Will Respond

When bullying is reported, the Club will:

1. Listen carefully to all parties involved
2. Record concerns where appropriate
3. Speak to parents/carers where necessary
4. Investigate concerns fairly and proportionately
5. Take steps to stop the behaviour
6. Support anyone affected
7. Work with individuals to improve behaviour where possible.

The Club will always seek an appropriate and proportionate response depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the incident.

Possible actions may include:

- Informal resolution or apology
- Education and behaviour support
- Warnings
- Parent meetings
- Temporary suspension
- Referral to County FA or safeguarding authorities
- Removal from Club activities in serious or repeated cases.

Bullying by Adults

Any allegation involving an adult bullying a child or young person will be treated seriously and referred immediately to the Club Welfare Officer.

Where appropriate, Lancashire FA Welfare Team, The FA Safeguarding Team, Police and/or Children's Social Care may be involved.

Prevention

The Club seeks to prevent bullying by:

- Promoting positive behaviour and respect.
- Maintaining clear Codes of Conduct.
- Encouraging inclusive team environments.
- Supporting education around equality, diversity and respect.
- Encouraging members and parents to report concerns early.

All members, volunteers and parents are expected to support this policy.

Policy Review

Approved by: Readstone United JFC Committee

Last Reviewed: 07/06/2026

Next Review Date: 07/06/2027