



Sheppey Swifts FC - Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Sheppey Swifts Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children, young people and adults involved in the club so that everyone can enjoy football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Sheppey Swifts. If bullying does occur, all players, parents/carers and members of the club should feel confident to report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, seriously and effectively.

The club operates as a **TELLING** club. This means that anyone who knows bullying is taking place is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or a committee member.

2. What Is Bullying?

Bullying is repetitive, intentional behaviour by an individual or group that hurts another person, where there is an imbalance of power. Bullying can be face-to-face or online and may take many forms, including:

- Emotional: excluding, spreading rumours, tormenting, threatening gestures
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting or use of violence
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, offensive remarks
- Discriminatory: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disability-related comments
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Cyberbullying: bullying via social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms or texts.

3. Why It Is Important to Respond to Bullying

Bullying causes distress, anxiety and harm. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Sheppey Swifts Football Club recognises its responsibility to:



- Protect children and young people from harm
- Promote positive behaviour and respect
- Respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying
- Support both the victim and those involved in bullying behaviour to achieve positive outcomes.

4. Objectives of This Policy

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All club members understand what bullying is
- Players and parents/carers know how to report bullying
- Bullying is taken seriously and not tolerated
- Those affected by bullying are supported
- Adults involved with the club recognise the signs and indicators of bullying
- Online behaviour linked to the club is managed appropriately.

5. Signs and Indicators of Bullying

A child may indicate they are being bullied through changes in behaviour, including:

- Saying they are being bullied
- Reluctance to attend training or matches
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking confidence
- Unexplained injuries or damaged kit
- Missing belongings or requests for money
- Changes in mood, sleep or appetite

Any concerns should always be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.



6. Cyberbullying and Online Behaviour

Sheppey Swifts Football Club recognises the growing use of digital platforms. The club expects that:

- Club-related social media and communication tools are used responsibly
- Online bullying linked to club activity is treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying
- Incidents of online abuse will be dealt with in line with this policy and FA procedures

Inappropriate online behaviour may also result in FA disciplinary action.

7. Reporting Bullying

Bullying can be reported to:

- The Club Welfare Officer
- A coach, manager or committee member
- A trusted adult involved with the club

All reports will be handled sensitively, confidentially and in line with FA safeguarding and reporting procedures. Where necessary, concerns may be referred to the County FA or The FA Safeguarding Team.

8. Response and Action

When bullying is reported, the club will:

- Take all reports seriously
- Record incidents accurately
- Investigate promptly and fairly
- Support the child or young person affected
- Apply appropriate action or sanctions where required
- Work to prevent recurrence through education and guidance

The welfare of children and young people will always be the priority.



9. Policy Review

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in line with FA guidance and legislation
- Shared with players, parents/carers, coaches and volunteers

Sheppey Swifts Football Club is committed to creating a positive, inclusive and respectful football environment for everyone.