



## Statement of Intent

Oakdale Netball Club ("The Club") is committed to providing an environment which accepts difference, is caring and responsive to individual needs, and recognises that such an environment is crucial in responding to the complex issue of bullying. All Club participants are entitled to feel safe and gain maximum advantage from their time at Oakdale Netball Club. Within this context, the Club has a zero tolerance of bullying. Bullying is damaging to the self-esteem of the victim and can impede the enjoyment of sport and make it an unpleasant, if not traumatic experience. The Club seeks to raise awareness of bullying, address incidents of bullying and facilitate a positive and caring environment that does not foster bullying or violence. Coaches, organisers and parents should act as appropriate role models, and be vigilant in identifying and dealing with bullying. Players have a responsibility to be caring, positive and supportive of one another, and to use the resources of the Club to work through relationship difficulties.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurting a person either physically, verbally, psychologically or socially. It involves a power imbalance where one person has power or strength (e.g., physical, mental, social or financial) over another. It can be carried out by one person or several people who are either actively or passively involved. Bullying can be a 'one-off' incident, but usually involves repeated actions or incidents. An individual may bully their victim face to face or use technology such as a mobile phone or computer. In the netball context, bullying can take many forms and must be behaviour of a nature and level of seriousness which includes but is not limited to, repeatedly:

- a parent telling their child that they are incompetent, hopeless or useless
- a coach alienating a player or team member (adult or child)
- several people ganging-up on an individual team member or leaving someone out of a group (online or offline),
- spectators verbally abusing players from the opposition
- a player, spectator, coach or other official verbally abusing an umpire
- a parent intimidating a young coach
- a player posting abusive or intimidating posts on social media
- a coach or player posting comments about a player or coaches' ability on social media or in a team chat

Types of bullying may include:

- physical bullying — intentionally and repeatedly pushing, fighting, pinching, intentionally stalking someone, 'fooling around', 'messaging about' or other random or supposedly playful conduct that goes too far

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- verbal/written bullying - put downs, name calling, derisive comments, sexual comments, written graffiti, being rude and impolite, constantly negative and teasing, social media comments, intimidation
- gestures - dirty looks, gestures behind peoples' backs
- psychological bullying – ganging up, taking someone's possessions, sending abusive emails or text messages, taking advantage of any power over someone else
- social bullying/exclusion – ignoring, spreading rumours or lies, imposing unreasonable penalties, or misrepresenting someone (ie using their social media account to post messages as if it were them), harassing someone based on their race, sex, religion, gender or a disability,
- cyber bullying - carried out through email, social media, a chat group, instant messaging or mobile phone text messaging.

Bullying does not include legitimate and reasonable:

- Management action,
- Management process
- Disciplinary action, or
- Allocation of activities in compliance with agreed systems, policies and procedures.

## Responsibility of Club Members

Any member of the Club who witnesses bullying, or feels they are a victim of bullying should speak with a Club official. This might be a coach or team manager, age group coordinator, umpiring coordinator, Child Safety Officer or another member of the Club committee.

A person, especially a child, may not always ask for support when being bullied. They may feel afraid, ashamed or embarrassed. Victims of bullying may think that they deserve to be bullied or are 'dobbing' by telling someone what is happening to them. The following are signs that a person may be being bullied, for Club members to be aware of:

- finds excuses for not wanting to attend training or games (e.g., feeling sick, has an injury, has too much work to do) or talking about hating their sport
- regularly is the last one picked for team or group activities
- seems alienated from conversations or social or shared activities
- has bruising or other injuries
- becomes uncharacteristically nervous, worried, shy or withdrawn
- clothing or personal possessions are missing or are damaged
- is suddenly prone to lashing out at people either physically or verbally

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## Policy Framework

Oakdale Netball Club will not allow or tolerate bullying. We recognise and subscribe to the Netball SA and Netball Australia Codes of Conduct. The Oakdale Netball Club Anti-Bullying Policy expands upon, and can be read in conjunction with the Club's Anti-Harassment Policy, Code of Behaviour, Disciplinary Policy and Member Protection Policy, all of which can be viewed at <https://oakdalenetballclub.com.au/about-us/policies/>

Bullying that involves physical assault is against the law. Bullying that involves, harassment or discrimination can be illegal under State or Federal law under certain circumstances (e.g., racial and sexual harassment). Because bullying can contribute to psychological injury it may be covered under occupational health and safety legislation. If an incident of bullying is suspected of breaching the law, please seek advice from the Oakdale Child Safety Officer.

Content from the following websites was utilised in the development of this policy:  
<https://www.aascf.com.au/files/Australian-Sports-Commission-Factsheet-Bullying.pdf>  
<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/bully>  
<https://netball.com.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/SD02%20-%20Member%20Protection%20Policy%20Version%202.0%201%20January%202023.pdf>

## Actions, Investigations & Consequences

Players, parents, coaches, administrators and sporting clubs all have an ethical and legal responsibility to take action to prevent bullying occurring in sport and to manage it should it occur. We encourage all members to be 'upstanders', not 'bystanders' if bullying occurs.

There are initial steps that all Club members can take should bullying be suspected of occurring:

- Ensure the victim/s are safe
- Take all signs of bullying seriously. Show interest and sympathy with every allegation of bullying and provide support
- Encourage members to speak out and tell someone (a parent, coach, manager, age group coordinator or Child Safety Officer) if they are being bullied or if they witness bullying
- Reassure the victim/s that you will help them. Also advise them that to help them you may need to tell others about the problem (i.e., do not say you will not tell anyone)
- Keep records of what was said (i.e., what happened, who was involved, when the incidents occurred, how the matter was handled)
- Telling the victim/s to 'ignore' the bully rarely works. Experts agree a passive or distressed reaction can encourage the bully(ies) because it is the reaction they are looking for

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- After a period of time, follow-up with the victim/s (and parents if appropriate) to find out if the bullying has stopped

Suspected bullying must be reported to the Club in writing to the Club committee via the Club Secretary, Child Safety Officer or Age Group Co-ordinator. Upon receipt of the written report, the Club will adopt the following process:

- Conciliation. By getting the parties together (including the parent/s if the victim and/or alleged bully is a child); it may be that a genuine apology solves the problem. If possible, the bully and the bullied person will be reconciled
- If conciliation fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel selected by the Executive Committee should meet with the person alleging the bullying, and also with their parent if it is a child, to obtain details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken and shared. The same small panel should meet with the alleged bully/ies and parent/s (if the alleged bully is a child) to put forward the allegation raised and allow them to respond and to give their views. Minutes again should be taken and shared. The Club Child Safety Officer should be a member of the panel
- If the panel decides bullying has taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of any further action deemed appropriate. Consideration should also be given as to whether a conciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at the time
- Actions may include asking the bully/ies for a formal apology to avert further consequences. In serious cases of bullying, or in the absence of an apology, temporary suspension or even exclusion from the Club will be considered
- All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and the outcome of the process. If the person found to have committed the bullying is a parent, the relevant Team Manager should be made aware
- The panel must put in place a system to monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated
- If the issue is not resolved, a Club member may wish to start a Grievances Process as per general Club policies:  
<https://oakdalenetballclub.com.au/about-us/policies/>