



## **ALPHA PLUS GUARDIANS LTD Anti-bullying Policy**

Within guardianship there is a commitment to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all young people so they can be cared for in a relaxed and secure atmosphere regardless of their age or background.

Quite simply, bullying of any kind is unacceptable.

If bullying does occur, all young people and staff of Alpha Plus Guardians Ltd should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Safeguarding Officer as soon as they have concerns.

### **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:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Sexist – belittling someone because of their gender
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber -
  - Any issues relating to the internet, such as email, social media and internet chat room misuse.
  - Mobile threats by text messaging, instant messenger services such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Instagram and calls
  - Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. The sport has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All young people, staff of Alpha Plus Guardians Ltd and parents should understand what bullying is
- All Alpha Plus Guardians Ltd staff should know what the policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All young people in the care of Alpha Plus Guardians Ltd should know what the policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a guardianship agency, we take bullying seriously. Anyone in the care of Alpha Plus Guardians Ltd should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

## **Very simply - Bullying will not be tolerated.**

## **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the Safeguarding Officer, your Host Family or an adult you can trust or the County Safeguarding Officer.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the relevant AEGIS Safeguarding Officer.
3. In serious cases parents, should be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour, or threats of bullying, must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying continues further disciplinary action will be taken.

## **Recommended Agency Action**

If the guardianship agency decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Reconciliation 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 of club officers should meet with the parent and child making the allegation to obtain more information. This panel will normally include a Welfare Officer [this can be a teacher from school or another host. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account
3. The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s, detail the allegation and allow them an opportunity of reply. Minutes should again be taken and agreed
4. If it is considered that bullying has taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action if the bullying continues and the school and parents informed of this. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time. The guardianship agency should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not repeated
5. All guardianship and school staff involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning

## **Outcomes**

1. The bully/bullies may be asked to apologise
2. In serious cases, notifying the police will be considered
3. If possible, the people concerned will be reconciled
4. Monitoring should be put in place to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## **Prevention**

1. The guardianship agency will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
2. All guardianship students and staff should sign a code of conduct on an annual basis. The code of conduct should include reference to bullying
3. The guardianship agency Safeguarding Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters

**The Designated Safeguarding Officer:**

Mrs Emma Ryan

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