

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**London Sport Academy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

London Sport Academy (LSA) is committed to providing a safe, respectful and positive environment for all gymnasts, parents, staff and volunteers.

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

All reported or suspected incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated promptly and managed in accordance with British Gymnastics Safeguarding Procedures.

### **2. Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated, intentional behaviour that causes physical, emotional or social harm to another person.

It involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying can be:

\* Physical:

pushing, hitting, kicking, harming belongings

\* Verbal:

name-calling, mocking, threatening, teasing, insults

\* Emotional / Social:

exclusion, spreading rumours, intimidation, manipulation, ganging-up

\* Racial or Religious:

offensive comments, slurs, taunts or actions related to ethnicity, nationality or faith

\* Sexual or Homophobic:

unwanted contact, sexualised language, comments about sexual orientation or gender identity

\* Disability-based:

targeting a person's disability, learning need or health condition

\* Cyberbullying:

harmful behaviour via social media, messaging, images, videos, group chats, or digital platforms

Bullying may occur:

- during training
- in changing areas or toilets
- at competitions and events

- during travel
- online or via social media
- between families connected to the club

### **3. What Bullying is NOT**

The following do not constitute bullying:

- occasional disagreements
- misunderstandings
- fair coaching corrections
- one-off unkind comments (still addressed, but not “bullying”)
- being told “no” by staff
- a coach giving feedback in English or another language for safety
- equal application of club rules

This distinction helps prevent unfounded accusations.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Club Responsibilities**

LSA will:

- provide a safe, supportive environment
- investigate all reported incidents
- record outcomes
- take appropriate action
- inform relevant parents
- involve external agencies when required (e.g., Social Care, Police, British Gymnastics)
- ensure staff are trained in safeguarding and anti-bullying procedures

### **4.2 Staff Responsibilities**

Coaches and staff must:

- remain vigilant to all signs of bullying
- report concerns immediately to the Welfare Officer
- challenge inappropriate behaviour
- model respectful behaviour at all times
- support vulnerable gymnasts
- avoid highlighting differences (e.g., nationality, language, ability)

### **4.3 Parents/Guardians Responsibilities**

Parents must:

- report concerns promptly to the Welfare Officer
- avoid confronting other gymnasts or parents
- not investigate incidents independently
- support the club’s decisions and sanctions
- communicate respectfully at all times

- avoid sharing allegations or suspicions in WhatsApp groups or social media
- avoid making unverified accusations of bullying

#### 4.4 Gymnast Responsibilities

Gymnasts must:

- treat others with respect and kindness
- report concerns to a trusted coach, adult or the Welfare Officer
- never join in hurtful behaviour
- include others wherever possible

#### 5. False or Unfounded Allegations

LSA recognises that sometimes incidents may be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

However, deliberately false, exaggerated or malicious allegations of bullying are considered inappropriate behaviour and will be addressed through:

- Parents/Guardians Code of Conduct
- Parent Communication & Behaviour Policy
- Complaints & Grievance Procedure

Consequences may include:

- formal warning
- communication restrictions
- behaviour review
- termination of membership (in severe or repeated cases)

### 6. Responding to Bullying

When an incident is reported:

1. Report received → Welfare Officer logs details
2. Initial assessment → determine if bullying or conflict
3. Investigation → speak with all parties involved
4. Action plan created
5. Parents informed (both sides, when appropriate)
6. Sanctions applied (see below)
7. Reconciliation supported, when possible
8. Monitoring period to prevent recurrence

All incidents are recorded in:

- Behaviour Log (low-level concern)
- Bullying Log (confirmed bullying)
- Safeguarding records (if applicable)

### 7. Possible Outcomes / Sanctions

Depending on severity, actions may include:

- verbal or written apology
- reflective discussion
- supervised seating or training adjustments

- behaviour contract
- parental meeting
- temporary removal from training
- referral to safeguarding agencies
- suspension or termination of membership (for serious or repeated incidents)

The Welfare Officer has full authority to involve external agencies when necessary.

## **8. Prevention Strategies**

LSA promotes a positive culture by:

- teaching respect, inclusion and teamwork
- modelling appropriate behaviour
- ensuring equal access to training
- encouraging reporting of concerns
- creating a culture where differences (language, culture, ability) are respected
- reviewing policies annually
- applying the Inclusion & Equality Policy and Language Use in Coaching Policy

Staff avoid stereotyping or highlighting differences in a way that could encourage teasing.

## **9. Advice to Parents**

If your child is being bullied:

1. Contact the Welfare Officer
2. Share facts, not assumptions
3. Allow the club to investigate
4. Attend a meeting if requested
5. Do NOT:
  - contact the other child
  - contact their parents
  - post or discuss the issue in social media
  - encourage retaliation

These actions make the situation significantly worse.

## **10. Key Contacts**

*Welfare Officer:*

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07591826431

*British Gymnastics:*

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