



Registered Office  
12, Westwood Lane,  
Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire S43 1PA  
Phone/Fax: +44 (0)1246-236443  
Company Number: 4190868  
Email: [admin@britishwrestling.org](mailto:admin@britishwrestling.org)  
[www.britishwrestling.org](http://www.britishwrestling.org)

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## British Wrestling Association Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Every child has the right to experience wrestling in a safe environment free from abuse and bullying. Wrestling clubs play an important role in creating a positive ethos that challenges bullying. Our sport needs to empower young people to understand the impact of bullying, how best to deal with it and how best to implement agreed standards of behaviour. Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those experiencing bullying to defend themselves. Nancy Duin defined bullying as *'repeated (systematic) aggressive verbal, psychological or physical conduct by an individual or group against another person or persons'*

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. Bullying usually has three key elements:

- It is repeated behaviour that happens over a period of time
- It involves an imbalance of power
- It is intentionally hurtful behaviour

#### 1.1 Reasons for being bullied

Any child can get bullied just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sometimes the exact things that can make him/her accepted in one environment can make him/her a victim of bullying in another. Children who are popular, smarter or attractive can be victims of bullying but those who bully also pick on children who appear easy to hurt.

Bullies generally set their sights on:

- Anyone who's different - whether that is their looks, weight, accent, clothing or interests. Disabilities make some children an easy target.
- Those who are small or young - and not so able to defend themselves
- Those who will react quickly - popular targets are children who get upset or cry easily
- Kids who poor performers at the club
- Anyone who is socially anxious or struggles with shyness

Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, being overweight, physically small, having disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture. In particular children with disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who are gay or lesbian or those with learning difficulties are more likely to be targeted.

## **1.2 Environments for bullying**

Both girls and boys can exhibit bullying behaviour. Although bullying often takes place in schools research shows it can and does occur in any setting where there is inadequate supervision or a culture that allows it to continue. It can occur on the way to and from school, at a sporting event, in the playground, online or in the changing rooms.

## **1.3 Characteristics of bullying behaviour**

Those who bully come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of reasons and may even have been victims themselves. Typically, those who bully can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive or jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others and there is increasing evidence to suggest that this behaviour will have a long term detrimental effect on the person displaying the bullying behaviour inhibiting their emotional development and possibly leading to criminal behaviour.

## **1.4 The effect of competition**

The competitive nature of the sport of wrestling can unfortunately make it an ideal environment for bullying behaviour. The bullying behaviour can be by:

- A parent who pushes too hard;
- A coach who adopts a 'win-at-all costs' philosophy;
- An athlete who intimidates inappropriately;
- A club official who places unfair pressure on a person;
- A spectator who shouts abuse.

## **1.5 Bullying**

Bullying can include:

- Physical: e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- Verbal: e.g. name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures
- Emotional: e.g. torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals
- Sexual: e.g. sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour, unwanted physical contact

Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour:

- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites

## **1.6 Symptoms of being bullied**

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a young person or disabled adult is being bullied:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotional up and down, reluctance to go to school, training or sports club;
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, alcohol or cigarettes;
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

## **2. Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The organisation (BWA) will:**

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

### **2.2 Each wrestler, coach, volunteer or official will:**

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respect the feelings and views of others
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying and prompt and collective action to deal with it
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see
- Report incidents of bullying they see – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying

## **3. Support**

### **3.1 To the child/young person**

- Children should know who will listen to and support them
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help
- Children should be aware that they can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111 or visit [www.childline.org.uk/](http://www.childline.org.uk/) for any advice
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and supported
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their health development
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

### **3.2 Support to parents/guardians**

- Parents/guardians/carers should be advised on the BWA's bullying policy and practice
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s)

- Parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available
- Support should be offered to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) including information on other agencies or support lines

#### 4. Responding to a bullying concern

Coaches/volunteers should adopt a positive mind set when responding to bullying concerns. They should be prepared with options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way. Confronting members who have bullied requires a high amount of self-control as well as preparation to know what to say and do. The following are important factors when managing a bullying situation:-

- **Be calm.** It is important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.
- **Be positive.** Have in mind the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the member. A member is much more likely to modify his/her behaviour if he/she perceives that a coach/official cares.
- **Be assertive.** Coach/official should directly and clearly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the member to not only stop bullying, but also make restitution with the child who has been bullied.
- **Be confident.** It is important to trust that you will be successful in implementing practices that can have an impact on the member's future behaviour. It is always helpful to focus on the behaviour, not the individual.
- Ensure that the specific behaviour is in fact bullying behaviour which conforms to the sport's agreed definition of bullying as identified in this current Anti-Bullying Policy. Assess the situation and its severity level. Determine the appropriate level of response required to manage the situation effectively.

#### 5. Useful contacts

##### Internal (BWA)

Lead Safeguarding Officer Tel: 01246-236443

Lead Safeguarding Officer: [safeguarding.officer@britishwrestling.org](mailto:safeguarding.officer@britishwrestling.org)

*(The name of the Lead Safeguarding Officer is given in the Register of Signatories, Delegations, Roles)*

##### External

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

ChildLine 0800 1111 – [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Anti-Bullying Alliance [www.antibullyingalliance.org](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org)

Anti-Bullying Forum (Northern Ireland) [www.endbullying.org.uk](http://www.endbullying.org.uk)