

Aylsham Bowling Club

Anti Bullying Policy

version 2 – Feb 2026

Introduction

- Everyone has the right to participate in bowling in a safe and respectful environment free from abuse and bullying. As in many organizations, incidents of bullying may occur within our club.
- Aylsham Bowling Club maintains a Zero Tolerance Policy towards bullying.

Purpose of the Policy

- Aylsham Bowling Club (ABC) is committed to fostering a positive club culture that actively discourages all forms of bullying. We aim to provide a welcoming, friendly, and safe environment where all bowlers can enjoy their participation in a relaxed and secure setting, regardless of age or background. This policy complements and clarifies the ABC Code of Conduct.

Definition of Bullying

- Bullying involves the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing, threats, or intimidation to abuse, dominate, or frighten others. It often involves repeated behaviours and a power imbalance—whether physical, social, or emotional—that distinguishes it from general conflicts. Bullying dynamics can be complex and may not always fit a simple bully-victim model.
- All forms of bullying are unacceptable within our club. If bullying occurs, members should feel empowered to report incidents, confident that reports will be addressed promptly and effectively. Anyone who suspects or witnesses bullying is encouraged to notify the Club Safeguarding Officer or another trusted club committee member immediately.
- Types of Bullying Include:
 1. Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
 2. Emotional: excluding others, unfriendly behaviour, threatening gestures
 3. Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, or any physical violence
 4. Racist: racial slurs, graffiti, gestures
 5. Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually inappropriate comments
 6. Sexist: belittling individuals based on gender
 7. Homophobic/BI phobic: discrimination due to perceived or actual sexual orientation

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8. Cyberbullying, occurring on social media platforms, online games, or via mobile devices, has become increasingly prevalent. It can have equally damaging effects and is often more difficult to escape from in the digital environment.

Objectives of this Policy

- To ensure all members, coaches, volunteers, officials, and parents/carers understand what constitutes bullying and how to report it
- To provide clear procedures for addressing complaints
- To promote fair treatment and zero tolerance for bullying within the club
- To ensure that those involved in bullying will receive appropriate support and intervention

Procedures

- Any member, coach, volunteer, official, or parent/carer should report bullying concerns to the Club or County Safeguarding Officer, a club or county committee member, or a trusted adult.
- In severe cases, the Club Safeguarding Officer will refer the incident to the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) Safeguarding Officer. (The full name of the NGB should be written out initially, e.g., United States Bowling Congress (USBC).)
- In all cases involving minors, the parents or guardians of the alleged victim will be informed.
- If appropriate, the victim may also choose to involve law enforcement, especially in cases involving harassment, online abuse, hate crimes, violence, or discrimination.
- The incident will be thoroughly investigated with the goal of resolving the issue promptly.
- The victim will be provided with information about support services and helplines.
- Efforts will be made to work with the alleged perpetrator(s) to encourage behavioural change.
- Mediation may be offered if all parties agree; if mediation fails or the bullying continues, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the ABC Code of Conduct and/or the relevant NGB Disciplinary Policy.

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ABC Response

If the ABC Committee determines that it is appropriate to handle the situation internally, the following steps will be followed:

- A small committee of two or three members, including the Club Safeguarding Officer, will meet with the complainant (and their parents if under 18) to gather information. Minutes will be recorded and agreed upon by all parties involved. The complainant over 18 may request to be accompanied by a friend, caregiver, or family member.
- The committee will clarify the complainant's preferred course of action, which may include:
 - Support for the victim without taking action against the alleged perpetrator, especially if there are concerns about reprisals
 - Mediation facilitated by a club official
 - Disciplinary measures against the perpetrator(s)
- If the chosen course includes addressing the alleged perpetrator, the same committee will meet with them (and parents if under 18), present the allegation, and offer an opportunity for reply. The perpetrator may also be accompanied if over 18. Mediation will be offered if appropriate. Minutes will be recorded and agreed upon.
- Should all parties agree, a mediation session will be scheduled within a reasonable timeframe. The club may designate trained mediators—current or former police officers, teachers, social workers, HR professionals,
- Following a successful mediation meeting, the club committee will monitor the situation for a given period agreed at the meeting by both parties to ensure the bullying is not repeated and that there is no retaliatory behaviour.
- If mediation is not agreed or does not produce an appropriate resolution the ABC /NGB disciplinary procedure can be used by the person making the complaint.

Prevention of Bullying with the Club

The ABC written constitution must include what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members. This constitution must clarify that bullying is not tolerated.

All club members and parents of young bowlers (U18) should receive and sign a Code of Conduct ideally at the point of becoming a member. The Code of Conduct must include reference to the lack of toleration of any form of bullying. All ABC committee members will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters.

All ABC members to be aware of the club's disciplinary policy.