



## ANTI-BULLYING

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## INTRODUCTION

This is guidance relating to aikido members under the age of 18 and all references to participants refer only to those under the age of 18. The term parent is also deemed to mean “carer”.

The Aikido Alliance UK (the Alliance) is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all members so they can relax in a secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur, all participants or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within Alliance affiliated clubs. The Alliance is a TELLING organisation and expects all affiliated clubs to adopt this stance. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club’s Welfare Officer or any other appropriate adult in the club.

All committee members, coaches, participants and parents should have an awareness of what bullying is and how to respond to it. All committee members and coaching staff should know about this guidance and follow it when bullying is reported. Participants and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is repeated deliberate actions by one or more people that causes hurt to an individual or group and where it is difficult for the bullied person(s) to prevent or deal with the bullies actions. This often means that there is an imbalance of power. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

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
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber-bullying through email & internet chat room misuse including the misuse of video and camera facilities
- Mobile threats by text messaging and calls

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and a child.
- A child and a child.
- A parent and own child.

None of the above is acceptable within aikido

Examples of bullying in aikido could be:

- A parent who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a “win-at-all costs” philosophy.
- A child aikidoka who intimidates inappropriately
- An older aikidoka who intimidates inappropriately
- An official who places unfair pressure on a participant

The physical contact in aikido, combined with the importance of discipline and respect for authority, can create the opportunity for bullying; for example, coaches who inflict pain or humiliation on child ukes or adult ukes while children are watching.

## DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is an act that is unwanted by the recipient. It may be the provision of items or unwanted actions from another person but by definition it is the unwanted nature of the action or item that distinguishes the nature of the act to be harassment. As an example, most clubs encourage students to change partners regularly during a class and discourage refusing practice with any one individual. This might be exploited so that a child felt unable to refuse to practice with someone who was using the practice to constantly criticise the child's technique or to show the child that their technique was ineffective.

It is for any given individual to determine for themselves what is acceptable to them and what they regard as offensive.

Harassment can be deemed to be a criminal offence in some circumstances and can lead to the use of a restraining order or criminal prosecution. Harassment can take many forms, some examples being suggestive sexual remarks; racist insults or jokes; verbal abuse or foul language exclusion; unwelcome attention. The impact of harassment for the individual can be profound. Harassment can lead to the child feeling unhappy, demoralized, undervalued as a person. Harassment is often a constant ongoing type of abuse where the individual causes extreme distress by the repeated action usual verbally.

**Remember: Bullying and/or harassment will NOT be tolerated in Alliance affiliated clubs**

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he/she is being bullied.
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill on a regular basis before training session.
- Has possessions which go "missing".
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong or gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- In more extreme cases starts stammering.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours are not an exhaustive list and may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## PROCEDURES (ALSO SEE FLOW CHART ON PAGE 7)

- Report bullying incidents to the club Welfare Officer (WO), Instructor or a member of the Club committee or ring Childline or KIDSCAPE.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer or Alliance Case Management Group for advice.
- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.
- If handled at Club level the WO should inform the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer of the outcomes. The Club should contact the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer if they feel additional help is needed – or if they notice patterns of bullying emerging. This is so that further training can be put into place and affiliated clubs supported more effectively to handle issues of bullying.

## RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If a club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedures outlined below.

## CHILDREN BULLYING OTHER CHILDREN

- Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails/is not appropriate a small panel of no more than three people (made up from Club Coach/Instructor, WO, Secretary, Committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.
- The same three people should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
- If bullying has, in their view, taken place the bully should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied aikidoka can be asked to attend all training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
- All coaches involved with both the bully and bullied participant should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

## TIMESCALES FOR ACTION

It is important that allegations or report of bullying are acted upon quickly. The Alliance recommends the following timescales:

1. Reconciliation attempts should be made immediately (ideally before the next possible training session)
2. If this fails, the meeting with the parents of the alleged victim should take place within 2 weeks of the allegation being made.
3. The meeting with alleged bully should follow quickly – ideally within 2 weeks.
4. Notice of any further action should be given to the person accused of the bullying ideally within 4 weeks of the allegation having been made.

During this 4 week period it may be necessary for parents to be in attendance to ensure no further bullying takes place. Clubs will assess the situation and put the necessary risk mitigation in place. Where possible this should allow all parties to continue training until the matter is resolved.

#### ADULTS REPORTED TO BE BULLYING AIKIDOKA UNDER 18:

- The WO should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken. The Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer should be informed, and advice will be given as and when required.
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
- More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or the Alliance Case Management Group.

#### SUPPORTING THE CHILD

- Children and young people should know who will listen to and support them. The role of the WO in this should be publicised within the club
- 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 have access to Helpline numbers. These could be made available in welcome packs or through posters and web site information (see “Other Sources of Help” at the end of this document).
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- Children and young people who are being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to participate in a safe environment which allows their healthy 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.

#### SUPPORTING THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Parents/guardians should be advised on the club/organisation’s bullying policy and practice
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child’s parent(s)/guardians
- Parents 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. This could be by way of referral to the agencies (see “Other Sources of Help” at the end of this document).

## PREVENTION

The WO should raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with all participants to discuss the issue openly and constructively. Raising awareness could be through talks, events, handouts, web site information, membership packs etc.

## OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

You may also wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

- Kidscape Parents Helpline: visit <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/parent-advice-line/> for opening times and further details
- Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) <https://www.familylives.org.uk/> or call 0808 800 2222
- Youth Access provides information on counselling <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/> or call 020 8772 9900
- Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- ChildLine 0800 1111 OR visit [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)

**This guidance is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE.**

**KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.**

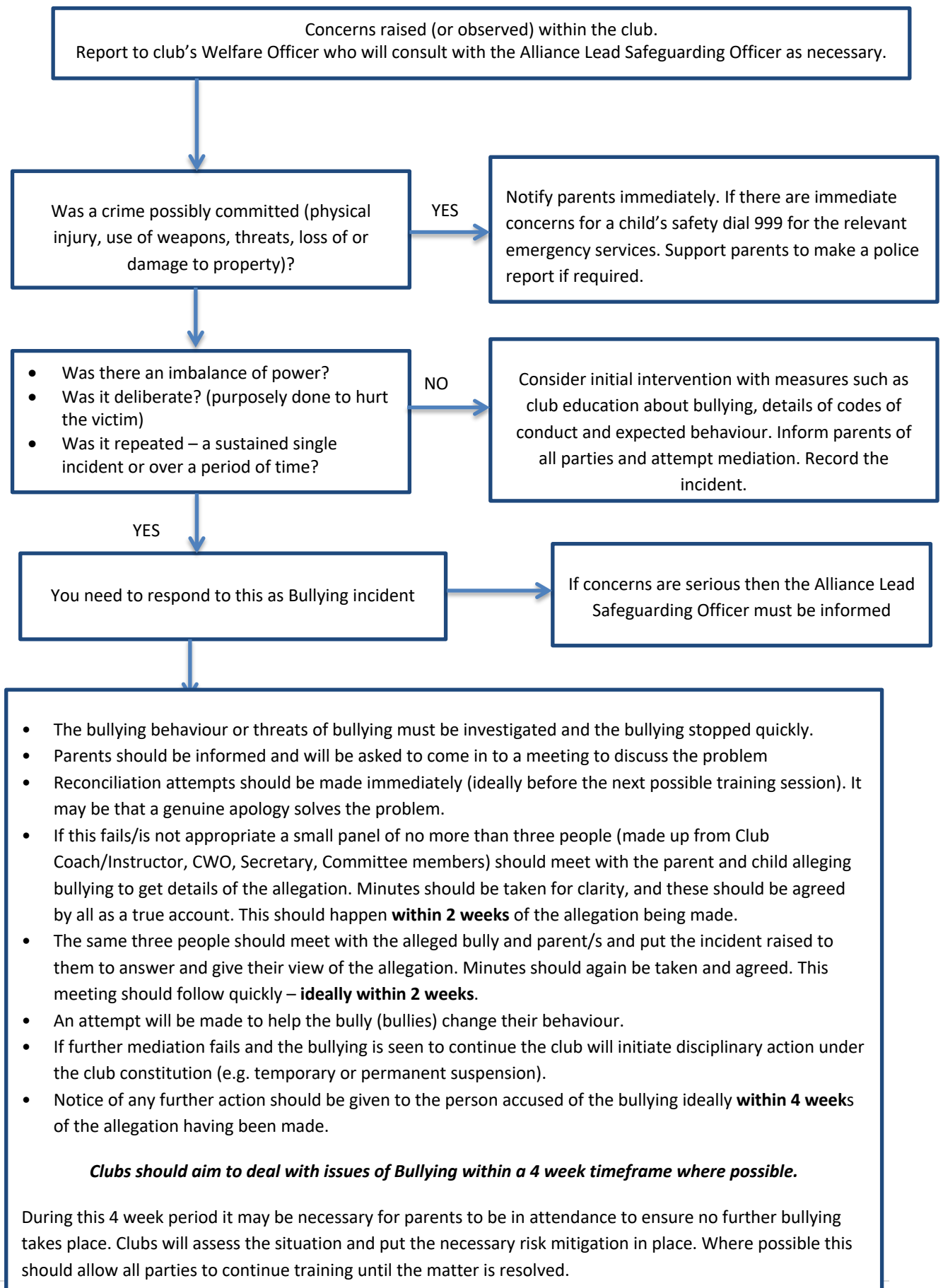
**KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300**

**Visit the Kidscape website**

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

**for further support, links and advice.**

**APPENDIX ONE: FLOWCHART: POSSIBLE BULLYING INCIDENT – ACTION TO TAKE**



## CHANGE LOG

Date	Details