Introduction to IRFU Anti-Bullying Campaign

**Step 1:**
(a) Full knowledge and awareness of IRFU SAFEGUARDING POLICY for Age-Grade Rugby
http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/development/safeguarding/policy.php
*Particular focus on Bullying, page 26 and Codes of Conduct, page 40&41

(b) Full knowledge and awareness of 'IRFU Bullying Factsheet',
http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Bullying.pdf

**Step 2:**
Read: *ISPCC's Key Learning For Clubs on Bullying*

**Step 3:**
Utilise the ISPCC’s ‘Shield My Club Toolkit’

*See the ‘Shield My Club IRFU Introductory Steps’ below.
*Support is also available from the ISPCC’s national Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator Sinead McKee
smckee@ispcc.ie/086 722 6788

**Step 4:**
Take the extra steps in bullying prevention within your club & apply for the ISPCC’s Shield Anti-Bullying Flag
IRFU Introduction to ‘Shield My Club’ – the ISPCC Anti-Bullying Tool Kit

This ‘Introduction to Bullying’ will help you implement the IRFU anti-bullying policy, (http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Bullying.pdf)

Key messages
- Codes of Conduct should always set the standards of behaviour for players, coaches and volunteers.
- Bullying is a repeated behaviour that should never be tolerated
- Bullying should never be dismissed as ‘harmless fun’
- Strive to create a ‘permission to tell’ culture, so that players will feel able to report bullying behaviours

Using the Tool
- The tool consists of 10 ‘Shield Statements’ in relation to the management of bullying
- A self-evaluation tool allows clubs to ascertain their current approach to bullying, clubs identify area that they are strong in and potential areas of improvement
- Clubs complete the action plan, including time scales for achieving the outcomes in the action plan
- The tool is used to manage incidences of bullying but also to reduce future incidents
- In completing the tool clubs should be as honest as possible, establish trust among the group at the outset, allow for differences of opinion and constructive criticism. These opinions can then be effectively measured against international evidence and best practice research.

Achieving the Shield
The self-evaluation tool and action plan is designed to be completed in one sitting within 2-hours. Further time will be needed to in order to work through any planned areas of improvement that were identified during the evaluation.

When the evaluation tool is complete the club is likely to spend time achieving its outcomes, in order to create a robust anti-bullying strategy for reducing and tackling incidents of bullying.

When these actions have been achieved the club can apply to the ISPCC for their ‘Blue Shield Flag’, http://www.ispcc.ie/shield-anti-bullying-campaign/anti-bullying-shield-programme/12523

Bullying Reporting Tool
Clubs can also avail of the stand up to bullying ‘report tool’ on the ISPCC website, http://www.ispcc.ie/shield-anti-bullying-campaign/stand-up-bullying-report-tool/12531
ISPCC Key Learning for Clubs on Bullying

Key messages:
- Codes of Conduct should always set the standards of behaviour for players, coaches and volunteers.
- Bullying is a repeated behaviour that should never be tolerated.
- Bullying should never be dismissed as ‘harmless fun’.
- Strive to create a ‘permission to tell’ culture, so that players will feel able to report bullying behaviours.

What is bullying?
Bullying exists in many different forms, some are not as obvious as others, but are just as damaging to the victim.

Bullying Definition: Bullying is repeated aggression, be it verbal, physical or psychological, by an individual or group against others, which causes significant harm to the victim(s). It is intentional, aggravating and intimidating.

Listed below are some of the more common types of bullying, one or more method may be used to bully.

Physical bullying includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person like pushing, hitting, kicking, punching, tripping, etc. Physical bullying can put the victim at risk of injury and makes them feel powerless. Taking something that belongs to someone else and destroying it would also be considered a type of physical bullying.

Verbal bullying usually takes the form of name-calling or making nasty remarks or jokes about a person's religion, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or the way they look. It can also include freezing the victim out by exclusion or spreading rumours.

Making threats against a person or their property is also a type of bullying. It can be a threat to damage or take something belonging to the victim or to hurt them physically. Often the threat is not actually carried out, but the fear created by the threat can be enough to upset the victim.
Cyber bullying is done by sending messages, pictures, or information using electronic media, computers (email & instant messages), mobile phones (online messaging services, text messaging & voicemail) and social networking websites. This activity can be upsetting and harmful to the person targeted. This type of bullying can allow the person who bullies to hide their identity which may have a bigger impact on the victim.

Homophobic bullying is motivated by prejudice against a person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity—lesbians, gay males, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender people.

Racist bullying is motivated by prejudice against a person’s skin colour, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin.

*Boys are more likely to physically bully their victims, girls use more indirect methods. Indirect bullying can often go undetected for long periods of time. This can include socially isolating another person, ignoring them, or attempting to make others ignore that person.

Statistics on Bullying:

- In 2014, more than 8,000 children contacted the ISPCC’s Childline Listening service about bullying

The ISPCC’s 2011 National Children’s Consultation Survey involving over 18,000 young people showed that:
- 26% of respondents from secondary schools said they or someone they knew had been bullied
- 22% of respondents from the primary group said that they or someone they knew had experienced bullying
- **Over 50%** of the young people consulted stated that they would not tell anyone about bullying because they would be afraid that it would make the bullying worse

Why Do People Bully?

While people can have a natural aggressive constitution, it is recognised that factors within the home, school or wider society influence the development of aggressive behaviour. **If aggressive behaviour is not challenged in childhood, then there is the danger it can become habitual.** Research indicates that bullying during childhood puts children at risk of criminal behaviour and domestic violence in adulthood.

Signs of Bullying:

- Unexplained bruising
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – but reluctance to say what’s wrong
• Unexplained mood swings or behaviour – e.g. becoming withdrawn/clinging/attention seeking/aggressive behaviour.

• Deterioration in education attainments

• Refusal to attend school/club

• Torn cloths/damaged equipment

• Expressions of distress in artwork

**The Effects of Bullying:**

• Stress, depression

• Reduced ability to concentrate, lack of motivation/energy

• Poor/Deteriorating school work

• Anxiety regarding school attendance

• Loss of confidence and self esteem

• Lack of appetite/comfort eating

• Alcohol, drug, substance abuse

• Aggressive behaviour

• Panic attacks

• Attempted suicide.
**Effective initiatives to prevent bullying for clubs:**

- Celebrating diversity and difference within the club environment and ensuring that all club activities promote inclusivity amongst youth members, parents and fellow club members is crucial.

- Actively tackle bullying behavior through awareness raising, tolerance and empathy building and improving general levels of self-esteem.

- Building young people’s confidence to report bullying concerns by ensuring they feel listened to and supported.

- Remembering that children and young people having a positive relationships with an adult outside of their family like a rugby coach can have a hugely positive effect on their life and can build a young person’s psychological resilience.

- Being aware that young people participating and contributing to social and or community activities and having a sense of belonging and good friendships will also build resilience

- ISPCC leaflets on bullying are available at [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie). for example this leaflet maybe useful for your club [http://www.ispcc.ie/file/80/4/4_0/Bullying+for+Children+%26+Young+People-2.jpg](http://www.ispcc.ie/file/80/4/4_0/Bullying+for+Children+%26+Young+People-2.jpg)

**Support for Age-Grade Players:**

The ISPCC’s Childline service has an Online Bullying Support service - a live one-to-one text messaging support service for children and young people affected by bullying. By texting the word ‘Bully’ to 50101 a young person from anywhere in Ireland can avail of this free confidential service.

This service is available from 10am – 4am every day.

Childline provides support via a One-to-One live chat service on the web.

Childline’s website [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie) also has support pages which contain information about Childline, children’s rights and information on various support topics. These can be accessed by logging on to [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie). The Childline Phone service also provides a 24 hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18. Young people can access this by calling 1800 666 666.
Contact Childline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Phone</td>
<td>24hrs a day</td>
<td>Call 1800 66 66 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to One Live</td>
<td>10am-4am every</td>
<td>Log on to <a href="http://www.childline.ie">www.childline.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chat</td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By text</td>
<td>10am-4am every</td>
<td>Text 'talk' to 50101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By text</td>
<td>10am-4am every</td>
<td>Text 'Bully' to 50101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By text</td>
<td>10am-4am every</td>
<td>Text 'Help' to 50101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>24hrs a day</td>
<td>Log on to <a href="http://www.childline.ie">www.childline.ie</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support for Coaches, Volunteers & Club Members:

The ISPCC provides a helpline for members of the public who may be concerned about the welfare of a child and who need more information and support. This service is available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Call ISPCC Head Office on **01 6767960** for more information.

Why not take the extra step and complete the ISPCC ‘Shield My Club’ Toolkit? This self-evaluation tool allows clubs to ascertain their current approach to bullying; clubs identify areas that they are strong in and potential areas of improvement. Support and guidance is available from the ISPCC’s National Anti-Bullying Co-Coordinator Sinead McKee on 086 722 6788 or on [smckee@ispcc.ie](mailto:smckee@ispcc.ie)