

PERSONAL ABUSE POLICY

1. Objective of this policy

Rugby's core values are: Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.

The objective of this policy is to set Middlesex County RFU's ("the County") commitment to the core values and to maintaining an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and to outline the process for addressing abuse where it is reported.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment for all of the people involved in the activities of the County be they players, coaches, referees, volunteers, supporters or board members. Our aim is also to ensure fair treatment for anyone who wishes to raise a grievance under this Policy.

Harassment and bullying are covered by three pieces of legislation: The Equality Act 2010, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

This policy outlines:

- Definitions of bullying, harassment and victimisation to help better understanding of what is meant by those terms, together with examples
- What we can do to help to stop bullying and harassment
- What an individual should do if they feel they are being bullied and harassed.

This policy does not cover bullying or harassment by members outside of the Middlesex rugby community such as suppliers or visitors. In these cases, individuals should report any such behaviour to a member of the Middlesex Management Board who will take appropriate action.

2. Scope

The Policy relates to all Middlesex Management Board members, employees and volunteers carrying out activities for the County.

3. Audience

All members of the Middlesex Rugby community.

4. What is bullying, harassment and victimisation?

4.1. Bullying



Middlesex Rugby, PK1 Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Twyford Avenue, Acton, London W3 9QA
tel: 020 8896 3400 email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com www.middlesexrugby.com

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Bullying means offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power, which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end. This can include but is not limited to persistent criticism of an individual (as distinct from his or her work), isolation or non-co-operation, exclusion from social events, abusive language, body language and facial expressions (e.g., glaring).

4.2. Harassment

Harassment means unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct related to sex, gender reassignment, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or any other personal characteristic, which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Harassment may involve a single incident or may be persistent and may be directed towards one or more individuals.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not it is intended e.g., an alleged joke which may offend another person. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others.

4.3. Victimisation

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably than others because he or she has, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing him or her or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

Provided that an individual has acted in good faith (i.e., genuinely believing that what they are saying is true) then he or she has the right not to be victimised for making a complaint of bullying or harassment. We will take appropriate action to deal with any victimisation, which may include disciplinary measures.

Making a complaint under this procedure and / or giving evidence, which an individual knows to be untrue may itself lead to disciplinary action.

4.4. Examples of bullying, harassment and victimisation

Bullying and harassment may be misconduct which is physical, verbal or written (e.g., by letter or email). Examples of unacceptable behaviour include (but are not limited to):

- Excluding someone from social activities.
- Unwelcome jokes or comments
- Spreading malicious rumours or insults
- Ridiculing someone
- Threatened or actual physical conduct from unwelcome touching to serious assault

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances (e.g., promotion or team selection)
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances (e.g., promotion or team selection)
- Obscene gestures
- The open display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person (e.g., social media and pictures)

Any act of bullying or harassment against either our people or any third party will be a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy. This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Middlesex Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

5. What can I do to help stop bullying and harassment?

We all have a responsibility to help create and maintain an environment free of bullying and harassment.

You can help to do this by:

- Being aware of how your own behaviour may affect others, and changing it if necessary – even an intended joke can cause unintended offence
- Treating your colleagues with dignity and respect
- Taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made
- Making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable
- Intervening, if possible, to stop bullying, harassment and/or victimisation and giving support to recipients
- Reporting promptly any issues or incidents of which you become aware, and supporting any subsequent investigation
- Not prejudging or victimising either the person who complains or the alleged harasser.

6. What should I do if I am being bullied or harassed?

6.1 Informal stage

Individuals should try to resolve issues informally at an early stage to prevent them escalating. An individual may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome and upsetting. An informal discussion may help them to understand the issue and agree to change their behaviour.

This approach will usually take the form of a private discussion between the two parties, instigated by the affected person, to try and solve the problem between them. It is important that the individual states the issue/s clearly in as much detail as possible and asks the offending party to stop the stated behaviour immediately.

If an individual does not feel able to confront the offending person by themselves, they may ask someone to speak to the person on their behalf.

6.2 Reporting of serious issues

Where the informal approach does not resolve matters, or is too serious to be dealt with informally, individuals may wish to make a complaint on a more formal basis, or they may wish to report the matter to the Secretary or Chair of the Middlesex Management Board or to the President of the County who will ensure the appropriate action is taken when necessary.

All such complaints will be treated in confidence and will be investigated appropriately and dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

7. Contact Details

If you would like to report an incident or discuss any part of the process, please contact:

RFU Discipline Department	DisciplineRFU@Rfu.com
RFU Age-Grade Discipline Department	Agegradediscipline@RFU.com
CB Discipline Secretary	John Orr Discipline@middlesexrugby.com
CB Age-Grade Discipline Secretary	Caron Evan-Evans cree@mtsn.org.uk

8. Owner of this Policy

This policy is owned by the Secretary and approved by the Middlesex Management Board. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

9. Document Approval History

Date	Version	Document Approver	Comment
30 December 2020	Version 1	Middlesex Management Board	To be reviewed in December 2021