



# Port Vale Football Club

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Version control

Document Title:	Anti-Bullying Policy 2021/2022
Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Jon Bloore
Reference:	Mar 2021

### Document review

Last reviewed	Position
Mar 2021	Review and update of Club/Academy and Foundation policy to one umbrella policy.

### Version history

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	Sept 2018	Unknown	Board	Anti-Bullying Policy
1.1	Mar 2021	Jon Bloore	Board	Anti-Bullying Policy
1.2	August 2021	Tim Bailey		Revised version

## **1. The purpose and Scope of this Policy statement**

Port Vale Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all staff, players, parents, carers and anyone participating in activities run or associated with the club. This is so everyone can work, learn and participate in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind, by anyone, is unacceptable in our Club.

If bullying does occur, all staff, players, parents, carers and participants should feel able to tell someone, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This Policy is for use across the club and is to be observed by all staff, supporters and anyone participating in activities run or associated by the club. The Policy exists to ensure that best practice is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are under the remit of this policy which include:

- Port Vale Football club and the Vale Park Stadium
- Port Vale Foundation Trust
- Port Vale First Team
- Port Vale Academy and youth development
- Port Vale ladies Football team
- Port Vale Retail Store.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to hurt someone and is:

- Repeated
- Can either be physical or emotional.
- Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or social standing.

### **Forms of 'bullying'**

Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, and tormenting (threats and gestures).

Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or any use of physical violence.

Racist – racist language, taunts, graffiti, or 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.

Cyberbullying - This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies can often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the person they want to bully.

Bullying because of discrimination - Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, ability or social standing.

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to individuals feeling excluded, isolated or undervalued.

***Discriminatory language and/or behaviour will not be tolerated by Port Vale Football Club.***

#### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

- Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with RESPECT.
- Individuals who Bully need to learn different ways of behaving.
- Port Vale Football Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to any issues of bullying.

#### **Objectives:**

All staff, players, parents, carers and participants should understand what bullying is.

All staff, players, parents, carers and participants should know what Port Vale Football Clubs policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

As a Football Club we take bullying seriously. All staff, players, parents, carers and participants should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

All staff, players, parents, carers and participants should have an understanding of the signs and indicators of Bullying.

#### **Signs & indicators:**

A child or young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. We ask all staff, Parents, Carers and Participants to be

aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child or young person:

- Says that they are being bullied.
- Is unwilling to attend sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before sessions.
- Comes home with clothes or equipment regularly torn or damaged.
- Has possessions that 'go missing'.
- Asks for money or steals (to pay the bully).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above and appears frightened

**Or, in more extreme cases, if a child:**

- Can develop a stammer.
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Displays bullying tendencies towards other children or siblings.
- Stops eating or loses their appetite.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

Of course, many of these signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be a consideration and investigated.

**What do you do if Bullying is suspected or reported?**

- Report all incidents to the Club Safeguarding Officer or available member of staff.
- All cases of bullying will be recorded as a safeguarding concern on TOPICS.
- Parents, carers or any persons with parental responsibility should be informed and will be asked to meet to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate Staffordshire Police will be consulted.
- Any bullying behaviour or suspected bullying behaviour must be investigated and the bullying stopped immediately.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies recognise and change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying continues the club will initiate a formal investigation and possible disciplinary action, which will follow the process below:
  - An informal warning (verbal)
  - A formal warning (written)
  - Suspension for a determined length of time
  - Release from the Club or activity.
- In some cases, parents, carers or any persons with parental responsibility of the suspected perpetrator of bullying or the victim of the bullying will be asked to attend training sessions if appropriate. The club will monitor

the situation for an agreed period to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

- All staff involved with both the perpetrator and the victim should be made aware of the concerns and the outcomes of the process.
- Allegations of bullying by a staff member will be managed under the Managing Staff Allegations Policy and the Club Disciplinary procedures

### **Prevention**

- Port Vale Football Club have codes of conduct that staff players and parents are expected to adhere to.
- All persons will sign to accept applicable codes of conduct.
- Workshops will be completed with all persons regarding the Code of conduct Discipline and procedures.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Check in with players, parents and participants. Listen to them and understand their concerns.

### **Useful Contacts:**

Port Vale Safeguarding Officer – Tim Bailey

Mob: 07966 935817 e: [tim.bailey@port-vale.co.uk](mailto:tim.bailey@port-vale.co.uk)

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Kidscape 0207 730 3300

Parent line Plus 0808 800 2222

Childline 0800 111 1111

[Anti-Bullying Alliance | United against bullying \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

[www.youngstonewall.org.uk](http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

<https://www.bullying.co.uk>

**Board Authority and Acceptance of this Policy**

**Signed by:**

**Name Board member..... Date:.....**

**SSM..... Date: .....**

**This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation / statutory guidance changes by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**