**ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

This policy refers to Bullying of children and young people.

(BC policy last updated 02/2015)

# Statement of Intent

Shrewsbury Canoe Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in our sport in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all paddlers or parents should be able to *tell* and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* organisation. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer or any committee member.

# Objectives of this Policy

* All committee members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
* All committee members, coaches, volunteers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it if bullying is reported.
* All junior paddlers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

# What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can include:

* pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence; and theft
* name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racial or homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures
* unwanted physical or verbal contact of a sexual nature or sexually abusive comments
* Emotional tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
* Cyber: All areas of internet, such as email, social media and internet chat room misuse. Mobile phone threats by text message, calls, photos and video.

# Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Paddlers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

# 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:

* is unwilling to go to club sessions
* becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
* feels ill before training sessions
* comes home with clothes torn or possessions damaged or missing
* asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
* has unexplained cuts or bruises
* is bullying other children or siblings
* is frightened to say what's wrong
* gives improbable excuses for any of the above
* is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

In more extreme cases

* starts stammering
* cries him or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
* becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
* stops eating
* runs away or attempts or threatens suicide

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

# Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the committee.

2. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly

3. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents should be referred to British Canoeing for advice or contact one of the organisations listed below.

4. Parents should be informed and will be asked by the Club to come to a meeting to discuss the problem

5. If necessary and appropriate, police will be informed

6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

# Recommended Action

If the club decides it is appropriate for it to deal with the situation it will follow the procedure outlined below:

* Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
* If this fails or is not appropriate, a panel should meet with the parents/ carers and child alleging bullying to obtain exact details of the allegation. The panel should comprise of the Club Chair, the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) and one other committee member. Minutes should be taken for clarity; these must be agreed and signed as a true account.
* The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and their parents/ carers to put the allegation to them. They will be asked to answer and give their account of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity; these must be agreed and signed as a true account.
* If bullying has, in the panel’s view, taken place the bully should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension should the bullying continue. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
* The parent/ carer of the bully or the victim can be asked to be present at the Club with the young person each time they attend, if appropriate.
* The Club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not continuing.
* All coaches/ instructors and volunteers involved with both parties should be made aware of the concerns and sanctions.

# In the case of adults alleged to be bullying:

* The Club Welfare Officer (CWO) will follow British Canoeing Child and Vulnerable Groups Protection Policies and Procedures.
* British Canoeing should always be informed and will provide advice on action to be taken.
* British Canoeing will treat the allegation as a Child Protection concern.

# HELP ORGANISATIONS:

KIDSCAPE Anti-Bullying Helpline for Parents 0845 1205 204

Family Lives 0808 800 2222

NSPCC 24 hour help line 0808 800 5000