



A friendship club for children and adults with special needs.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which *is repeated over time*.

Placing *even a once-off* offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people is also regarded as bullying behaviour.

The club takes bullying very seriously. Through our code of behaviour we encourage and support a culture of care and mutual self-support and respect, both among the participating members themselves and their families.

Any concerns of bullying will be dealt with by using the code of behaviour where everyone will be listened to and action agreed to resolve the situation.

#### **Procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour**

- The leaders will ascertain from the aggrieved member or his/her parents/guardians what has happened
- They will then ask the alleged perpetrator or his/her parents/guardians what has happened or if guardians are unaware of what has been alleged inform them but only cite the facts as stated by the victim or details that are known directly by them. There should be no rush to judgement.
- The matter should be referred to the chairperson who will consult with officers of the committee and contact all affected parties.
- The leaders will speak to the parties involved with a view to bringing the parties together to resolve the matter. For the meeting to be successful both members should be prepared. They should know beforehand what will happen and what the other person is going to say. They will also need the support of their adult carers who likewise will have to be prepared.
- If the situation allows the two members will come together to resolve the situation. The victim should be allowed to express how the behaviour has affected him/her and the alleged bully gets an opportunity to accept responsibility for what he/she has done and to understand how the other person feels.
- Both should agree a simple plan to avoid such behaviour and upset in the future and the leader will follow up to see if all is resolved.
- If a satisfactory resolution of the situation still has not been achieved the matter will be referred to a full sitting of the committee. Parents or guardians can make direct representation to the committee by attending and addressing the committee directly. All possible solutions up to and including expulsion will be considered and applied as appropriate.