



## **Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association**

### **POLICY STATEMENT – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

*Confirmed at WSMBA Executive Meeting – 15/12/2024*

The Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association believes that everyone has the right to enjoy our sport in a safe environment, free from abuse and bullying. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all bowlers so they can take part in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, people should be confident that it will be addressed swiftly and effectively. Anyone who is aware of any incident of bullying is expected to bring this to the attention of the WSMBA as soon as they have concerns.

#### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual. There is typically an imbalance of physical or social power. This imbalance distinguishes bullying from conflict. The dynamics of bullying can be more complex than the basic idea of a bully and a victim.

#### **Bullying can be:**

- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Sexist – belittling someone because of their gender.
- Homophobic and biphobic - where people are discriminated against and treated unfairly by other people because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual or are perceived to be such.
- Transphobic - where people are discriminated against because their gender identity doesn't align with the sex they were assigned at birth or perhaps because they do not conform to stereotypical gender roles or 'norms'.

Cyberbullying has become more common. It is a form of bullying behaviour that takes place on social media, in online games and through mobile phones. Cyberbullying can have just as much of an impact on children and young people as more direct, face-to-face bullying and is often harder to escape in the online world.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All officers, members, umpires, coaches, players, volunteers and parents/carers should understand what bullying is and that it won't be tolerated.
- All officers, members, umpires, coaches, players, volunteers and parents/carers should know what to do if they witness or experience bullying within the sport.
- Anyone involved in bowls should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## **Procedure**

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club or County or National Safeguarding Officer, member of the Club, County or National Executive committee or an adult you can trust.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the BowlsWales Safeguarding Officer.
3. In all cases affecting children, parents/carers of alleged victims will be informed.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the victim might consult the police. Laws concerning harassment, online behaviour, hate crime, use of violence and discriminatory behaviour may be relevant.
5. The bullying behaviour will be investigated with the intention of stopping the bullying quickly.
6. The victim will be provided with information about support agencies and helplines.
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
8. Mediation can be considered if both/all involved are willing to participate. If mediation fails and the bullying continues, disciplinary action can be taken under the WSMBA Disciplinary Policy.