Anti Bullying Policy

(Aligned with the FAI Child Welfare & Safeguarding Policy 2024)

1. Introduction

Rush Athletic F.C. is fully committed to ensuring all children and young people in our care experience soccer in a safe, positive, and respectful environment, free from bullying of any kind. We adopt the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy and follow its guidance for responding to and preventing bullying within our club.

This policy applies to players, coaches, volunteers, parents/guardians, and spectators. Bullying is not tolerated and will be dealt with promptly, seriously, and sensitively.

2. Definition of Bullying

As per FAI guidelines, bullying is repeated, deliberate behaviour by an individual or group that causes distress or harm to another. It can take various forms, including:

– Physical: Hitting, pushing, tripping, etc.

– Verbal: Name-calling, mocking, insults, threats.

– Social/Emotional: Excluding others, spreading rumours, humiliation.

– Cyberbullying: Abuse via social media, texts, or other online platforms.

– Discriminatory Bullying: Targeting someone due to race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, etc.

The FAI strictly prohibits all bullying behaviours, including “banter” or “teasing” that discriminates against or humiliates a child.

3. Club Commitment (Aligned with FAI Standards)

Rush Athletic F.C. will:

✅ Foster a culture of respect, inclusion, and safety.

✅ Promote FAI-endorsed education and awareness around bullying.

✅ Ensure all members sign and follow the club’s Code of Conduct, with specific anti-bullying expectations at the start of each season. This will be part of the registration process for players each year.

✅ Provide a clear, confidential reporting process.

✅ Take all reports seriously and respond in line with FAI’s Concern/Complaint Policy.

✅ Offer support to all affected parties and take corrective action where required.

4. Reporting Procedures

As guided by the FAI Concern/Complaint Policy:

– Reports can be made by players, parents, coaches, or volunteers.

– All concerns should be brought to the Child Welfare Officer or Designated Liaison Officer.

– Reports will be handled with confidentiality, sensitivity, and in line with FAI safeguarding procedures.

5. Responding to Bullying

Once a report is received:

– The Child Welfare Officer or Designated Liaison Officer will conduct a fair, thorough, and timely review.

– All parties involved will be spoken with respectfully and privately.

– If bullying is confirmed, the club may take one or more of the following steps:

– Verbal or written warning.

– Parental meeting.

– Suspension from matches or training.

– Referral to the FAI National Children's Officer if necessary.

All actions will be in line with the FAI's step-by-step complaint and concern resolution pathway.

6. Prevention Strategies

– Education: We will run periodic awareness workshops (age-appropriate) for players, parents, and coaches in line with the FAI Safeguarding Framework.

– Signed Codes of Conduct for players and their parents.

– Supervision & Role Modeling: Coaches will model respectful behaviour and address poor conduct immediately.

– Positive Culture: We encourage teamwork, respect, and peer support across all age groups.

7. Support for Individuals

Children or young people who are bullied will:

– Be listened to, supported, and offered reassurance.

– Be protected from further bullying.

– Be referred to additional services if needed (in consultation with parents).

Individuals responsible for bullying will be guided to reflect on their behaviour and provided with appropriate intervention.

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually by the Child Welfare Officer and Club Committee to ensure alignment with updates from the FAI and best safeguarding practices.

9. Contact Information

Child Welfare Officer: Oonagh Boylan

Email: rushafc@gmail.com

FAI National Children's Officer: safeguarding@fai.ie

FAI Safeguarding Info: https://www.fai.ie/about/safeguarding/fai-safeguarding-framework

By being part of Rush Athletic F.C., every member agrees to uphold this policy and create a safe, respectful environment for all.