

## Bullying

Bullying has been identified as one of the major issues that face children, parents and communities - generating media attention & considerable public debate. It is estimated that one in six Australian children are bullied weekly. The Kids Help Line identifies bullying as one of the top three concerns for both boys and girls aged between 5 – 14 who call.

The AusTouch Program promoted as an out of school activity, is not immune to the issue of bullying and therefore Leaders should be aware it may exist when dealing with participants. Particularly if the participants may attend the same school or have other common places for interaction, often conflicts in these environments may spill into an AusTouch Session.

Bullying is identified as “deliberate psychological, emotional and/or physical harassment of one person by another or a group that may include exclusion from peer group, intimidation, extortion and violence.” (Kids Help Line Info sheet 2004)

The reason for victimisation may include:

- Ethnicity
- Resistance to pressure to behave in a certain way
- Physical differences
- High achievement
- Being new
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background

As a Leader the most important aspect relating to this issue is that it may exist. It is also important as an adult that we must make it clear that bullying is an act of violence and will not be tolerated in our sport. We have an obligation to ensure all participants are provided with a safe and positive environment.

## Guidelines for effective action & reducing the incidence of bullying

1. Have a clear and acceptable definition of what bullying is and communicate this throughout the AusTouch Centre.
2. Recognise it may take many varying forms.
3. Make observations of other groups or age groups to assess if the behaviour is 'a normally accepted' or if it is in fact bullying. This may be done by an AusTouch Centre Coordinator.
4. Consult if necessary and make a plan for action.
5. In some instances your Centre may like to develop an Anti-bullying Policy. The policy should reflect the views and values of your participants in its own unique circumstance.
6. If your centre has a bullying issue, bring it into discussion will help the participants in small groups or as a whole centre. Using Questioning Techniques you can lead the participants to make their own decisions about what it is, how it makes people feel, how we can prevent it.
7. Adults involved with the centre need to promote positive behaviours between themselves and the participants.
8. Deal with bullying incidents appropriately. Once this process is set-up any behaviour outside of the boundaries outlined, should be dealt with according to the developed policy.
9. Provide avenues for children that might be victimised that may need help. This will range depending on personal judgement; sources of assistance could be the Kids Help Line, Schools or researching information available.
10. Work constructively with parents. Parents maybe unaware of their child being bullied so sensitivity may be required. If as a Leader you do not have the confidence to deal with this, and then seek assistance of another Leader, Centre Coordinator or experienced person, such as a teacher.

Related websites for further information – [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au) , [www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org) , [www.bullywise.com](http://www.bullywise.com) , [www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/](http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/) , [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au) . Touch Football Australia Incorporated also has a member protection policy which can be downloaded from [www.austouch.com.au](http://www.austouch.com.au) .

Information for this Hint was gathered from a range of websites stated above, in particular we recognised Kids Help Line & Dr Ken Rigby, University of South Australia.