Anti-Bullying Policy

Number:	ABP-01	**Issue:**	1.0	**Issue Date:**	October 2026
Approved By:	Sport & Communities Director				

1.0 About This Policy

1.1 This policy sets out how Active Bolton feels about bullying, how it will be tackled, and how children and young people who experience or display bullying behavior will be supported. It also provides venue good-practice guidance based on the LTA “What’s the Score?” toolkit.

1.2 This policy should be read alongside Active Bolton’s Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and relevant Codes of Conduct.

2.0 Who Does This Policy Apply To?

2.1 This policy applies to all children and young people participating in Active Bolton activities, and to parents, guardians and carers.

2.2 It also applies to employees, coaches, volunteers, officials, contractors, members, participants and visitors involved in delivering or supporting Active Bolton activities, including tennis.

3.0 Who Is Responsible for This Policy?

3.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Operational responsibility sits with the designated safeguarding lead and venue Welfare Officers.

3.2 All participants, employees, coaches, volunteers and officials are responsible for promoting a safe and inclusive environment and reporting bullying concerns.

3.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the designated safeguarding lead, or earlier following a significant incident or updated guidance.

4.0 Definition of Bullying

4.1 Bullying is both behaviour and impact: what someone does and the impact it has on another person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships and can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened or left out. It can happen face to face and online.

4.2 Bullying behaviour can cause physical or emotional harm. Although an individual act might not be repeated, the threat that it might happen again can be sustained over time through looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions or fear of these.

4.3 **Examples of bullying behaviour**

4.4
- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face or online.
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked.
- Having belongings taken or damaged.
- Being ignored or left out, or having rumours spread face to face or online.
- Receiving abusive messages, pictures or images through social media, online gaming platforms or a phone.
- Behaviour that makes people feel they are not in control of themselves or their lives.
- Being targeted because of who they are, or who they are perceived to be, including visible or non-visible differences and protected characteristics.

4.5 **Children's rights**

4.6 Every child has the right not to be bullied and to participate in a safe, secure and inclusive environment. Adults have a responsibility to help provide and protect these rights.

5.0 Active Bolton Commitments

5.1 Active Bolton will:

5.2
- recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants and athletes from harm;
- promote and implement this policy alongside safeguarding policies and procedures;
- ensure bullying behaviour is not tolerated or condoned;
- require relevant participants, employees, coaches, volunteers and officials to comply with this policy and applicable Codes of Conduct;
- investigate and respond to reports of bullying involving children and young people;
- enable children and young people to help develop clear expectations for behaviour during activities;
- provide coaches, employees and volunteers with access to information, guidance and training on bullying; and
- apply fair and proportionate action where concerns are substantiated.

6.0 Expected Standards of Behaviour

6.1 Active Bolton expects each participant, player, coach, employee, volunteer and official to:

6.2
- encourage individuals to speak out about bullying behaviour;
- respect every child's right to safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunities to take responsibility;
- respect the feelings and views of others;
- recognise that everyone is important and equal and that individual differences should be valued;
- acknowledge individual qualities, contributions and progress;
- ensure rules and expected behaviours are clearly explained and displayed; and
- report bullying they experience or witness, recognising that doing nothing may allow the behaviour to continue.

7.0 Supporting Children and Young People

7.1 Active Bolton will let children and young people know who will listen to and support them. An open-door approach will be maintained so children feel confident to speak to a trusted adult about bullying or any other concern.

7.2 Potential communication barriers, including those associated with disability or impairment, will be identified and reasonable steps taken to enable the child to speak out. Relevant helpline information will be made available.

7.3 Anyone reporting bullying will be listened to carefully and taken seriously. Reports will be investigated by listening to everyone involved and considering available information.

7.4 Children experiencing bullying will be supported to continue taking part in a safe environment. Children displaying bullying behaviour will be supported to understand the impact of their actions and develop safer and more respectful relationships.

7.5 Any sanctions or restrictions will be fair, proportionate, recorded and consistent with relevant procedures.

8.0 Working With Parents, Guardians and Carers

8.1 This policy will be available through Active Bolton's published policy information.

8.2 A child's experience of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent, guardian or carer, subject to safeguarding considerations.

8.3 Parents and carers will be consulted, where appropriate, about actions for the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying bullying behaviour.

8.4 Guidance and signposting to relevant agencies, support services and LTA safeguarding information will be offered where applicable.

9.0 Reporting a Concern

9.1 Anyone who is being bullied, witnesses bullying or receives a disclosure should report the concern as soon as possible to an Active Bolton manager, the venue Welfare Officer or the designated safeguarding lead.

9.2 For tennis-related concerns, a report may also be made through the LTA online "Report a Concern" platform on the LTA safeguarding page.

9.3 If there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted. Safeguarding concerns will be managed under Active Bolton's safeguarding procedures.

9.4 **Recording information**

9.5 Record the date, time and location; people involved; what was seen, heard or disclosed; immediate action taken; witnesses; and relevant online messages or images. Do not investigate beyond establishing immediate safety. Pass the concern promptly to the appropriate safeguarding lead.

10.0 Preventing Bullying and Good Practice

10.1 Active Bolton adopts a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Sport and activity venues should model positive behaviour, promote inclusion and identify concerns early.

10.2 Everyone should follow the relevant Code of Conduct, make sure people can participate and have fun, report concerns, and actively promote a safe and inclusive environment.

10.3 **Venue checklist**

10.4
- A clear anti-bullying statement covers visible and non-visible differences, including protected characteristics.
- The statement and reporting routes are promoted through more than one communication channel.
- A fair and consistent process exists for responding to bullying.
- Children and parents or carers can give their views on anti-bullying practice.
- Relevant participants, employees, coaches and volunteers agree to a Code of Conduct.
- Everyone knows who the Welfare Officer is and how to report bullying.

11.0 Possible Indicators of Bullying

11.1 One sign on its own does not prove bullying. A pattern, sudden change or combination of indicators should prompt a sensitive conversation and, where appropriate, a safeguarding report. Indicators may include:

11.2
- possessions going missing or being damaged;
- unwillingness to attend the venue, coaching sessions or camps;
- feeling ill before activities;
- becoming withdrawn, nervous or lacking in confidence;
- a change in performance, eating, sleeping, personality or appearance;
- asking for or stealing money;
- fear of travelling to the venue alone;
- nightmares, self-harm, attempted suicide or threats of suicide;
- beginning to bully others;
- refusing to explain what is wrong or giving unlikely explanations;
- unexplained physical injuries; or
- running away from home.

12.0 Conversations With Those Involved

12.1 **The child or young person experiencing bullying**

12.2 Bullying can happen to anyone. The person may feel responsible, upset, angry, isolated, lacking in confidence or frightened about speaking out. The person will be reassured, listened to and supported, and appropriate action will be taken.

12.3 **The person displaying bullying behaviour**

12.4 The person may be a child or an adult and will be given an opportunity to provide their account. Possible reasons for the behaviour do not excuse it. The behaviour will be addressed and support may be offered to help develop safer and more respectful relationships.

12.5 **Bystanders and witnesses**

12.6 Witnesses may fear repercussions or be reluctant to become involved. Their accounts should be obtained sensitively and they should be reassured that speaking out is the right thing to do.

12.7 **People who minimise bullying**

12.8 Where people regard bullying as inevitable or nothing to do with them, Active Bolton will reinforce this policy, relevant Codes of Conduct and the shared responsibility to maintain a safe and inclusive environment.

13.0 Responding to a Report

13.1 Active Bolton will:

13.2
- listen calmly, take the concern seriously and thank the person for speaking out;
- check immediate safety and seek urgent assistance where needed;
- not promise absolute confidentiality and explain that information may need to be shared to keep people safe;
- make a factual record using the person's own words where possible;
- notify the Welfare Officer, designated safeguarding lead or appropriate manager without unnecessary delay;
- gather accounts from those involved and relevant witnesses fairly and sensitively;
- agree and record actions, support and communication with parents or carers where appropriate;
- apply proportionate measures under relevant safeguarding, conduct or disciplinary procedures; and
- review whether the actions have stopped the behaviour and whether further support is required.

14.0 Confidentiality, Records and Information Sharing

14.1 Records relating to bullying concerns will be factual, dated, stored securely and handled in accordance with Active Bolton's data protection and safeguarding arrangements.

14.2 Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis where necessary to protect a child, investigate a concern or meet a legal or regulatory requirement.

14.3 Anonymous information may be used to identify themes, improve practice and inform training without identifying individuals unnecessarily.

15.0 Related Policies and Guidance

15.1 This policy should be read alongside:

15.2
- Active Bolton Safeguarding Policies and Procedures;
- relevant Active Bolton Codes of Conduct;
- Active Bolton complaints and disciplinary procedures, where applicable; and
- LTA safeguarding guidance, the "Report a Concern" platform and the "What's the Score?" toolkit, where the activity is tennis-related.

Updates of Policy:

Issue No	Description of Revision	Date
1.0	First Active Bolton issue, reformatted to the QMS policy standard.	October 2026