



## **East Midlands Cheer Academy (EMCA)**

### **Anti Bullying Policy**

**2023/24 Season**

<b>Date updated:</b>	October 2023
<b>Date for next review:</b>	May 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- ☆ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities statement
- ☆ Code of Conduct
- ☆ Mixed age teams' guidance
- ☆ Photographs and Social Media use



## **Introduction**

- ☆ At EMCA we aim to provide a supportive, caring, and friendly environment which allows all our athletes to achieve to their full potential.
- ☆ We expect our athletes to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of the gym – we do not tolerate any form of bullying and we are committed to preventing and tackling it.
- ☆ We recognise that as athletes work closely together in sport, they may experience differences of opinion and fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our athletes to resolve these ‘relational conflicts’ and stop them from progressing to bullying behaviours.
- ☆ If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our athletes, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- ☆ At EMCA we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity.

## **Policy Development**

- ☆ This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Statutory Guidance in line with KCSIE 2023
- ☆ This policy is available:
  - *Online at [www.emcanottingham.com](http://www.emcanottingham.com)*
  - *In the welcome pack (as a link)*
  - *Child friendly versions are on display in the gym for our younger athletes.*
- ☆ This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- ☆ All coaching staff and management are aware that athletes may bully others, and that this can happen both inside and outside of the gym, and online. All staff understand the Anti-Bullying strategy and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying.
- ☆ **The All-Star Director** has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying at EMCA. They are responsible for appointing an Anti-Bullying Coordinator and liaising with parents/carers where appropriate.
- ☆ **The Anti-Bullying Coordinator and The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is Emma Pye. She is responsible for:
  - *Policy development and review*
  - *Implementing the policy and monitoring/assessing its effectiveness*
  - *Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents*
  - *Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour*



- Reporting of any bullying concerns which demonstrate safeguarding behaviours.

### **What is bullying and how does it differ to relational conflict?**

- ☆ At EMCA we have adopted the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

***“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or online.”***

- ☆ We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect anyone. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between athletes, or perceived differences.
- ☆ We recognise that the sport of Cheerleading can place adults and minors together in one team in a way that would be unlikely in normal social situations. We recognise that this could provide potential for an ‘imbalance of power’ and therefore have our Mixed age Athletes Policy in place to address this.
- ☆ We also recognise that incidents may occur between athletes, which may not be deemed as ‘bullying’ but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as ‘relational conflicts’ or falling out. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, athletes show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.
- ☆ Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but our gym is aware occasionally some can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.
- ☆ Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or virtually), athletes who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as ‘bystanders’.
- ☆ Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as ‘relational conflict’ or ‘bullying’, the gym will address the situation and support the athletes to resolve any negative feelings. The gym will monitor athletes following a relational conflict to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying. Our gym will



challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all athletes feel supported (this will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider gym community).

### **What does bullying behaviour look like?**

- ☆ At EMCA we consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will consider the age and stage of development of the athletes involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all involved.
- ☆ Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:
  - *Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.*
  - *Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.*
  - *Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.*
  - *Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, exposure to inappropriate films etc.*
  - *Online / Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.*
  - *Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as ‘false friendships’, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation.*
  - *Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and disablist in nature.*
- ☆ There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.
- ☆ Our gym understands that banter is an increasingly relevant part of discussions relating to bullying; however, it is important to acknowledge that banter is not inherently bullying, and it can be an important part of social bonding and friendships. At the same time, we know that some bullying in society is passed off as ‘just banter’, and we know that banter can quickly escalate to inappropriate or harmful exchanges and bullying.

### **Where does bullying take place?**

- ☆ At EMCA we understand that bullying is not confined to the gym premises. Bullying can take place outside of the gym. Bullying may also take place online (this is sometimes referred to as cyberbullying).
- ☆ We will offer support and guidance to athletes, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside the gym or online.

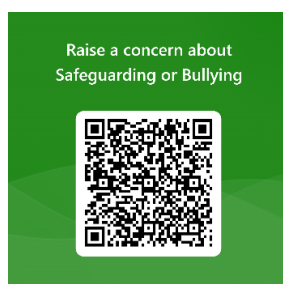


### **How to report bullying concerns**

- ☆ At EMCA we want athletes, parents/carers, and staff to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all athletes involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviour and the wider gym community.
- ☆ We have clear reporting systems for each group of our gym community, the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

### **Athletes, including bystanders/witnesses.**

- ☆ We ask that all athletes report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of gym staff. This may be their coach or any other member of the coaching team.
- ☆ The member of staff will listen to the athlete and make an initial note of their concerns, they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will directly alert the gym's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if an athlete is considered at risk.
- ☆ We understand that some athletes may find it difficult to tell a coach about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our gym has an anonymous reporting system where the athlete can use the QR codes displayed around the gym to complete an online form. This link is also below:



### **Parents/carers**

- ☆ We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.
- ☆ We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact their child's coach or the All-Star Director. We ask that parents/carers to come directly to the gym with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the gym community in person or online.
- ☆ Parents can also raise a concern to the Safeguarding Lead online using the link below.

<https://forms.office.com/e/JLAv88maA3>



### **Gym staff**

- ☆ Our staff work closely with our athletes and therefore may notice a change in an athlete's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a member of the gym community. If staff have any concerns about an athlete's welfare or are concerned that an athlete is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately.
- ☆ Gym staff should log all confirmed incidents of bullying using the form in appendix 1.

### **How we will respond to reports of bullying**

- ☆ At EMCA all reports of bullying or reported concerns of bullying behaviours will be taken seriously. Even if an incident is deemed 'not bullying' or a 'relational conflict', our gym remains committed to supporting all athletes who have been involved and affected.
- ☆ Our gym keeps records of all reports of bullying.
- ☆ Some of our gym's responses may include, but may not be limited to:
  - *Talk to all athletes involved in the reported incident – this may include the target, the alleged perpetrator, and any bystanders/witnesses.*
  - *Talk to the parents (of the target and/or the alleged perpetrator)*
  - *Implement appropriate sanctions (this could include a verbal warning, written warning or in more serious cases where bullying continues and/or is of a more serious nature this could involve suspension or permanent expulsion from the gym)*
  - *Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been taken.*
  - *Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there are safeguarding issues or concerns – a DSL may then refer to the appropriate agencies.*

### **Strategies for preventing bullying.**

- ☆ At EMCA, we are committed to the safety and welfare of our athletes, and therefore we have developed strategies to promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. Cheerleading is a Team Sport, and we encourage the development of a strong Team Ethos.
- ☆ The strategies we use include, but are not limited to:
  - *Taking part in Anti-Bullying week annually in the Gym (November)*
  - *Setting up official Team WhatsApp groups for communications where all minors must also have an adult online. Setting up unofficial groups is not permitted.*
  - *Celebrating everyone's achievements (ringing the bell for new tumblers)*



- *Developing collective responsibility - not blaming individuals for failed stunts or mistakes in routines*
- *Celebrating key events through dress up days and events*
- *Stressing that everyone has a part to play in the team regardless of position.*
- *Encouraging gym members to socialise through open gym and team socials.*
- *All coaching staff to model expected behaviour and interactions and address any inappropriate comments immediately.*

### **Alleged bullying by members of coaching staff**

- ☆ As a club we are aware that the coach/athlete relationship can lead to an imbalance of power and that reports such as the Whyte Review (2006) have identified and highlighted the potential for bullying within Sporting Organisations.
- ☆ All members of coaching staff are expected to adhere to our code of conduct and our Safeguarding Policy which details appropriate interactions with athletes.
- ☆ Any allegations of bullying regarding a member of staff should be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the Safeguarding Lead on

[emca\\_safeguarding@icloud.com](mailto:emca_safeguarding@icloud.com) or using the link below  
<https://forms.office.com/e/JLAv88maA3>



## Appendix 1

# Bullying incident report form

Incident details			
Date of incident		Time of incident	
Location / event			
Where did the incident occur?	<input type="checkbox"/> Gym area	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiting area	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify including online):		
Nature / type of incident			
<input type="checkbox"/> Extortion		<input type="checkbox"/> Written	
<input type="checkbox"/> Isolation – being ignored or left out		<input type="checkbox"/> Possessions – kit taken or damaged	
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical – being hit or hurt		<input type="checkbox"/> Forced into actions against will / hazing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal – name-calling, taunting, mocking, threatening		<input type="checkbox"/> Cyber – online, social media, email, text, posting photos / videos	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreading rumours		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	
Are there indications that the incident was motivated by any of these? Tick all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> General appearance / demeanour	<input type="checkbox"/> Race / ethnic origin	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability / SEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender / sexism	<input type="checkbox"/> Home circumstances	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports ability	

Individuals involved				
	Name	Gender*	Age	Role*
1				
2				
3				
4				
* Gender: <b>F</b> – Female / <b>M</b> – Male / <b>NB</b> – Non-binary / Another – please write in				
* Role: <b>V</b> – Victim / <b>R</b> – Ringleader / <b>A</b> – Associate / <b>B</b> – Bystander				





Brief summary of incident(s)	

Action taken	
Include any sanctions, exclusions, parental involvement, or involvement with external agencies.	
Overall (include details if incident was referred on)	
With each individual involved (noted on page 1)	

Declaration	
Form completed by (print your name)	
Your signature	X
Today's date	