

# Anti-Bullying Promise and Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all members – young people, parents, coaches and others who help and assist with Swim Ireland, regional and or club activities. As part of this policy clubs are encouraged to support the Anti-Bullying Promise to help create a safe, enjoyable place for young people.

There is additional information at the end of this policy including a record sheet for recording the details and outcomes of an issue and flow charts to help show the process for dealing with bullying behaviour.

## Anti-Bullying Promise

The Anti-Bullying Promise aims to prevent bullying behaviour, described as the repeated and intentional use of power or aggression to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of others.

1. Bullying behaviour is not acceptable in our sport – we have a zero tolerance to bullying behaviour
2. Everyone is expected to behave according to our codes of conduct
3. It is OK to tell someone about bullying behaviour; we will listen and help stop the behaviour
4. We want young people to feel safe and secure in our sport
5. We will support young people to help stop bullying behaviour
6. Everyone will sign up to this promise

If you see bullying behaviour or if you are being bullied tell someone you trust like your coach, the children's officer, your parent or a friend.

Help keep Swim Ireland free from bullying behaviour  
BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

## Defining bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour is the repeated and intentional use of power or aggression by one or more persons to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another individual or group. An individual or individuals may be targeted through a variety of methods e.g. through social media sites, physically or verbally harmed, through text or other messaging services.

## Types of bullying behaviour

### Cyberbullying

This involves the use of technology via texting, messaging, photographs, social media, etc.; a message may only be posted once, however it becomes bullying behaviour because of the repeated viewings. Young people are easily accessible via phone or computer, so bullying behaviour can continue outside the club environment.

### Exclusion bullying

This may manifest in several ways and may be less obvious than someone being left out of an activity, e.g. a group may appear to involve someone but regularly chooses to exclude them within the group activity or passes on the wrong messages about an activity so turning up too early/late or in the wrong gear etc.

### **Extortion bullying**

Extortion bullying involves regularly extracting something from a person without returning the 'favour', e.g. borrowing goggles/equipment, money, snacks, drinks etc. This becomes bullying behaviour when nothing is given in return, i.e. the relationship is not two-way. This type of behaviour may also include forcing someone to change their performance, i.e. losing on purpose, or not training well.

### **Gesture bullying**

This involves a gesture, a look, a signal, pulling a face or can include the way someone stands. The behaviour may not be apparent or meaningful to anyone other than those involved.

### **Physical bullying**

This is where something is physically done to a person, it does not need to cause physical harm e.g. throwing clothes into the shower or catching a foot of the person in front in the lane.

### **Verbal bullying**

Verbal bullying involves saying something about or to another person, e.g. gossiping, telling lies or calling someone names, etc. This can include the tone used when speaking e.g. saying something with a sarcastic tone or shouting.

Bullying behaviour usually involves several types of behaviour. The issues, when viewed as individual incidents, may appear petty or inconsequential. However, for the person on the receiving end bullying behaviour is a hurtful series of happenings. Knowledge of the different types of behaviour helps to deal with occurrences of bullying. Identifying bullying behaviour is about being observant to the behaviours of others. Being observant helps in separating bullying behaviour with banter. Banter involves a two-way communication, as between friends or peer individuals, where there is a balance of power between those involved. Banter can become bullying if the behaviour is directed one way with the influence and power being one sided.

## **Helping prevention**

Individuals can help prevent bullying behaviour by:

- Knowing the code of conduct and what it means; adults and young people must sign their code of conduct every year
- Signing and supporting the Anti-Bullying Promise; a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to every member and posted where everyone can read it and refer to it if needed. The Children's Officer should go through the Anti-Bullying Promise with young people
- Being responsible by acting where bullying behaviour occurs; it is the right thing to do to tell about bullying behaviour

Damaging and bullying behaviours can develop where bad behaviour is not dealt with through appropriate means. Leaders must make sure the codes of conduct are followed in all activities in Swim Ireland. Young people should be encouraged to tell a trusted person about bullying behaviour, this might be a friend, their coach, a parent or a Children's Officer.

## **People involved**

There may be several people involved in incidents of bullying behaviour, directly or indirectly having seen or heard about what is happening and these may be adults and/or young people. There are four typical types:

1. The person displaying bullying behaviour can be an individual or a group, this may be an individual who is popular, or has discovered their behaviour evokes a reaction. Where a group is involved, they can be those most respected or thought to be part of a good team.  
People who behave in a bullying manner may be recognised by their own behaviours, often where:
  - An individual is being intentionally hostile, aggressive, seemingly be without reason
  - An individual or group exert power over another individual or group, often where an imbalance of power already exists
  - Satisfaction is gained from their bullying behaviour
  - An individual purposely causes harm to another
  - An individual repeats harmful behaviour to another

2. The person or group on the receiving end of the bullying behaviour can be known as the target. Often these are individuals who are different from others or stand out for a reason e.g. different culture, background, sexual orientation; someone with a disability; or a talented or less skilled individual.
3. Those individuals who are onlookers to bullying behaviour, often taking no part, are known as the backup and the audience. They provide the audience and the reaction to the bullying behaviour and may be afraid to speak up in case they become a target of the bullying behaviour.
4. There is usually an individual or group who know what is happening but consider it is not their problem; they don't get involved as they are not affected but don't do anything to stop the behaviour.

## **Impact of bullying behaviour**

Bullying behaviour has an impact on everyone involved. For the person who is the target of bullying behaviour the effects can be felt psychologically and physiologically.

The person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour whilst often a popular person amongst their peers may also show signs of low self-esteem, show a lack of empathy and may have been labelled as a 'troublemaker' in the past.

If the person who is behaving in a bullying manner is an adult, other young people may be afraid to speak out because of the consequences, i.e. they may be afraid of not being picked for activities or left out of team selections.

## **How to deal with bullying behaviour**

Young people should be encouraged to talk to a trusted person if they are worried about bullying behaviour. There are generally two ways to deal with bullying behaviour between young people: immediately an issue happens or after an issue has happened.

### **Immediately an issue happens (see flow chart 1)**

The person in charge must be aware or told something is happening and seek to resolve the issue at the time

#### **Where bullying behaviour involves an adult:**

The person in charge should ask to speak with the adult separately, away from any young people or other adults. The person in charge should describe the type of behaviour witnessed and the effect it is having on others, especially young people, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying Promise as reminders about acceptable behaviour. The adult should be asked to stop with such behaviour; if the behaviour is denied or does not change, the person in charge may need to issue an immediate sanction to protect young people or others.

#### **Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:**

The person in charge should talk with all the people involved in bullying behaviour as soon as they become aware of the issue and try to reach an agreement about what happened between those involved, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying Promise as reminders about acceptable behaviour. An immediate sanction may be necessary to deal with the bullying behaviour.

Parents and the Children's Officer should be informed of the issue by the person in charge and the way it was dealt with including any action necessary if the behaviour continues. It is better to sort issues immediately and quickly and we expect parents and adults to be supportive of this process. The person in charge should also observe the group/individuals to ensure the bullying behaviour does not continue.

The person in charge may also submit a disciplinary report to the complaints and disciplinary committee for further action if necessary.

### **After an issue happens (see flow chart 2)**

This process can be used when the person in charge becomes aware of the behaviour after the incident or if the immediate resolution does not resolve the issue straight away.

### **Where bullying behaviour involves an adult:**

The behaviour of an adult may be dealt with through an informal complaints process. However, where a young person is involved the Children's Officer should talk with the young person and parent to find out what happened. The Children's Officer role is to support the young person in ensuring the matter is dealt with appropriately. An informal process is preferable to the formal process, where a resolution can be reached to the benefit of any young person involved. The processes are detailed in the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

### **Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:**

If an issue has not been resolved or continues after an attempt to resolve the behaviour at the time, or a report is received after an event the information should be passed to the CCO. Often it will require a coach or other person in charge, e.g. a team manager and the CCO to work together to resolve an issue.

The CCO will need to know who is involved i.e. the person or group who have allegedly behaved in a bullying manner, the target of the behaviour and any others who may have been present at the time, i.e. the bystanders.

The bullying behaviour should be assessed based on:

- Information from target of the behaviour (individual or group)
- How long the bullying behaviour has been going on
- How often the bullying behaviour is happening
- Is there an intention to cause harm to the target(s) of the bullying behaviour?

### **Restorative approach with young people**

The preferred method to deal with reports of bullying behaviour is the No Blame approach to resolve the behaviour. This can help to restore or repair a previously positive relationship and allows the young people involved to consider their feelings, their behaviour and the effects of bullying behaviour on everyone.

### **Use of sanctions**

If bullying behaviour cannot be resolved through the No Blame approach the issue should be sent forward as a disciplinary matter through the correct process to the complaints and disciplinary committee. The complaints and disciplinary committee will deal with the matter through the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary procedures and may issue sanctions depending on their findings.

### **The No Blame approach**

The NO BLAME approach seeks a resolution for young people involved in bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within their peer group. Young people involved often want certain behaviours to stop, without a need for punishments to be imposed. This approach is often difficult for adults to reconcile, often wanting punishments to be handed out. The guidance should be taken from young people involved.

The NO BLAME approach encourages young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing it. Using this approach, a previous relationship between individuals or within a team may be re-established and this is often the preferred option for the young people involved.

The ethos behind the NO BLAME approach is to:

EXPLAIN the problem, i.e. that someone seems to be unhappy, seems to be picked on etc. and explain how that person is feeling; this should not accuse anyone.

ASK for ideas as to how to help this person

LEAVE the individual/group to put their ideas into practice

MEET with the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed

SHARE the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to a trusted adult if there is bullying behaviour in the club

The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions', it seeks to get an acknowledgment of behaviour and provides an opportunity for young people to change hurtful behaviour.

There may be issues that are not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues. Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However, the outcome for young people is far better when issues can be resolved through such a restorative practice.

## **NO BLAME Approach**

### **Step 1: Meet with young person who is the target of the bullying behaviour**

If there has been an incident of bullying behaviour talk to the young person who is the target of the behaviour. Find out who is involved and what the young person is now feeling.

Try asking the following questions:

What was the behaviour that has caused upset?

Are you physically hurt and/or how are you feeling?

Who was involved in the behaviour, i.e. was it in your own peer group?

When and where did it happen?

Actively listen and advise the young person of the next steps that will be taken

### **Step 2: Meet with all involved**

Meet with all those involved including those who appear responsible for the bullying behaviour, some of the backup and audience participants. This does not necessarily need to be a whole squad. Meet the individuals informally or if meeting with the group, it will be necessary to get everyone's points of view and their suggested solutions.

### **Step 3: Explain the problem**

At the meeting explain that it appears there is something going on in general terms without apportioning blame, e.g. you might suggest the target of the bullying behaviour doesn't seem to be happy, and you have heard they have been called names/left out/picked on etc.

Ask questions like:

What do you think they are feeling?

How would you feel if it was you?

What would you do if it happened to you?

What could we do to see it does not happen again?

Do not use specific details of the incident or allocate blame; however, explain how that person might be feeling e.g. loneliness, feeling left out, being rejected, laughed at.

Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on comments without accusing or isolating anyone.

This is an opportunity to find out how others feel about bullying behaviour.

### **Step 4: Ask the group/individual for their ideas**

The final outcome of the meeting is to seek suggestions that would make a target of the bullying behaviour feel happier. Use phrases like: "if it were you what would help you ...", to encourage a response.

Listen to all suggestions and note them, especially positive responses as these will help create an environment for the young people involved to work together. Agree actions that will create a positive atmosphere and resolve the behaviour.

### **Step 5: Leave it to the group or individual**

Hand the issue to the group to take the suggested actions forward and arrange to meet again a certain time frame. The responsibility is now with the group of individuals to put the suggested actions in place within that time.

### **Step 6: Meet them again**

Meet everyone, including the person who had been responsible for the bullying behaviour and the target of the behaviour; discuss how things are going and check if there have been other incidents.

This allows for continual monitoring and keeps everyone involved in the process. The Anti-Bullying Promise should be reinforced regularly. This encourages a team or squad to look after each other and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. The parents of the young people involved should be informed of the actions taken.

### **Step 7: Share the responsibility**

Meet with the wider group or team to discuss what should be in place to help prevent further incidents and what impact bullying behaviour may have on everyone, e.g. less free time or social activities, or other actions might need to be imposed as a preventative measure.

Any action should be used in the spirit of prevention, not as a punishment.

## Anti-Bullying Record Sheet

Please complete as much information as possible to note an accurate account of the incident.

### General details

Date and time of alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Who reported it to you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the bullying behaviour suspected (e.g. cyber, exclusion, extortion, gesture, physical, verbal):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Description of what happened: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Who is involved (record of people alleged to be involved)?

Person responsible for bullying behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

Target of bullying behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

Backup and audience: \_\_\_\_\_

### Record the responses from those involved

Who spoke about it? \_\_\_\_\_

Feelings of individuals involved: (identify how the issue made them feel and any suggestions/fears expressed)  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action did you take?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were the parents informed, and when?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What follow up is required (identify who should follow up and when)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Further action taken (note date and what follow up actions happened)  
\_\_\_\_\_

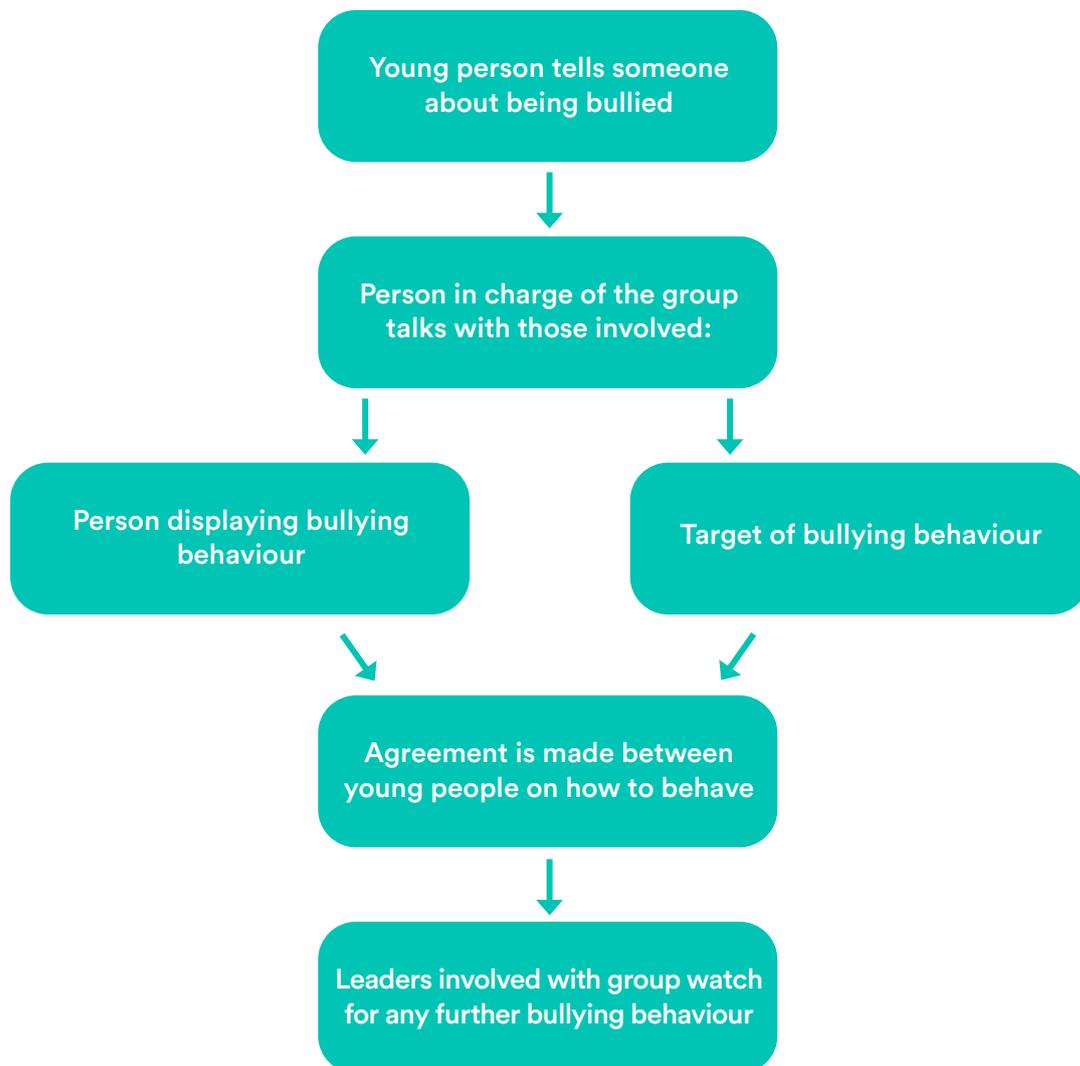
Form completed by:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

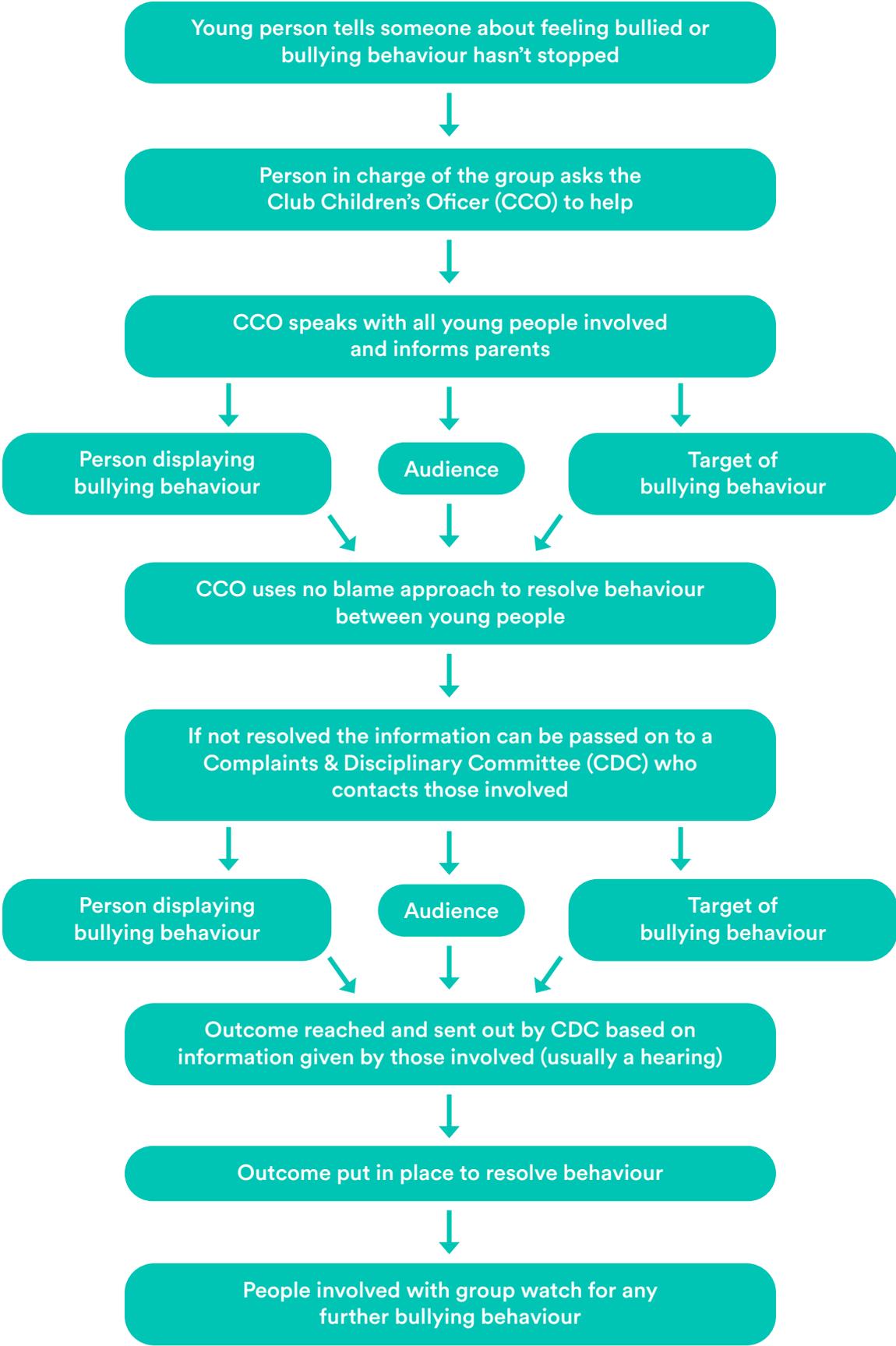
## Flow chart 1. Bullying behaviour: immediate response



- The person in charge of the group should always try to stop bullying behaviour as quickly as possible; immediate sanctions may be used to control behaviour
- Children should not be forced to shake hands with each other
- If an adult is involved in the bullying behaviour this should be stopped immediately
- Parents should always be told – this may happen after the behaviour has been sorted out
- Club Children's Officer should be told, the CCO should not need to do anything unless bullying behaviour continues
- Reaching a solution straightaway is usually better for all young people involved
- All those working with young people should encourage the group to follow the codes of conduct
- Only those involved, their parents and the CCO need to be told about what has happened; the CCO will note the behaviour, the actions and the outcome – this record will remain with the CCO.

### Flow chart 2. Bullying behaviour: Response after issue happens

If the bullying behaviour is not resolved immediately, it continues to happen or only becomes apparent after the event, this process can be followed for reaching a resolution:



## Notes

- Adults in charge should respond to bullying behaviour without delay
- The response should involve all young people affected by the bullying behaviour
- Parents should be told what is happening
- The CCO, parents and young people will all be involved in putting a resolution in place
- Dealing with bullying behaviour after it has happened often has a greater impact on young people involved – support will be needed for all those involved
- The information should be kept confidential to only those involved.
- The CCO will note the behaviour, the actions decided by the group and outcome – this record remains with the CCO.