

VERWOOD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Anti-Bullying Policy

A club where every player feels safe and respected

Version	Version 2.0 – April 2026
Date of issue	April 2026
Review due	Annually, or following any significant incident or change in FA guidance
Policy owner	Club Welfare Officer / Club Secretary (as applicable)

1. COMMITMENT

Verwood Town Football Club is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for playing football. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at this club. If anyone sees or knows that bullying is happening, they must tell the Welfare Officer or a committee member.

2. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another. It can be:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, damaging belongings
- **Verbal:** name-calling, threats, offensive comments
- **Psychological:** excluding, spreading rumours, manipulating relationships
- **Online (cyberbullying):** sending threatening messages, posting humiliating content, group exclusion online, sharing images without consent, anonymous harassment

3. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF BULLYING

- Someone says they are being bullied
- Reluctance to come to training or matches
- Becoming anxious, withdrawn or lacking in confidence
- Coming home with torn clothing or damaged equipment
- Possessions going missing
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Frightened to say what is wrong

4. CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying. It includes:

- Sending threatening, abusive or humiliating messages via any platform (WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.)
- Posting embarrassing photos or videos of someone without their consent
- Excluding someone from online groups deliberately
- Creating fake profiles to mock or threaten someone
- Anonymous harassment via any platform

Coaches and managers should not assume cyberbullying 'happens outside the club' — if it involves club members and affects their participation or wellbeing, the club will take action. Refer to the Social Media Policy for additional guidance.

Resources: UK Safer Internet Centre – saferinternet.org.uk | Childline – 0800 1111 | CEOP – ceop.police.uk

5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT BULLYING

Any concerns about bullying should be reported to:

- The Club Welfare Officer: welfare@vtyfc.co.uk / 07758 246452
- Any committee member
- The Dorset FA Welfare Officer: safeguarding@dorsetfa.com

For serious bullying or if a child is at immediate risk: NSPCC (0808 800 5000), Dorset Children's Social Care (01305 228866) or Police (999).

6. HOW THE CLUB WILL RESPOND

1. The concern will be referred to the Club Welfare Officer and at least one other committee member.
2. A mediation meeting will be offered to relevant parties where appropriate.
3. The club will support those engaging in bullying behaviour to change, where possible.
4. If the bullying continues or is serious, the club's Disciplinary Policy will be invoked, which may result in suspension or expulsion.
5. Serious incidents may be referred to the Dorset FA Welfare Officer.

7. MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

Following the resolution of any bullying incident, the Club Welfare Officer will:

- Follow up with the affected player and their parent/carer within four weeks
- Confirm with the manager that the situation has been resolved and the player's participation is not affected
- Keep a confidential record of the incident and its resolution

8. SUPPORT FOR PLAYERS

Players who have experienced bullying, or who are struggling with mental health as a result, can speak to:

- The Club Welfare Officer in confidence
- Childline: 0800 1111 (free, 24/7)
- Young Minds: youngminds.org.uk or text YM to 85258
- Their team manager or any trusted adult at the club

Key Contacts	
Club Welfare Officer	Clare Nixson – welfare@vtyfc.co.uk / 07758 246452
Dorset FA Safeguarding	safeguarding@dorsetfa.com / 01202 688270
NSPCC (24/7)	0808 800 5000
Dorset Children's Advice	01305 228866
Childline	0800 1111 (free, under 18s)