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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
v1.0	28/03/2024	David Shipley	Initial version.
v1.1	11/03/2026	David Shipley	Minor policy amendments, including grammatical updates and clarification of scope and application.
v1.2	24/04/2026	David Shipley	Added document control information and version history.
v1.3	05/08/2026	David Shipley	Clarified scope, strengthened procedures and updated policy wording.

Try Tag Rugby Bullying and Harassment Policy

Try Tag Rugby is committed to providing an environment for players, referees and staff members that is free of harassment and bullying, and where everyone is treated, and treats others, with dignity and respect. Try Tag Rugby will not permit or condone any form of bullying or harassment.

This policy covers bullying or harassment of or by anyone involved in the Try Tag Rugby community; staff, franchisees and their staff, referees, players, coaches, parents, contractors and volunteers. The policy encompasses bullying or harassment that occurs at leagues and

tournaments as well as Try Tag Rugby social events. Actions that take place outside of leagues, tournaments and social events may still be subject to the policy if those actions have direct consequences within the Try Tag Rugby community.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. A single incident of this nature can amount to harassment if sufficiently serious.

Unlawful harassment may include sexual harassment or harassment related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The precise legal protections depend on the circumstances and the relationship between the people involved. Try Tag Rugby considers bullying or harassment unacceptable whether or not it meets the legal definition of unlawful harassment.

Examples of harassment may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material or material with racial overtones;
- Use of slang names for racial groups, or age groups, or for disabled persons;
- Workplace, sporting or social exclusion;
- Unwanted physical conduct, such as touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content.

It is important to note that harassment occurs even if the harasser perceives their behaviour as being harmless and without malice, or 'just a bit of fun'. What matters is how the behaviour makes the recipient feel, and not what the perpetrator's intentions were. Also, a person may be harassed even if they were not the intended 'target' of the behaviour. For example, a man may be harassed by sexist jokes about women if the jokes create an environment that is offensive to him.

What is bullying?

Bullying commonly involves repeated behaviour, although a single serious incident may also be addressed under this policy. It is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, involving the abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose or effect of belittling, humiliating or threatening the recipient.

Bullying usually takes one of three forms: physical, verbal or indirect. It can range from extreme forms such as violence and intimidation, to less obvious actions, such as workplace or social exclusion.

Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Shouting, name-calling or swearing at people in public or private;
- Physical violence;
- Spreading malicious rumours, teasing, name-calling;
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
- Physical or psychological threats or threatening gestures;
- Constantly undervaluing effort;
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people;
- Taunts, gestures, graffiti or online activity relating to someone's identity or protected characteristics;
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding performance.

Please note that staff or referees are duty-bound to give players feedback and address their playing actions. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive feedback of a player's actions in game scenarios would not, on its own, normally amount to bullying.

What to do if you are being harassed or bullied

Informal approach

You may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting, so an informal discussion may help them to understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it.

If you feel able to, tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately. You should keep a note of the date and what was said and done. This will be useful if the unacceptable behaviour continues and you wish to make a formal complaint.

You are not expected to approach the person directly where you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, where the conduct is serious, or where there is a significant imbalance of power. You may proceed directly to the formal complaints process.

Formal procedure

Where a concern involves a child or an adult at risk, it must also be reported through Try Tag Rugby's safeguarding procedures. Where someone is in immediate danger, the emergency services should be contacted. Try Tag Rugby may refer a matter to the police, a local authority, the Rugby Football League or another appropriate agency where necessary.

When a staff member, referee, player, coach, parent, contractor or volunteer feels that they need to deal with an issue of harassment or bullying formally, they should contact Try Tag Rugby using the Try Tag Rugby *How to Make a Complaint* advice.

We will investigate complaints in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner. An investigation will be conducted, where possible, by someone with appropriate seniority and experience, and no prior involvement in the complaint. The person complained about will normally be informed of the substance of the concerns and given a reasonable opportunity to respond. All people involved will be treated fairly, respectfully and impartially. We will handle information as sensitively and confidentially as reasonably possible. However, information may need to be shared to investigate the concern fairly, protect someone from harm, comply with legal obligations or make an appropriate referral. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage the ongoing relationship between people involved during an investigation.

Whilst an investigation is taking place, people involved in the complaint may be temporarily suspended from activities as a neutral and precautionary step. This does not amount to any finding of wrongdoing by Try Tag Rugby but a neutral precautionary measure intended to manage risk while the matter is considered.

Once an investigation is complete, we will inform any relevant people involved (separately) of our decision. Whether or not a complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between any people concerned.

Consequences of a breach of this policy

Where a complaint is upheld, Try Tag Rugby may take any action it considers reasonable and proportionate. This may include a warning, required behavioural changes, education or training, removal from an activity or venue, suspension, termination of membership or participation, disciplinary action, termination of a contractual or volunteering arrangement, or referral to an appropriate authority. The action taken will depend on the seriousness of the behaviour and all relevant circumstances.

Some bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination if it relates to any of the protected characteristics as detailed above. In some circumstances, the behaviour may also constitute a criminal offence and may be reported to the police or another appropriate authority.

Where it is found that a staff member has been harassed by a referee, player, coach, parent, contractor or volunteer, Try Tag Rugby will take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent any recurrence.

No action will be taken against someone merely because a complaint is not upheld. However, deliberately making an allegation that a person knows to be false, or providing information dishonestly or maliciously, may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff, referees, players, coaches, parents, contractors and volunteers who make complaints in good faith, or who participate in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Any staff, referees, players, coaches, parents, contractors and volunteers engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Record-keeping

Information about a complaint by or about staff, referees, players, coaches, parents, contractors and volunteers may be placed on file, along with a record of the outcome and any other notes or documents compiled during the process. Records will be kept securely, access will be restricted

where appropriate, and information will be retained only for as long as necessary in accordance with Try Tag Rugby's retention schedule and data protection obligations.

How we can all help to stop bullying and harassment

We all have a shared responsibility to help create and maintain an environment free of bullying and harassment. You can do this by:

- Considering how your own behaviour may affect others, and changing it;
- Being receptive, rather than defensive, if asked to change your behaviour;
- Treating your teammates, opposition, referees and staff members with dignity and respect;
- Taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made;
- Making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable;
- Intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying, and giving support to those affected;
- Reporting harassment or bullying to Try Tag Rugby;
- Being open, honest and objective in any investigation of complaints.