



Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent:

Michaela Foundation is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children and vulnerable adults. Bullying of any kind is viewed as unacceptable by Michaela Foundation. If bullying does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that any young person who knows that bullying is happening is encouraged to talk to staff and/or volunteers. We require any staff/volunteers to respond to bullying appropriately as outlined in this document.

Michaela Foundation will encourage staff/volunteers to:

- Respect every child/young person's need for, and rights to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respect every individual's feelings and views
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- Ensure all young people at Camp know they can talk to a leader if they are being bullied or know someone else who is

What is bullying?

Bullying is the "repeated use of power, by one or more persons, intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others". (NIABF)

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse; mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls; misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Michaela Foundation understands that children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties may be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the coach/volunteer, the parent/guardian and, the child/young person. Early identification of bullying and prompt, collective action to deal with it is essential to create a culture where bullying is not acceptable.



Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one should be a victim of bullying or have to operate in an environment of fear in case they may be next. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are displaying bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

We, at Michaela Foundation have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this policy

- Michaela Foundation staff, volunteers, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and should know what the Michaela Foundation policy on responding to bullying behavior is and what they should do if an issue arises.
- As a charitable organisation we take bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated by Michaela Foundation and is against the very ethos of our organisation.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child, for example:

- is frightened of attending the group;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the person bullying them);
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and the behavior clarified with the young person. Giving them the opportunity to talk in a safe and secure setting with someone they trust.

Procedures:



1. Report bullying incidents to leader / member of staff / volunteer
2. The incidents will be recorded by leader. The young person may complete the Bullying Report Form if they find it less distressing than verbally recounting their experience. This is available online or in a hard copy upon request,
3. In some cases parents will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the concerns. But in all cases were a young person discloses an incident of bullying the parent/carer should be informed and advised of what action the Michaela foundation will take
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be challenged and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the person displaying bullying behavior to change their behaviour.

Support to the child:

- children should know that all the staff/volunteers will listen to and support them
- systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them
- potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help
- children should have access to the Childline Helpline numbers (In Northern Ireland this would be Childline 080011 11 www.childline.org.uk and in the Republic of Ireland 1800 66 66 66 www.ispcc.ie)
- anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported
- any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development
- those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying
- sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

How to talk to the person displaying bullying behavior

To demonstrate a restorative approach in dealing with bullying behavior it is important that the adults respond appropriately and ask open questions. Questions to consider asking the person(s) accused of bullying another individual or group;

- Tell me what happened?
- What were you thinking that led you to behave that way?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- Can you tell me how that person has been affected by your behavior?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?



Support to the parents/guardians:

- parents/guardians should be advised on the club/organisation's bullying policy and practice
- any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/guardians
- parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available
- support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Outcomes:

- The individual showing bullying behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise and consider what they could do to heal the relationship. If possible, the children will be reconciled, but only with genuine agreement by both parties.
- After the incident /incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.



Bullying Report Form

Name:	Age:
How can we contact you? Please tick and write in the phone number or email address.	
At home At school Email At Camp Telephone Other:	
Describe what happened/is happening:	
Where did it happen?	
When did it happen?	
Who was doing the bullying?	
Did anyone else see it happen and if so, who?	
Was the bullying a one-off incident or part of a bigger problem?	
How did the bullying make you feel?	
Were you physically hurt during the incident?	
Did you need medical help?	
Have you told anyone else about the bullying? Please write their name next to who they are in the list below: Parent/carer: Brother/sister: Other family member: Friend: Teacher: Key worker: Volunteer / Leader: Doctor/nurse: Other (please say who): If you haven't told anybody else, what has put you off doing so?	
What sort of help would you like to stop the bullying? (eg someone to speak to the bullies and monitor the situation to ensure it doesn't get worse)	



Do you have any worries now that you have reported the bullying?