

# Cyber bullying (full)



Albury Wodonga Football Association acknowledges that Cyber bullying is becoming a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of a whole generation of young people in our sporting community and beyond.

Whilst not wishing to limit or stop any discussion about our game, we wish to inform all members of our playing, coaching, officiating and administration communities that actions that contravene the FFA, FNSW and Victorian Codes of Conduct for Community Sport and Football, will be dealt with, by the AWFA Executive and Disciplinary board, and these actions will be considered as bringing the game into disrepute.

Cyber bullying involves harassment, insults and humiliation via technology such as email, mobile phones, social networking sites, instant messaging programs, chat rooms and websites.

The internet is not a private space: it is a public place and needs to be acknowledged as such. Comments posted on Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, Myspace etc are considered to be in the public domain.

The [National Crime Prevention Council's](#) definition of cyber-bullying is:

**“when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”**

StopCyberbullying.org, defines cyberbullying as:

- Tormented,
- Threatened
- Harassed
- Humiliated
- Embarrassed or otherwise targeted' person using text messaging, email, instant messaging or any other type of digital technology.”

Cyber-bullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender, but it may also include [threats](#), sexual remarks, pejorative labels (i.e., [hate speech](#)), ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact aimed at humiliation.

Reports of cyber bullying in Australia are increasing and, as young people's technological abilities grow ahead of their maturity, the wider community must take responsibility to encourage acceptable use of technology. Failure to do so will result in more and more cases of cyber bullying and, ultimately, a generation of young people with a skewed sense of reality

AWFA Players and Clubs and are not immune from these problems and they need to think clearly about how they can manage the possible consequences. Clubs need to consider how they can monitor communication between members, such as coaches and players. How would a Club react if, for example, a player used a social networking site like Facebook to post photos or comments which have undesirable and possibly damaging consequences for the Club or players?

other key considerations include issues of privacy, physical and psychological safety, and the preservation of a Club's reputation and a sport's image.

It is crucial for Clubs to be aware of all issues relating to the misuse of technology and ensure that they send a very clear message to their members and the local community that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Club

requirements regarding technology use can be included in codes of behaviour, member protection or related policies, guidelines and duty statements.

The reporting process for notification of the misuse of technology must be clear, concise and simple. Research has shown that young people will often not report online abuse for the fear of getting in trouble and losing their ability to remain connected (for example, by being banned from using the internet by parents). Clubs must undertake to treat complaints promptly, seriously, sympathetically and confidentially, and to investigate complaints impartially. All issues of abuse **MUST** be reported to the AWFA Executive via Club Secretary. AWFA Executive must be informed of any action the club has taken to deal with the reported issue.

Each Club could also provide its members with advice on how to be safe online. Taking a proactive approach – rather than reacting after an event – is always preferable

Cyberspace is not divided into age-appropriate areas, it's one big world, and the methods that cyber bullies can use to hurt others are only limited only by their imaginations and their access to technology.

Cyber safety is an issue that affects the whole community, and as such, solutions must come from a wide range of groups and Clubs. The 'not my problem' approach, which leaves others to deal with trouble, is unhelpful and alienating. Working cohesively and collaboratively with and within the wider community will result in a far better outcome. Clubs that become aware of issues regarding other clubs have an obligation to report these issues to the AWFA Executive.

Some helpful sites ...

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au>

<http://teachers.reachoutpro.com.au/using-technology/> supporting-young-people-to-be-safe-online.aspx

<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au>

### **Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport**

- Every person: spectator, player, club member, official, participant, administrator, coach, parent or member of the community involved with the sport, should work to ensure:
- Inclusion of every person regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation
- Inclusion of every person regardless of their race, culture or religion
- Opportunities for people of all abilities to participate in the sport and develop to their full potential
- Respect is shown towards others, the club and the broader community
- A safe and inclusive environment for all
- Elimination of violent and abusive behaviour
- Protection from sexual harassment or intimidation.

This Code applies to community sport, training and club sanctioned activities.

## **BRINGING THE GAME INTO DISREPUTE**

**2.1** A Member must not bring FFA or the game of football into Disrepute.

**2.2** Without limiting the generality of clause 2.1, a Member will be taken as having brought football into Disrepute if any of the following occurs:

**(a)** Discriminatory behaviour, including public disparagement of, discrimination against, or vilification of, a person on account of an Attribute;

- (b) Harassment, including sexual harassment or any unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances;
  - (c) Offensive behaviour, including offensive, obscene, provocative or insulting gestures, language or chanting;
  - (d) Provocation or incitement of hatred or violence;
  - (e) Spectator or crowd violence
  - (f) Intimidation of Match Officials, which may take the form of (but is not restricted to) derogatory or abusive words or gestures toward a Match Official or the use of violence or threats to pressure a Match Official to take or omit to take certain action regardless of where such action is taken;
  - (g) Forgery and falsification, including creation of a false document, forgery of a document or signature, the making of a false claim or providing inaccurate or false information on a prescribed form;
  - (h) Corruption, including offering a Benefit or an advantage to a Player or an Official in an attempt to incite him or her to violate FIFA Statutes or FFA Statutes;
  - (j) Abuse of position to obtain personal benefit;
- 2 (j) Commission or charge of a criminal offence; or (k) any other conduct, behaviour or statement that materially injures the reputation and goodwill of FFA or football generally.