



TITLE: BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE: Whilst the pressures and tensions which arise at the competitive level of dog sports is understood, the Belgian Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland (BSDCQ) will not tolerate any abuse or aggression towards those people who are engaged in their hobbies, or as voluntary employees are undertaking their jobs for the benefit and interest of the canine community, and ultimately the Belgian Shepherd Dog itself.

The BSDCQ understands that bullying is a threat to the health and wellbeing of its community.

Accordingly, the BSDCQ is committed to eliminating, so far as is reasonably practicable, all forms of bullying by maintaining a culture of openness, support, and accountability.

The purpose of this document is to communicate that the BSDCQ does not tolerate any form of bullying and to set out the process which is to be followed should any instances of bullying be reported.

ACCOUNTABILITIES: All members of the BSDCQ

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying Repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons that creates a risk to health and safety. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Repeated behaviour The persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time.

Unreasonable behaviour Behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

Respectful relationships Require that all people are treated with integrity and goodwill, and are aware of the impact of their behaviour on others, and adjust their interpersonal styles and methods to the social and cultural environment.

Examples of behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be considered to be bullying if they are repeated, unreasonable and create a risk to health and safety include but are not limited to:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments
- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately excluding someone from activities
- withholding information that is vital for effective participation
- setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines
- spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- online harassment (for example, making inappropriate or aggressive comments about individuals on published emails, repeated electronic pestering of individuals to provide responses in unreasonably short time frame
- unjustified or exaggerated negative discussion about an individual by any means whether face to face or by email or on a social media platform

Bullying can be carried out in a variety of ways including through email, text or social media channels.

Bullying that directly inflicts physical pain, harm, or humiliation amounts to assault and should be dealt with as a police matter.

POLICY

1.0 The BSDCQ has a duty of care to provide a safe environment, and to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that club members and other people are not exposed to health and safety risks.

2.0 The BSDCQ accepts and acts on its duty of care. Any reported allegations of bullying will be promptly, thoroughly, and fairly investigated.

3.0 Bullying complaints will be handled in a confidential and procedurally fair manner. Where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly communicated to the relevant parties.

4.0 All parties will be treated with respect.

5.0 Notwithstanding 3.0., the person against whom the allegation is made has the right to natural justice (the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply, and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision-maker).

PROCEDURE

1.0 Bullying procedures will be dealt with in accordance with the constitution, rules and regulations and policy of the BSDCQ and/or Dogs Queensland.

2.0 If a BSDCQ member feels comfortable in doing so, it is preferable for them to raise the issue with the person directly with a view to resolving the issue by discussion. They should identify the offensive behaviour, explain that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive and ask that the behaviour stops (see Attachment 1).

3.0 If the behaviour continues, or if the BSDCQ member feels unable to speak to the person(s) directly, they should contact the BSDCQ secretary, who will provide support and ascertain the nature of the complaint.

4.0 Informal Intervention

4.1 The BSDCQ secretary will explain the rights and responsibilities of the BSDCQ member under the relevant policy and procedures.

4.2 Informal intervention may be done through a process of either mediation or conciliation.

4.3 During informal intervention the respondent will be made aware of the allegations being made against them and given the right to respond. Interventions at this stage should adopt a confidential, non-confrontational approach with a view to resolving the issue.

4.4 This procedure will be complete when the alleged harasser respects the individual's request to cease unwanted and unwelcome behaviour, or when the complainant accepts that the behaviour is not properly described as bullying. If neither of these outcomes occurs, the BSDCQ's formal procedure should be followed.

5.0 Formal Bullying Complaints Procedure

5.1 The formal bullying complaint procedure involves a formal investigation of the complaint.

5.2 These investigations follow the steps outlined within the BSDCQ policy document 'Complaints Policy and Procedure'.

5.3 The findings as to whether bullying has occurred will be determined on the basis of the evidence, and on the balance of probabilities.

5.4 On the basis of the findings, possible outcomes of the investigation may include, but will not be limited to, any combination of the following:

- Counselling
- Official warning
- Formal apology and/or an undertaking that the behaviour will cease
- Mediation where the parties to the complaint agree to a mutually acceptable resolution
- Complaints proceedings (as per BSDCQ Complaints Policy and Procedure) and/or Breach of conduct proceedings (as per BSDCQ Breach of Conduct Policy and Procedure).

5.5 Following an investigation concerning a bullying complaint (irrespective of the findings), the BSDCQ management committee will:

5.5.1 Consult with the parties involved to monitor the situation and their wellbeing; and

5.5.2 Educate and remind all BSDCQ members of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to participating in a club that is free from bullying

6.0 Dealing with Criminal Conduct

5.1 Some forms of severe bullying (physical attack, for example, or obscene phone calls) may constitute criminal conduct.

5.2 While the BSDCQ is committed to treat most complaints about bullying at an organisational level as far as possible, this type of conduct is not suited to internal resolution. Such complaints should be treated by the criminal justice system.

5.3 Members will be advised of the option of police support or intervention. It is not the obligation or duty of the BSDCQ to report such matters to the police on behalf of the complainant.

Roger Winton

Signature:
(President)

Date:28/04/2020.....

Review Date:

Attachment 1

Specific strategies for preparing to address bullying

1. Name the behaviours: What are you experiencing that you find victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening? Naming the behaviours will assist in identifying strategies to address them, whereas simply reporting 'I'm being bullied' is less likely to lead to a positive resolution.

2. Make diary notes. Write down:

- when those behaviours are experienced and the context within which they occur (eg, in private, in public, during one-on-one discussions)
- when the behaviours began
- how long they have been going on
- any witnesses who can speak to the 'persistent and ongoing' nature
- whether others experience similar behaviours from the same source
- what, if anything, has been done to address the inappropriate behaviours to date.

3. Seek advice and support: It is important to ensure that any direct action you choose to take is one that you feel safe, comfortable and supported to do. Seeking assistance in preparing to address the person whose behaviour is causing you a problem can help you determine your best course of action. If you decide to raise your concerns informally with the individual, you may find it helpful to have a support person with you when you do so.

4. If you do decide to address the issue directly with the individual, it is important to:

- approach the matter in a non-confrontational way
- focus on the unwanted behaviour and how it affects you, rather than the individual's character
- provide specific information about what changes you would like them to make in their interactions with you.
- Consider taking more formal action: You can speak with BSDCQ secretary for further information and support.

Reference: DOGS NSW Bullying Prevention and Guidelines

<https://www.dogsnew.org.au/media/3033/dnsw-bullying-prevention-management-guidelines-statement.pdf>