

# **TAO MATERIAL RELATING TO CONDUCT & THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING**

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## **A. Code of Conduct**

- ❖ Respect the dignity and spirit of all participants, including children, young people and vulnerable adults
- ❖ Treat all participants fairly
- ❖ Establish supportive positive environments to encourage healthy competition, skill development, fun and achievement
- ❖ Avoid contact or conduct that may be interpreted as having sexual connotations or which is defined as inappropriate within the context of Chinese Martial Arts
- ❖ Do not take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, embarrasses or demoralises a participant or that negatively affects their self esteem
- ❖ Do not tolerate acts of aggression
- ❖ Work towards eliminating harassment and abuse from sports environments
- ❖ Be prepared to intervene if a child or young person under 18 is being abused or neglected
- ❖ Practice fair play both during and outside of all sports activities. 'Fair play' is defined as showing considerate regard for participants, staff, parents, spectators and officials; abiding by the rules of the sport; abiding by the officials' decisions
- ❖ Adhere to the policies and guidelines of the Taoist Arts Organisation and the British Council for Chinese Martial Arts

## **B. Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Bullying may take the form of physical attacks, taking or damaging belongings, verbal assault, including name-calling, insults, repeat teasing, racist assaults, or it may take more indirect forms, such as spreading malicious gossip, rumours or excluding someone from a social group. It is widespread and there is increasing evidence of immense distress caused by bullying, with a small number of children being driven to suicide every year. Anyone can be the victim of bullying and being or feeling bullied is not a sign of weakness and does not make the victim a less valuable person.

Within a martial arts organisation participants will routinely be training with partners and that training may include pushing, punching, kicking, throwing and other physical contact. Such acts, when carried out in the course of training and with the intention of assisting the partner in developing self-defence skills, self-esteem and confidence are to be distinguished from bullying which involves an abuse of power and an element of malice.

Training within the TAO, particularly for those who have chosen to be coached towards and take part in competitions, may involve more intense physical and psychological pressures. Instructors are trained always to use pressure as a constructive tool, to be used to support a participant's aspiration to improve their performance. This is to be distinguished from inappropriate pressure, which could be damaging to the participant's fitness or morale and might amount to bullying. TAO Instructors are trained to recognise the distinction and to adopt appropriate and constructive coaching methods.

Competitive sport creates an ideal environment for the bully. The bully in sport can be the over-zealous coach, a parent who pushes too hard, a player who intimidates others or an official who places unfair pressure on a person. TAO Instructors are trained to be alert for such situations arising, particularly where junior members are competing and to take appropriate steps to protect participants.

### **2. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It is unacceptable that anyone in the TAO should be subjected to bullying, whether by a child or adult participant, an instructor, an official or a parent.

Any bullying situation within the Organisation will be taken seriously and dealt with through the complaints procedure having regard to both the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Committee has overall responsibility for monitoring the procedures and policies of the Organisation.

The Technical Director and Child Protection Officer will monitor the incidence of bullying with a view to identifying potential improvements in the Organisation's policies and practices and reporting to the Committee.

As part of the ongoing support for Instructors, the TAO will

- ensure Instructors are aware of current policies, and
- inform them of changes of policy within the TAO
- provide information on sources of training necessary to their implementation.

Each Instructor has responsibility for ensuring that the policy principles are implemented in the clubs and any weekend courses that they run. The Committee has that responsibility in relation to residential courses.

## **C. Information and Guidelines for Instructors in Relation to Bullying**

### **1. INFORMATION ABOUT BULLYING**

Bullying can be defined as deliberate, hurtful behaviour either physical or verbal towards another person, usually repeated over a period of time, which it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves against.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, the victim is usually shy, sensitive and perhaps insecure.

Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, culture or religious belief.

It occurs if someone regardless of age, gender or status within the organisation

- name calls, teases, threatens, uses graffiti or gestures
- intimidates, torments, ridicules or humiliates
- hits, kicks (other than in the course of training) or thieves
- uses racist or homophobic taunts
- is overly sarcastic to another person
- uses unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

### **2. GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING**

#### **If a member complains of being bullied within the TAO:**

- give the member time to say how they are being bullied;
- reassure the member that they are right to tell you about the bullying.
- **if the alleged victim and perpetrator are adult**
  - report the matter to the Technical Director who will invoke the grievance procedure under article 14 of the constitution with the possibility of invoking sanctions under article 6, and
  - keep the victim advised of the action taken in response to their complaint.
- **if the alleged victim or perpetrator is under 18**
  - where necessary, consult with the CPO to decide whether it is appropriate to deal with the matter internally or whether child protection procedures should be invoked..
  - If it is to be dealt with internally:
    - discuss the matter with the victim's parents and inform them of the Organisation's policy and practices regarding bullying;
    - talk with the perpetrator, explain the situation, and seek any underlying reasons for the behaviour. Try to get the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
    - inform the perpetrator's parents and explore any potential underlying reasons for the behaviour;
    - devise and impose sanctions which seem just and appropriate in all the circumstances;
    - inform the parents (where appropriate) of the sanctions to be imposed;
    - keep a written record of the incident and the action taken and provide a copy to the Child Protection Officer.
  - to try to prevent recurrence:
    - encourage and support the perpetrator in changing his behaviour;
    - support the victim in regaining any loss of confidence in the group
    - liaise with both sets of parents, as appropriate.