



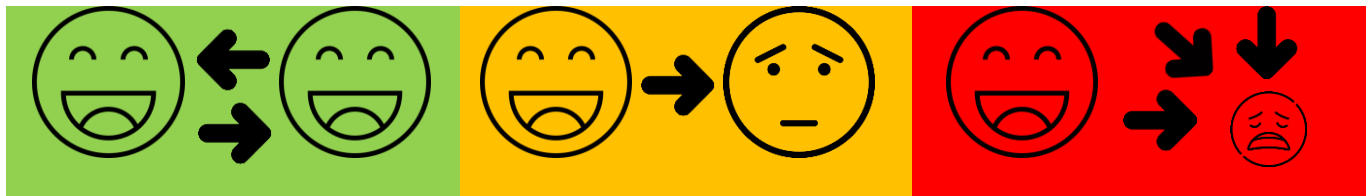
Banter or Bullying?

Age grade rugby should be where children first learn to live the values of [Irish Rugby – Respect, Integrity, Inclusivity, Fun & Excellence](#).

Rugby clubs should provide a positive, safe and fun environment. The behaviour of players, coaches, parents and others can impact positively or negatively on your rugby experience.

Banter can be a positive thing, used to help build relationships and can lead to lots of laughter and fun. However, banter isn't always used in a positive way.

When does banter become bullying?



Banter

Joking around, light-hearted & friendly. Enjoyed equally.

Taking It Too Far

Where the 'object' of the joke is hurt or made to feel uncomfortable.

Bullying

Repeated behaviour that is unwanted and harms the person it is aimed at.

Just because someone thinks a comment is banter, doesn't mean that it is. We are all capable of hurting someone's feelings without intending to.



Ask yourself:

- Am I sorry? Did I mean to hurt the other person's feelings? What could I do to make it better? How do I make sure I don't do this again?

You may think something is funny but to someone with different experiences to you, it could be offensive and hurtful. People might not speak up for fear of standing out, so think about how your words might make someone else feel.

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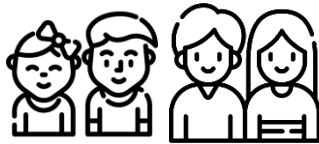
Ask yourself:

- How would I feel if something like that was said to or about me? Would I think it was funny or would it be hurtful? Was it truthful? Was it kind? What did I want to achieve by saying it?

The way we talk online can make it even more difficult to recognise the difference between banter and bullying. It can be easy to misunderstand the intention behind a comment or a post because you can't see the poster's face or hear their tone of voice. Bullying can also happen anonymously online as people can hide their real identities.

To find out more go to our fact sheets [Staying Safer Online](#) and [Cyberbullying](#).

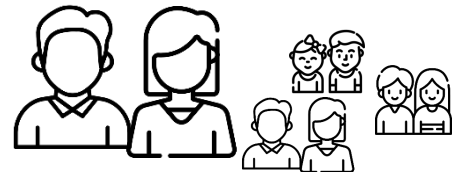
Who can carry out bullying behaviour?



Boys and girls of any age can bully



Children can bully other children and adults



Adults can bully children and other adults

Bullying can be carried out by one person or by a group of people. Sometimes bullying happens in friendship groups. There are lots of reasons why people may bully others. Some forms of bullying behaviour are harder to spot than others.

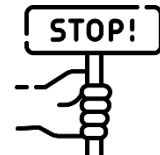
Some examples of bullying behaviour:



Calling other people names



Spreading harmful rumours about others



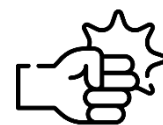
Excluding others, not letting them join activities



Intentionally isolating someone



Being threatening to or intimidating others



Causing someone physical harm



Taking or breaking something that doesn't belong to you



Making a person do something they don't want to do



Sending threatening or abusive messages (text, social media etc)

Please refer to the [Safeguarding Policy](#) for a fuller definition of bullying.

No matter the reason for the behaviour, it has to **stop!**

Why do we need to tackle bullying behaviour?

Bullying is a horrible experience and can really damage the person that the behaviour is aimed at. This damage can be physical and/or emotional and the consequences can be very serious if not dealt with.

Responding to bullying behaviour:

[Tackling Bullying Behaviour - Clubs](#)

All clubs offering rugby to children & young people have a responsibility to safeguard them against harm. Even when you are vigilant & the club operates to a high standard, situations can arise that cause concern. If you are worried about anything you can:



Talk to the Club Welfare Officer



Follow the [Safeguarding Policy](#)

Go to the fact sheet [Is Rugby Fun For You?](#) for further information on people you can talk to.

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