



RUTHERGLEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY INC.

POLICY ON BULLYING

Bullying is an issue in many sports today. Rutherglen Agricultural Society Inc (RAS) wants members, organisers and officials to know that bullying is not acceptable at any Rutherglen Agricultural Society event.

RESPECT

Every official, competitor and helper has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. RAS has a responsibility to ensure this occurs at our events. RAS can only discipline the appropriate person(s) if intimidation is reported. We encourage any person who feels they have been bullied to report it in writing to RAS.

- Reports will be handled promptly and confidentially
- Disciplinary action will be taken against those who have bullied others at events run under the auspices of RAS.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is an inappropriate behaviour using force or power. Bullying undermines another person's self-esteem and confidence. It may be a one-off or may be repeated incidents:

Disparaging remarks	Name-calling	Public criticism
Smirking	Verbal Abuse	Harassment
Written Abuse	Swearing	Threats
Socially excluding people	Shouting	Sarcasm
Belittling	Throwing papers etc down/around	
Spreading rumours or innuendo		

**None of this is ever acceptable. Please report it to a RAS official.
Being uptight at a competition is no excuse for bad behaviour.**

WHAT IS THE COST OF BULLYING

Bullying is not confined to the school yard. It costs Australians an estimated \$12 billion a year. Bullying may make officials, competitors and sponsors leave our events. Without our volunteers, judges, organisers, there would be no competition.

WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY?

- Those who can, do Those who can't bully.
- The more inadequate the person, the more they bully.
- Bullies blame others for their problems
- Some bully when they are overloaded and not coping
- Some are just socially inept.

STEPS RAS MAY TAKE

Every time a bully gets away with this behaviour it is a signal to he/she that the Society thinks it is acceptable. When unacceptable behaviour is reported to RAS the committee can:

1. Send a letter to the bully to arrange a meeting with representatives from RAS
2. Issue the bully with a written warning which will remain on file
3. Suspend the bully from competing at RAS events for a period of time if in the judgement of RAS's Committee the incident merits it and if further incidents occur.

HOW DO I HANDLE A BULLY?

1. **Stay Calm**, if necessary tell the intimidator that you will not continue the conversation until you have a Society official with you (walk away if you have to).
2. **Stay Polite**. Inform the intimidator that RAS wishes people at events to report inappropriate behaviour.
3. **Make a note** of the following details as soon as possible:
 - a. Name or exhibitor number (ask them to provide their name if you don't know it)
 - b. Time and Date
 - c. Others present
4. Put a **brief written report** in to RAS so that the matter can be handled formally.

WHO ARE BULLIES?

People in authority can victimise people with less power. They are often charming to those they are not bullying, which can make it even more difficult for their victims to complain. Some are clever, competent sophisticated manipulators who enjoy dominating and humiliating others. They like to see their victims squirm.

WHO DO BULLIES TARGET?

- Bullies often target people who have made a mistake. We all occasionally make mistakes. Riders do, officials, do and judges do.
- Bullies often attack people who are victim – the “blame the victim” syndrome.

For example, an organiser gets abused when a computer PA, printer or photocopier breaks down, or weather conditions damage a riding surface or blow shelters down.

HOW DO BULLIES RESPOND WHEN CHALLENGED?

- Deny it
- Blame others
- Claim victimisation if they are challenged
- Rationalise to explain their bad behaviour

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact us.

Adopted by the Rutherglen Agricultural Society Inc. on 21 February 2018

Chairman

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