

AQUA SWIMMING CLUB

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can swim in a relaxed secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and is not tolerated at our club.

If bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any Committee/Coaching or Teaching Member.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, (emotionally and physically) tormenting, sending hurtful text messages (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All committee members, coaches and teachers, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All committee members, teaching and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- swimmers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence

- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or swimming equipment damaged
- Has possessions go “missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviour may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

SWIMMERS

What can you do if you are being bullied?

- 1) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied.
- 2) If you are different in some way be proud of it. It is good to be an individual.
- 3) Try not to show that you are upset (which is difficult).
- 4) Try to stay in a group of people. There is safety in numbers.
- 5) Try being assertive - say ‘NO’ really firmly. Walk confidently even if you don’t feel that way inside. Practice this.
- 6) If you are being bullied try to give clear and accurate evidence of what happened, where and when.
- 7) You have a right to defend yourself but be careful you don’t ‘bully back’.
- 8) Tell an adult you trust. Teachers and Coaches will take you seriously and are experienced in dealing with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse.

What can you do if you see bullying going on ?

- 1) Take action when someone is being bullied or is in distress. Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim more unhappy and isolated.
- 2) If you cannot get involved yourself, tell an adult immediately. Teachers and Coaches have ways of dealing with bullies without getting you into trouble.
- 3) Only be friends with people who do not bully others.
- 4) Be supportive and sympathetic. If you are worried about helping someone, talk to an adult whom you trust.

REMEMBER

Your silence is the bully’s greatest weapon

PARENTS

- 1. Watch for signs of distress in your children. For instance, they could be unwilling to attend club sessions, feel unwell regularly, or have missing equipment.**
- 2. Take an interest in your child's social life. Discuss friendships and the activities they are involved in at the club.**
- 3. Inform the club immediately if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour. Your complaint will be taken seriously and an action plan will be worked out together.**
- 4. Don't encourage your child to hit back, this often makes matters worse.**
- 5. Make sure your son or daughter knows there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not their fault.**
- 6. Monitor their use of the Internet, chat rooms and mobile phones.**

Procedures

- 1. Report bullying incidents to the Club or a member of the committee/coaching staff, or ring Swimline: asa Swimline 0808 100 4001.**
- 2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the asa for advice.**
- 3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.**
- 4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.**
- 5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying must be stopped quickly.**
- 6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.**
- 7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the Club will initiate disciplinary action under the Club Constitution.**

Swimming Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate to deal with the situation, Aqua SC will follow the procedure outlined below:

- 1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be the case that a genuine apology solves the problem.**
- 2. If this fails/is not appropriate a small panel (made up from Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, Committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.**
- 3. The same three persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them, to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.**
- 4. If bullying has in the Committee's view taken place, the swimmer should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.**
- 5. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.**
- 6. All coaches involved with both swimmers should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.**

In the Case of Adults Reported to be Bullying Swimmers Under 18 years.

- 1. The asa should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken.**
- 2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a teacher or coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.**
- 3. More serious cases will be referred to the Judicial Complaints Procedure.**

Prevention.

- The Club will have a written Constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.**
- All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the Constitution upon joining the Club**
- The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively.**

Contact (for all Committee Members & Club Welfare Officer)

Aqua Swimming: 01732 455800

Email: admin@aquaswimming.ltd.uk