



Action Plan of the Zionsville Swim Club to Address Bullying

Purpose

The goal for the Zionsville Swim Club (ZSC) is to never have an incident where a child has been bullied and while that is an admirable goal in today's society it is probably not realistic. That being said ZSC will do its best to create an environment where all children feel included and accepted by others. Please discuss bullying with your child and make sure that there is open communication on this issue between your child and you.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at ZSC and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. ZSC is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment to all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and efficiently. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member, or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of ZSC's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make clear that ZSC will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that ZSC takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, which may be physical or verbal, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe repeated use by one or more USA swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the affect of:

- i. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;



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- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

ZSC also recognizes the Zionsville Community Schools definition of Bullying:

Overt, repeated acts or gestures, including:

1. Verbal or written communications transmitted;
2. Physical acts committed; or
3. Any other behaviors committed;

by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student. Such conduct is detrimental to the educational process and is prohibited in Zionsville Community Schools.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete or parent of an athlete who feels that they or their athlete has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- ⌚ Talk to your parents;
- ⌚ Parents and athlete should talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- ⌚ Write a letter or email to ZSC Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- ⌚ Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport Staff.
- ⌚ Ultimately the coach of the athlete that is accused of bullying along with either the Head Coach or Head Age Group Coach should be involved and responsible for implementing the elements of this policy.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to



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make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, coaches should **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or emotional needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene

If bullying is occurring at our club, the coach of the athlete who is bullying along with either the Head Coach or the Head Age Group coach (Two coaches should be involved) will take responsibility to address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. **First, we get the facts**
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.
2. **Then, we determine if it's bullying.**
 - a. Review the USA swimming/Zionsville Community School definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:



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- What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the target child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches all have valuable input. it may help to:
 - i. Ask the child what can be done to make him or her feel safe and better about the situation. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between ZSC and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.

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- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just make fun of someone that is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else-issues at home, abuse, stress-is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.

- d. The coach of the athlete will create a Personal Responsibility Agreement to be read and signed by the athlete, this Personal Responsibility Agreement will outline:
 - a. The expected behaviors of the athlete including ideal behavior, appropriate apologies, remedy for any property damage that may have occurred
 - b. Consequences if the expected behaviors are not seen