

Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team Safe Sport Policies



In Coordination with USA
Swimming's Safe Sport Initiative

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Action Plan of the Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team to Address Bullying

PURPOSE

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

Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Club 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 Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team 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, 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 or 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 effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- 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).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

1. Talk to your parents;
2. Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
3. Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
4. Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff (**after speaking with Coach/Board Member**).

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 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, we **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 mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we 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.**

There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - 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 targeted 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.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on 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 may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. 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 assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club 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.
- 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 to make fun of someone 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. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Identify the consequences:
 - i. Any offense that is reported to USA Swimming's Safe Sport Program will result in a minimum 1 week suspension from the club. The full term of the suspension will be decided by the Head Coach and Recreation Director.
 - ii. A second reported offense to USA Swimming will result in that swimmer's immediate permanent removal from the team.

5. Support bystanders who witness bullying.

Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Electronic Communication Policy of the Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team

PURPOSE

The Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- **Note:** Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

- The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “like” for information and updates on team-related matters.
- Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

TWITTER

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes, however, texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate, however, when communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

Locker Room Monitoring Policy for the Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team

PURPOSE

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

FACILITIES

The following is a description of our practice facilities to allow athletes and families to plan their use.

- Bethel Park High School Natatorium
 - This facility has a changing area and locker room dedicated to our swimmers during practice times, however, during the school day; these locker rooms are used by students during Physical Education classes. Swimmers may keep locks on the locker, but it must be removed each night. Swimmers in the Senior Group may keep locks on their lockers overnight.
- Mount Lebanon Outdoor Pool
 - This facility has a locker room that is shared with the general public. As such, there may be people in the changing areas or showers that are not associated with Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team during practice time.

MONITORING

The coaching staff makes every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room during practice and competitions and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.

We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent, and parents should let coaches know they plan to enter the room to assist their child.

If an athlete should need assistance with her uniform or gear (for example, a child under the age of eight), or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, then we ask the parents to let the coaching staff know beforehand that they plan to assist their child.

Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team has staggered practices, with different groups arriving throughout the day. It is therefore, not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms over this extended course of time. While we do not post any staff inside or at the doors of the locker rooms, we will make occasional sweeps of these areas. During these sweeps, female coaches will check the female locker rooms and male coaches will check the male locker rooms.

USE OF CELL PHONE AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protections Policies prohibit the use of such devices in all locker rooms and changing areas.

USA Swimming Rule 305.3: Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, restrooms, or locker rooms.

Photography Policies for the Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team

PURPOSE

There has been much talk about whether it is safe to have images taken of children participating in sports. While the great majority of images are appropriate and are taken in good faith, it is a fact that images can be misused and children can be put at risk if common sense procedures are not observed.

POLICY

The publishing of a photograph of a swimmer under 18 years of age on a notice board or in a published article or video recording of a competition should only be done with the parents' consent. A parent or guardian has the right to refuse to have their child photographed. Any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or an official photographer, should receive parental consent before publishing. (see parent consent form on following page)

In the case of open meets and other competitions where the host club has an official photographer present, parents should be notified by the meet host. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the photographer on site of their refusal to publish photos of their child.

GENERAL ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swim suit.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind the swimming blocks or at the start of a race.
- Photographs should not exhibit a child climbing out of the pool.
- Photographs should not be taken in locker rooms or restrooms.

Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team

Photography Consent Form

Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team may wish to take photographs (individual and groups) of swimmers under the age of 18 that may include your child during their membership in the club. All photos will be taken and published in line with club policy. The club requires parental consent to take and use photographs. All parents have the right to refuse photography of their child and it will not exclude them from entry to any meets or team functions.

As a parent/guardian of _____ I allow the following:

Take photographs to use on Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team Website:

CONSENT GIVEN

CONSENT REFUSED

Take photographs to include in club advertisements and newspaper articles:

CONSENT GIVEN

CONSENT REFUSED

Take photographs to use on club social media sites (Twitter & Facebook):

CONSENT GIVEN

CONSENT REFUSED

Video of my child to use for training purposes:

CONSENT GIVEN

CONSENT REFUSED

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____