



Guelph Marlins Aquatic Club - Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

The Guelph Marlins Aquatic Club (GMAC) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive and accepting aquatics club environment.

We promote a positive climate that is inclusive and accepting of all members including swimmers and members of any race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

We actively promote and role-model the development of a positive club environment, as well as take all precautions in the prevention of bullying. As such, we have outlined a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, for all athletes and their families, to ensure bullying is taken seriously, prevented and/or addressed.

Definition:

Bullying is a crime.

It is defined as physical or psychological actions by an individual or a group that are aimed at hurting or intimidating another individual or group. It is sometimes called harassment. It is typically a form of conscious, **repeated, persistent, hostile and aggressive** behaviour intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is real or perceived power imbalance. It may be used by an individual or a group who abuse their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. It may include the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

Many times, a single act or behavior is out of proportion, but it is not considered bullying. It may be difficult, especially for youth to differentiate between intentional and accidental acts, and mistake these for bullying. Much like in any communication, whether it is verbal or not, there are two sides involved. Bullying is a form of communication and depends not only on the giver but also on the receiver. For an incident to be considered bullying, the aggressor must want to hurt someone and the victim must perceive the incident as a deliberate act of abuse.

Cyber bullying builds upon the definition above to include bullying by electronic means including,

- creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person
- impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

Purpose:

In the belief that GMAC provides a safe and supportive aquatic club environment, we endeavor to:

- Promote the rights of all swimmers and employees, working within the club to have an environment free from bullying and harassment
- Eliminate bullying and harassment

A. Swimmer and employee behavioural expectations:

Within the club, it is intolerable for a swimmer, group of swimmers, employee or group of employees to:

- Bully or harass an individual or group;
- Bully or harass any visitors to the club or pool premises
- To request, instruct, induce, encourage, authorize or assist another to bully or harass.

As an expectation and guideline, all swimmers and employees of GMAC shall abide by the Swim Ontario Comprehensive Code of Conduct and Ethics.

B. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a person who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying:

In the event of a possible incident, GMAC will consider the following factors when deciding on a consequence for swimmers or employees who commit acts of bullying and/or harassment:

- the developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved,
- the levels of harm,
- the reasons surrounding the incident,
- the nature of the behaviours,
- the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, and;
- past history of the parties involved.

A determination of which consequence will be imposed will only be made after all of the facts and surrounding circumstances are taken into consideration.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action may be one or several of the following, in a manner of progressive discipline:

- Verbal Warning: Swimmers/Employees reported for a first incidence will be counselled and their name placed on record in an anti-bullying log (Appendix B);
- Swimmers/Employees reported for a second incidence will be counselled, their parents notified (with a possible meeting between coach, General Manager and parent) and prohibited from participating in the next subsequent practice; A written warning may also ensue;
- Swimmers/Employee reported for a third incidence may be assigned an informal suspension from training and/or competition and a mandatory meeting will be arranged with the parent or guardian, General Manager and coach). Escalation may result to the Board of Directors.
- Severe breaches of the anti-bullying policy will result in further disciplinary action and a referral to outside support agencies. These may involve the provision of tips concerning remediation at home for both victim and involved parties.

In consideration of all factors contributing to the incident, other forms of remediation may include:

- loss of privileges or confinement to room
- suspension from current or upcoming competition
- being sent home from competition at swimmer's expense
- suspension from training and competition of specified duration to match severity of incident
- formal expulsion from Club

Violations of the anti-bullying policy will be dealt with on an individual basis, either at the time of incident or upon return home.

For Bystanders:

The GMAC administrators will interview all bystanders for the purpose of conducting an investigation and collecting important witness information, to enable unbiased and fair review of all facts related to the incident.

C. Reporting and follow-up procedures for all

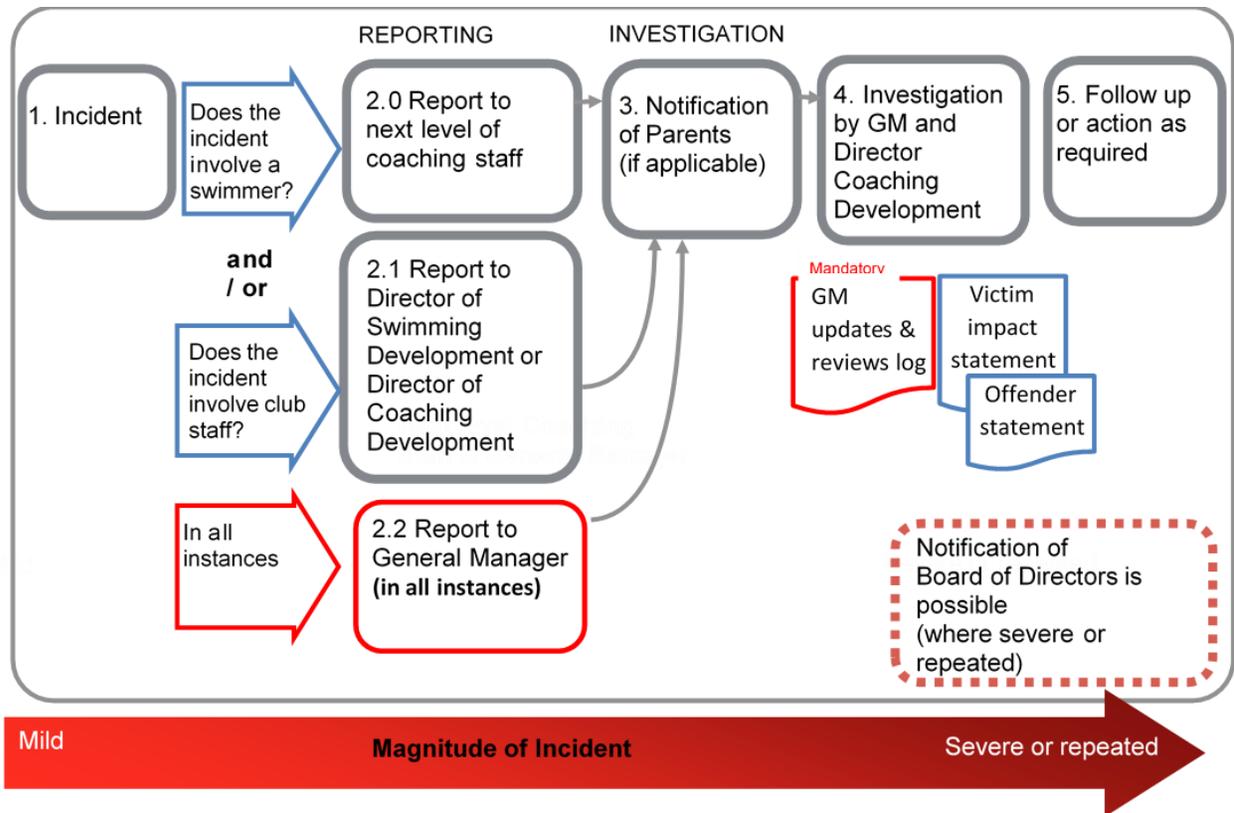
GMAC staff and members will refer to the following the guidelines for reporting incidents of bullying and follow up procedures. See Figure A for a visual representation. (These are modelled after Bill 157 - *Keeping our kids safe at school Act*, which has transferable value in an aquatics club setting, in that it has the common goals of safeguarding children.)

1. All members, employees and coaching staff of GMAC are required to report serious incidents of suspected bullying or harassment to General Manager
2. Coaches are required to notify the parents of swimmers who are victims of such incidents, unless in the coaches opinion, the notification of the parents would put the child at risk of harm from the parents.
3. Where the parents are not notified, the coaching staff will have procedures in place outlining how they will support swimmers and the coaches will refer these swimmers to a community agency that can provide the appropriate support. The Director of Coaching Development or the General Manager may be useful references for these agencies, if required.
4. A victim impact statement will be collected to understand and document the details of the incident and facilitate proper follow-up. *See Appendix A.*
5. A offender statement will be collected to understand and document details of the occurrence, as well as any message the alleged offender may wish to impart to the Club or the victim. *See Appendix B.*
6. GMAC employees who work directly with swimmers, including but not limited to, coaching staff, are **required to respond to incidents** that have the potential to have a negative impact on the club climate.
7. Where employees are engaged in bullying activities, the Director of Swimming Development and the General Manager, shall be alerted to activities and the details of such bullying.
8. The incident log shall be kept up-to-date in all instances by the General Manager, for accurate record keeping and future reference. *See Appendix C.*

In short, these procedures prompt all members and employees to take responsibility for receiving complaints of bullying or harassment and must respond to them.

All other members of the GMAC club community, including swimmers, parents, volunteers, and visitors are also encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but disciplinary action may not be based solely around the basis of an anonymous report, rather may also include an investigation to gather all relevant facts.

Figure A. Reporting and follow-up procedures



Appendix A

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Guide

A *Victim Impact Statement* is a description of how an incident has affected you. In the context of the Guelph Marlins Aquatic Club, this form may be useful as a written statement to assist in determining the impact of an event and in determining discipline, should the offender is found guilty or pleads guilt.

Victim Impact Statements Are:

- written by you or any family member, friend or other member of your community who has suffered mental or physical injury, emotional trauma or significant economic loss because of an incident;
- used in investigations as they are useful to investigators and authorities in helping them fully understand how the incident has affected you,
- written in your own words, describing how the incident has affected you and your family, and
- an opportunity to express concern about future contact with the accused

Victim Impact Statements Are Not:

- mandatory or required
- used to describe the incident or how it occurred (this information is included in your witness statement made to the General Manager, or police, if applicable)
- to include comments about the accused.

The following are the types of information you can include in your Victim Impact Statement.

- Emotional impact of the incident – for example, describe the emotions you have felt day-to-day since the incident took place.
- Physical impact of the incident – for example, did you or a loved one suffer any injuries as a result of the incident? Do you expect the problems to continue or other problems to arise?
- Financial impact of the incident – for example, provide information such as your insurance and medical costs, property damage and lost wages. Also, include expenses that may come up in the future.

What do I do with the Victim Impact Statement once complete?

The statement is a very personal account of the impact of the occurrence. It is most helpful when pursuing action against an offender through a court of law or involvement with the police, to document further information over and above the facts of the incident.

Sharing this document is solely at the discretion of the victim, and may help the Club or authorities determine the severity and impact of an occurrence and assist in determining a fair outcome.

Options for use are:

- Share with the GMAC General Manager, who is bound by confidentiality, to assist in determining an outcome to the investigation;
- Share with police authorities, to assist in articulating the impact of the occurrence;
- Share with the Crown Attorney, in a court of law, prior to sentencing of the accused.

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Form:

Date of document:

Name of Offender:

Name of Victim:

This form may be used to provide a description of the physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss that you or your family may have suffered, as a result of an offence or incident involving bullying. It may also assist in documenting the impact of the incident on you. It may be filled out by the victim or another person on behalf of the victim. Additional pages may be added, if more space is needed.

Your statement must not include:

- Any statement about the offence or offender that is not relevant to the harm or loss that you have suffered;
- Any unproven allegations;
- Any comments about the offence for which the offender was not convicted;
- Any complaint about any individual, other than the offender, who was involved in the investigation or prosecution of the offence;
- Any opinion or recommendation to remediate the offender or commentary about what discipline should be handed down.

You may present a detailed account of the impact the offence/incident has had on your life. The following sections are examples of information you may wish to include in your statement. You are not required to include all this information.

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Form – Continued

Emotional Impact

Describe how this incident or offence has affected you emotionally. For example, think of:

- your lifestyle and activities, and any impact to this that the occurrence has had;
- your relationship with others such as your family and friends;
- your ability to attend work, school or to study; and
- your feelings, emotional well-being and reactions in relation to the incident.

Notes:

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Form – Continued

Physical Impact:

Describe how the offence has affected you physically. For example, think of:

- ongoing physical pain, discomfort, illness or any physical limitations
- treatment or medications you've required since the occurrence;
- the need for any future treatment, or anticipation of future treatment;
- any additional anticipated long-term physical disability.

Notes:

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Form – Continued

Economic Impact:

Describe how the offence has affected you financially. For example, think of:

- the value of any property that was lost or damaged and the cost of repairs or replacement;
- any financial loss incurred due to missed time from work;
- the cost of any medical expenses, therapy or counselling; and
- the cost or losses of any expenses not covered by insurance.

Please note that this is not an application for reimbursement or restitution of these losses.

Notes:

GMAC Victim Impact Statement Form – Continued

Fears for Security

Describe any fears you have for your security or for that of your family and friends. For example, think of:

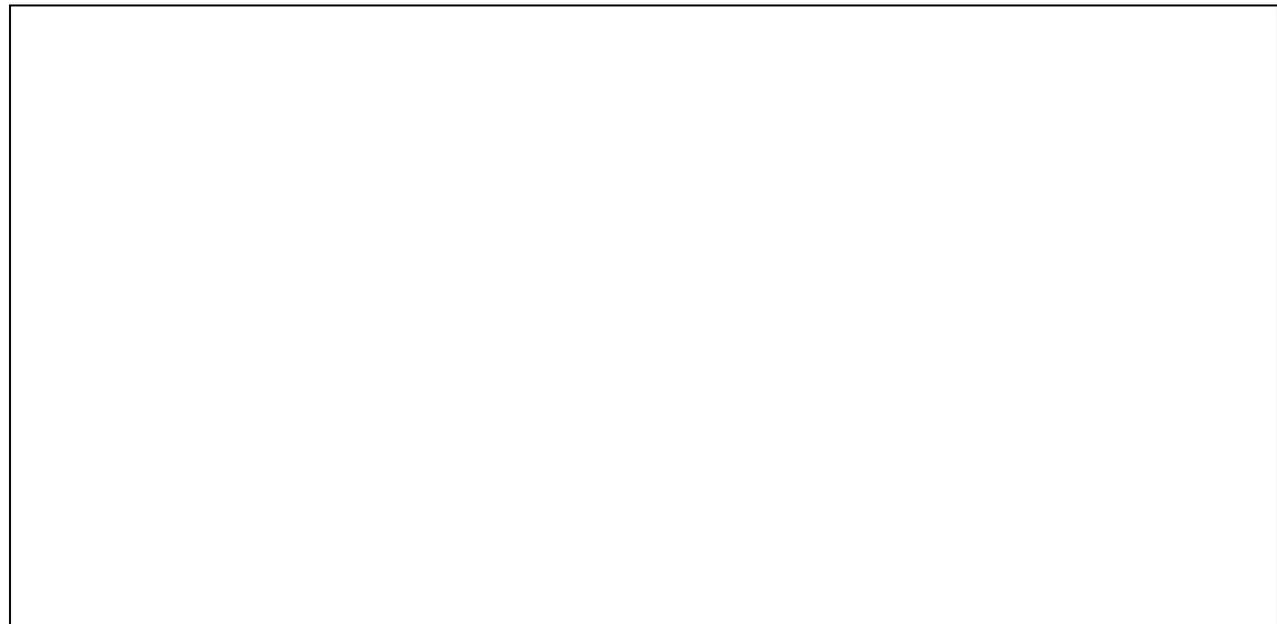
- concerns with respect to contact with the offender;
- concerns with respect to contact between the offender and members of your family and/or friends.

Notes:



Additional Space:

You may add additional notes, draw a picture or add anything that will help you express the impact that this occurrence has had on you.



Appendix B

GMAC Alleged Offender Statement

Date of document:

Name of Alleged Offender:

Name of Victim:

This document serves to facilitate a documentation of the occurrence, from the perspective of the Alleged Offender. It is acknowledged that in any occurrence, understanding perspectives from all parties is important and necessary to conduct a fair investigation.

This document is to be filled out by the Alleged Offender, in their own words, to describe the occurrence and relay any messages they wish to, either to GMAC staff, or the victim and members of their family. Additional pages may be attached if more space is needed.

Date of occurrence:

Location of incident:

Details of the incident, as best recalled. For example, consider clarify the circumstances that led to the occurrence, any other people that may have been involved, possible misunderstandings or contributing factors.

Notes:

GMAC Alleged Offender statement – continued

Witnesses to the occurrence:

Any additional messages or details, desired to be relayed either to the Club or the Victim:

Notes:

Please remit this document and any additional pages to the GMAC General Manager.

