

Valdosta Aquatics (VAST) Grievance Procedures

Valdosta Aquatics expects excellence from its coaches, leadership, employees, parents, and swimmers. No one is perfect; however, and at times, undesirable circumstances, situations, and behaviors happen. But because of Valdosta Aquatics' commitment to excellence and safety, individuals or groups must be held accountable for behaviors, words, and actions that do not represent the values and conduct expected from USA Swimming and Valdosta Aquatics members.

The Valdosta Aquatics' Grievance Procedures give swimmers, parents, coaches, leadership, and employees a way to address and report grievances in a productive, systematic way that allows the appropriate parties to investigate and intervene, and take disciplinary action when needed.

TYPES OF GRIEVANCES

1. Swimmer conduct
2. Assistant or Age Group Coach Conduct
3. Head Coach Conduct
4. Employee Conduct (no- swim team employees)
5. Board of Director Member Conduct
6. USA Swim Official or swim team parent conduct

HOW GRIEVANCES WILL BE HANDLED

The VAST Disciplinary Committee have the authority to impose penalties for infractions of the VAST Athlete Code of Conduct listed above or any behavior(s) they deem not conducive to the best interests of the Club or other swimmers. Consequences are at the sole discretion of the VAST Disciplinary Committee and may include, but aren't limited to, verbal warnings, contacting parents, written code of conduct contract, dismissal from practice, suspension from practices, and expulsion.

USA Swimming and local law enforcement (if applicable) will be contacted within 24 hours if a swimmer violates USA Swimming Code of Conduct, Minor Athlete Protection Policies, or local laws.

The VAST Disciplinary Committee will act in accordance with the following procedures:

1. **Gathering Information:** The appropriate individuals will reach out to the person who filed the grievance and the person against whom the grievance is being filed to ask questions about what happened. Other witnesses may be contacted for more information, as well.
2. **Assessing Behavior:** The behavior of the person(s) against which the grievance was brought will be assessed using Club policies and facility rules, USA Swimming Code of Conduct, USA Swimming Safe Sport policies, and applicable local and state laws.
3. **Consequences Will be Given and Disciplinary Action Will be Taken if Appropriate:** These consequences and disciplinary actions will be decided using the following general guidelines:
 - a. Nature of the misconduct
 - b. Severity of the misconduct
 - c. Prior disciplinary actions against swimmer
 - d. Adverse effect of the misconduct on other swimmers
 - e. Application of the Code of Conduct

WHOM TO NOTIFY OF A GRIEVANCE

(The Grievance Chain-of-Command)

Regarding the Conduct of a Swimmer – Contact the swimmer’s coach

Should a parent or swimmer feel another swimmer’s conduct is inappropriate or violates the Athlete Code of Conduct, the parent/swimmer should discuss these concerns with the coach of the swimmer responsible for the violation (Responsible Coach). This complaint should be made in person or in writing.

Regarding the Conduct of an Assistant or Age Group Coach – Contact the Head Coach (Matthew Grant, matthew@valdostaaquatics.com)

Should a parent or swimmer feel an Assistant or Age Group Coach’s conduct is inappropriate or in violation of any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Head Coach of this violation. This complaint should be made in person or in writing.

Regarding Conduct of Head Coach – Notify the VAST Administrator (Shannon White, Shannon@valdostaaquatics.com)

Should a parent or swimmer feel the Head Coach’s conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Administrator of Valdosta Aquatics. This complaint should be made in person or in writing. If the Administrator is not immediately available, notification will need to be made in writing. This complaint will be subject to review and discussion by Valdosta Aquatics Disciplinary Committee.

Regarding Employee (non-swim team) Conduct – VAST Owner (Matthew Grant, matthew@valdostaaquatics.com)

Should a parent or swimmer feel a non-swim team VAST employee's conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Owner of Valdosta Aquatics. This complaint should be made in person or in writing. If the Owner is not immediately available, notification will need to be made in writing. This complaint will be subject to review and discussion by Valdosta Aquatics Disciplinary Committee.

Regarding Parent or Swim Official Conduct – Notify the Head Coach

Should a parent or swimmer feel another VAST parent's conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Head Coach of this violation in person or in writing. This complaint will be reviewed and discussed by the Valdosta Aquatics Disciplinary Committee.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Any initial conduct review and disciplinary action will be the responsibility of the initial person(s) responsible for officially receiving said grievance (see "to whom to report" above). A decision, and/or disciplinary action, will be issued as soon as reasonably possible.

If a Parent/Swimmer who registers the complaint with an Assistant or Age Group Coach feels the disciplinary action is insufficient or unsatisfactorily resolves the issue, or if the responsible coach fails to address the parent/swimmer's concerns in a timely manner, the parent/swimmer may appeal the decision to the Head Coach, in writing, within 7 days of the initial complaint. A decision will be reviewed by the Head Coach and/or disciplinary action provided by the Valdosta Aquatics Disciplinary Committee as soon as reasonably possible.

If the parent/swimmer who registers the complaint appeals the Responsible Coach's conduct review and/or disciplinary action to the Head Coach and feels the Head Coach's decision/disciplinary action is insufficient or unsatisfactorily resolves the issue, or if the Head Coach fails to address the parent/swimmer's concerns in a timely manner, the parent/swimmer may request a meeting with the owner of Valdosta Aquatics for clarification of the decisions in the appeal process.