

## **ACTION PLAN OF GLENBROOK AQUATICS TO ADDRESS BULLYING**

### ***PURPOSE:***

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Glenbrook Aquatics (GA) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. GA is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members and staff. If bullying does occur, all athletes, parents and coaches 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 GLENBROOK AQUATICS BULLYING POLICY AND ACTION PLAN:***

1. To make it clear that Glenbrook Aquatics will not tolerate bullying of any type.
2. To define bullying and give all coaches, athletes and parents a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all coaches, athletes and parents 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 Glenbrook Aquatics takes bullying seriously and that all coaches, athletes and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

### ***WHAT IS BULLYING?***

Generally bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress. This is formally defined in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct (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 any 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 upon the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity
- 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 any 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:

- Talk to your parents
- Talk to one of the head coaches or board members
- Write a letter or email to one of the head coaches or board members
- Make a report to USA Swimming Safe Sport staff

There is no time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the concerns 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:

- Intervene immediately. It is OK to get another adult to help
- Separate the kids involved
- Make sure everyone is safe
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders
- 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 situation 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 the involved children separate
- b) Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids that witnessed the occurrence
- c) Listen to all sides without blaming
- d) Refrain from calling the act bullying while you are trying to understand what happened

- e) It may be difficult to get the entire 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 is 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 athletes 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 athlete 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**

#### **1 – 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 the 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/her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. When changes are the best option, the child being bullied should not bear the burden of the change.
  - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the club and parents of all children involved. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed moving forward
- c) Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child

## **2 – 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.
- 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.
- e) Avoid strategies that don't work or that have negative consequences. Zero tolerance and "3 strike" strategies do not work.
- f) Follow up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue to find ways to help the child who bullied to understand that what they do affects other people.

## **3 – Support bystanders who witness bullying.**

Every day kids witness bullying. They want to help, but sometimes don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple and 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 parents, a coach or team board member
- c) Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation
- d) Set a good example by not bullying others
- e) Refrain from giving the bully an audience.

For further details on bullying and prevention, please visit [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) – a federal government website managed by the US Department of Health & Human Services.