

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **HIGHLAND PARK AQUATICS CLUB**

Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. HPAC 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.

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying is unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates or humiliates people either as individuals or as a group. Bullying behavior is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual but can also be an aspect of group behavior. Some examples of bullying behavior are:

- Verbal
- Name-calling
- Abusive and offensive language
- Insults
- Teasing
- Spreading rumors and innuendo
- Unreasonable criticism
- Trivializing of work and achievements
- Physical (pushing, hitting, kicking, punching)
- Use of violence
- Emotional
- Being unfriendly
- Exclusion (emotion and physical)
- Hurtful text messages or emails
- Torment (hiding swim equipment, threatening gestures)
- Sexual
- Unwanted physical contact
- Sexually abusive comments

Context is important in understanding bullying, particularly verbal communication. There is a difference between friendly insults exchanged by long-time friends and comments that are meant to be, or are taken as, demeaning. While care should be exercised, particularly if a person is reporting alleged bullying as a witness, it is better to be genuinely mistaken than to let actual bullying go unreported.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING**

Bullying hurts. At the discretion of the coaches, any behavior by a swimmer that is disruptive to any HPAC activity or teammate will result in discipline. When the offense endangers the health, safety or well-being of HPAC or any of its members, the coaching staff or HPAC Board of Directors may immediately dismiss a swimmer for the rest of the season. Behavior determined severe enough by the coaching staff may result in immediate, permanent dismissal from participation with the team. The Board of Directors will support the coaching staff in the disciplinary decisions.

The Highland Park Aquatics Club coaching staff and Board of Directors are committed to maintaining safe environments for all swimmers that are free from hostility, harassment and intimidation. Swimmers shall feel safe and supported by fellow swimmers, coaching staff and adults. In the event a swimmer feels bullied or harassed by another swimmer or an adult, the swimmer and/or his/her parents should notify the coaching staff or a board member as soon as possible.

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