

Hello BA Families-

I hope this letter finds you well, warm, and relaxed after the holidays. I absolutely understand that many of you are quite busy at this time of the year and respect the limits on your time! With that being said, I would like to introduce you to, *and ensure that you review*, 5 of the most important Safe Sport policies. As a club, we are focused on the safety of all athletes, coaches, and parents. Though the following policies are considered to be the “top 5” when it comes to Safe Sport, please be aware that there are several more policies as well as additional information on the USA Swimming website under the Safe Sport tab at:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/Home/safe-sport>

We want all club members to be familiar with the content of these policies moving forward. Please review these policies upon receipt and ensure that you have done so by using signing the form immediately following this page. Additionally, I encourage you to keep an electronic or hard copy of these policies for your reference. I appreciate your understanding as we continue to distribute Safe Sport information. Though some of the policies are quite lengthy, they contain important information that is relevant to all club members. Should you have any questions or concerns about any of these policies, I would be happy to speak to you directly. I can be easily reached via email at [katiedewitt75@gmail.com](mailto:katiedewitt75@gmail.com).

## **LOCKER ROOM MONITORING POLICY #1**

### **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 and competition facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

We practice at: BAC, HHS, YMCA

This location has a changing area that is shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with Boilermaker Aquatics in the changing area around the time of practice.

### **MONITORING**

General Policy Considerations:

Coaches and staff make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition 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. If this is necessary, parents should let the coach or administrator know about this in advance.

If an athlete needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear (for example, a child under the age of eight), or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, then we ask that parents let the coach or an administrator know beforehand that he or she will be helping the athlete.

Boilermaker Aquatics has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas (e.g., immediately before and following practices and meets). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make swimmers uncomfortable and may even place our staff at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

Boilermaker Aquatics has staggered practices, with different groups arriving and departing throughout the day. It is therefore not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms and changing areas over this extended course of time. While we do not post inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas, we do make occasional sweeps of these areas. Coaches conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female locker rooms, and men checking on male locker rooms.

### **USE OF CELL PHONES 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 Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing area:

305.3 Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

## **ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING POLICY #2**

### **Action Plan of Boilermaker Aquatics to Address Bullying**

#### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Boilermaker Aquatics and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. BA 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 BA 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 BA 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:

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

## **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 a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

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.
  - iii. 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 harm others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing them.
- 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 who is a little different than 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, for the club, or for others in your community.
- 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:
  - . Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
- i. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the club, or for others in your community.
- ii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that done work or have negative consequences:
  - . Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you’re out” strategies don’t work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
- i. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don’t work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- f. Follow up. After the bullying is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects others people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

**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 child being bullied to 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 #3**

USA Swimming clubs are now required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the club.

Many of our swimmers use electronic communication as their primary method of communication. While BA 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.

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 Transparent, Accessible and Professional (TAP).

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 BA'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 BA. 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. BA has an official Facebook page (search Boilermaker Aquatics on FB), as well as a parent page (search #BAconnection) that athletes and their parents can "friend" 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-Best Practice:

BA 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 during the hours from 7am until 9pm. 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 between the hours of 7am and 9pm. 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.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY #4

**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.

Our Policy is as follows:

1. The publishing of a photograph of swimmer under 18 either on a notice board or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of swimming competitions ("publication") should only be done with parents' consent at registration.
2. A parent or guardian has a right of refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or official photographer, should receive parental consent before publishing/displaying the photo, preferably in writing. *Please be aware that at our open competitions, and when BA hosts, we have an official photographer present.* Again, you absolutely have the right to refuse to have your child's photograph taken. All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency in particular: 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 swimsuit. Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
3. No photos should ever be taken in a locker or dressing room at any time. It is recommended that all smart phones and cameras be left out of changing areas at all times.

#### TEAM TRAVEL POLICY #5

The following is a model travel policy, provided to assist USA Swimming member clubs in developing their own policies. Travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

Team Travel Policy for Boilermaker Aquatics Purpose: Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

Team Travel is defined as *overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by BA.*

#### Section 1 -Policies Required by USA Swimming

- a. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
- b. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
- d. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.

#### Section 2 - Recommended Policies

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
- b. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- c. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
- d. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
- e. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- f. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- g. BA officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- h. BA officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- i. Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
- j. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- k. The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.

- l. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- m. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- n. The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate BA leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.

### Section 3-Additional Code of Conduct

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No “deck changes” are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and Boilermaker Aquatics. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club BA.
- g. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to: dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete’s expense; disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition; disqualification from future team travel meets; financial penalties; dismissal from the team; and/or proceedings for a BA or USA Swimming National Board of Review.
- i. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- j. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.

\*I acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the following Boilermaker Aquatics Safe Sport policies:

- 1. Locker Room Policy
- 2. Policy to Address Bullying
- 3. Policy on Electronic Communication
  - 1. Photography Policy
  - 2. Team Travel Policy