

## **Club Philosophy**

Competitive swimming affords a giant step toward sounding out and developing young lives and gives boys and girls an opportunity to participate in a wholesome environment of competition, fostering fair play and sportsmanship, building health and vigor, and teaches that to lose is not a disgrace, but that as in life, when one has put forth his best effort and does not always win, he can lose with dignity and have the self-satisfaction of having done his best. Team effort is of utmost importance and the mediocre swimmer is just as important in his effort as is the best swimmer.

## **Welcome to the Minot Swim Club**

We are glad to have you as a member! This is a competitive swim team and all swimmers are encouraged to compete in organized meets. Please use this book to acquaint yourself with some of the aspects of competitive swimming.

### **Parents**

The Minot Swim Club is run by a Board of Directors and the Coaching Staff. We urge you to become an active part of this organization by working at swim meets as timers or officials. Parental help is also needed at Minot Swim Club swim meets in various areas, including awards, concessions, or meet set up/take down committees. All of these positions are important and your help is needed to make our meets run smoothly.

Parent meetings are held monthly throughout the swimming season. These meetings are an integral source of communication. Minutes of parents meetings will be distributed monthly for communication purposes for those unable to attend. If parents have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak to the coaches or call one of the Board Members.

## **Parental Responsibilities and Requirements**

The success of the Minot Swim Club depends not only on the participating swimmers, but also active participation of the parents. Fundraising is an integral source of income for the Minot Swim Club and enables the club to keep swimming fees at a minimum. It is expected that all families participate in fundraising activities throughout the swimming season. The following are basic guidelines established by the Minot Swim Club Board of Directors:

1. **Registration and Insurance Fees:** Swimmers may not participate in swimming practice until registration and insurance fees are paid.
2. **Fundraising Requirements:**
  - a. Each family is required to work at least 2 fundraising shifts throughout the year. This may be increased to 3 shifts depending on the number of families that register for the season. The final determination will be made at the December

Board Meeting. Any combination of the following shifts qualify for the requirement:

- i. Taking Tickets / Guarding Doors at Minot High Varsity Sports Events (Football, Volleyball, Girls & Boys Swimming, Girls Basketball, Baseball)
- ii. Hostfest Coat Check – Sept/Oct
- iii. Westlie Car Drive – January

**\*\*\*You must sign in at the fundraising activity to get credit.**

- b. Buyout Option: If you are unable to fulfill the fundraising requirements, you may “buyout” each one at \$50/shift. You can choose any combination of working and buyout that you would like. If you choose this option, it is payable upon registration and will be tracked by the MHS Ticket Taking Coordinator/MSC Board Member.
  - c. Every effort is made to ensure that there are enough shifts available for the number of families in the Minot Swim Club. However, shifts are filled on a first come, first served basis.
  - d. Working at Swim Meets does not qualify towards the Fundraising requirements.
  - e. Other events may be added as they arise during the swimming season.
3. **Swim Meets:** A parent (s) will work at least one shift at each Minot Swim Meet that they have a swimmer participating. Shifts may include timing, concessions, ribbon preparation, officiating or clothing sales. Families will also be asked to donate items for the concession stand. Volunteers are needed for each of these areas to ensure a successful meet. The Short Course Season meets in Minot are:
- Pentathlon – November
  - Minot Meet – January
  - Minot Last Chance Meet – March

By participating in these events, it will be a fun experience and you will get the opportunity to meet other parents. It will make for a better club and our kids and swim team will benefit from our support.

### **Communication**

Communication within Minot Swim Club happens in many different formats.

1. Parents are expected to attend the monthly parent meeting. Meetings are held during swim practice.
2. Minot Swim club utilizes email as its major form of communication. Please provide an email address that is regularly checked. We may at times need to notify members of a practice cancellation or of time changes. Email provides us with a quick method to contact large amounts of people. Our email address is [minotswim@srt.com](mailto:minotswim@srt.com)

3. Our website [www.minotswimclub.com](http://www.minotswimclub.com) is updated regularly with meet dates, practice schedules, a calendar and notices of events. Please be sure to refer to this whenever you have any questions.
4. Newsletters may occasionally be sent home with your swimmer from practice. Please be sure to look this information over.
5. Before each meet your swimmer will receive their event sheet. This will list the events your swimmer is signed up for along with relay team assignments. This sheet comes from the head coach. Please bring this to the meet with you.

## **Basic Swim Meet Information**

### **Meet Entry Coupons and Online Registration**

Parents may register for swim meets online through our web site. Simply click on the “Swim Meets” or “Events” tab located at the top of the page. You will be allowed to enter events also if you so chose. Coaches will make every effort to enter swimmers in these events, but they do make the final decision on events for each swimmer. Once you have registered online, print your registration form and attach your check for the meet fees to the form. Bring the form with payment to swim practice and place in the meet coupon box. Blank registration forms will also be available at the pool during practice if you are unable to register online, or need to register prior to the meet deadline.

### **Meet Fees**

Minot Swim Club pays for a portion of the meet fees for each swimmer. The swimmer’s portion of the meet fee is as follows: \$20 for a one day meet, \$25 for a two- three day meet. Many meet fees are \$30 plus total. Families pay a portion and MSC pays the remainder of the fee. This opportunity allows swimmer to compete in more meets and see success in their swimming career.

### **Individual Events**

Coaches will enter swimmers in the maximum number of events allowed for the meet depending upon age and ability. Entries for the state meet will depend on state qualifying times and the needs of the team at the coach’s discretion.

### **Relay Events**

Throughout the year, entries will vary at the coach’s discretion. Every effort is made for swimmers to swim in at least one relay per swim meet. State Meet relays will be entered with the fastest 4 swimmers on the A relay, next fastest 4 swimmers on the B relay, and so on.

### **Entry Fees**

The host team charges an entry fee for each race a swimmer is entered in. These fees are used to cover the costs associated with the meet. It is the swimmer’s responsibility to swim at a meet in which the swimmer has signed up for. In the event of an absence or failure to swim a registered event(s) at a meet, the swimmer’s parents will be billed for scratch fees.

## **Swim Meets**

Swim meets are usually held on Saturday and Sunday. The meet information will indicate if the meet is a “split” meet or a full day meet. If the meet is split, swimmers will swim either in the morning or the afternoon, depending on the age of the swimmer. The meet information will also contain information of the pool location, warm-up times, concession availability, events offered, and any other pertinent information.

## **Swim Meet Locations**

The majority of swim meets will be held within the North Dakota LSC (Local Swim Clubs). Swimmers may elect to attend swim meets outside the ND LSC but coaching staff will not be available. Meet fees are the responsibility of the swimmer.

## **Motel Blocks for State Meets**

The Minot Swim Club generally reserves a block of motel rooms for the State swim meet. Information about the block of rooms is sent to families via email and a club newsletter. Parents will need to call the motel and ask for a room under the Minot Swim Club block and reserve a room with a personal credit card. Parents are always free to make reservations at any motel they choose.

## **Attendance**

As a member of the Minot Swim Club, swimmers will be encouraged to participate in a minimum number of swim meets as set by the coaches each season. Families pre-pay a predetermined number of meets at the time of registration, whether the swimmer attends the meets or not.

## **Zones**

The ND LSC is part of the central Zone of USA Swimming, which is made up of approximately 15 different LSCs. The North Dakota team is eligible to compete each summer in the LSC Championship Meet. This meet is held in various locations across the Central Zone area.

## **Zone Eligibility**

A swimmer with a regular (not seasonal) USA swimming membership and has a national AAA time in an age appropriate event (either short course or long course) is eligible to compete at the Zone swimming meet.

## **Swim Meet Info**

Swim meets are a great family experience! They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help families through the first few swim meets. Swim meets are fun for swimmers. They get to visit with their friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams, and see how much they have improved from their hard work and practice.

### **Before the Meet Starts**

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information.

Upon arrival, find a place to put the swimmer's swim bags. Most outdoor meets have very little spectator seating, so families bring camping-type chairs to sit in. Most teams usually sit together in one place, so look for familiar faces.

A program is usually available for sale by the host team in the lobby or concession area of the pool. This will list all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent to the host team, each swimmer is listed in their event with their previous best time in that event. If a swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, they will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT" and will swim in one of the first heats of the event.

Write each event number on your swimmer's hand or leg in ink. This helps him/her to remember what events they are swimming and what lane assignment and heat they are scheduled to swim in.

E	H	L	S
12	2	5	100 Free
27	3	4	50 Breast

The swimmer should report to the coach for warm-up instructions with their cap and goggles. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with their team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day and they need to get the engine going and warmed up before they can go all out.

After warm-ups are completed, swimmers will go back to the area where their towels are and sit before their first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she gets a drink or go to the restroom. Check with the coaches to see where they want the swimmers to sit, as they may want the younger swimmers sitting together to avoid missing events.

### **Start of the Meet**

The meet usually starts 5-15 minutes following the warm-up session.

Swimmers should report to the starting blocks or Clerk of Course approximately 3 heats before their swim with their cap and goggles on. There are usually several heats in each event.

After each swim, the swimmer should report immediately to the coach. The coach will ask them their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.

After each swim, tell your swimmer how well they did! The coaching staff will generally discuss stroke technique with them. Parents need to tell their swimmer how proud they are and what a great job they did. This is another good time for the swimmer to get a drink or go to the restroom.

When the swimmer has completed all their events, they may go home. Make sure, however, to check with the coach to be sure they have not been added to a relay.

All questions concerning meet results, officiating calls, or conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff.

### **Food at Meets**

The host team generally provides a concession stand. Families may wish to take an insulated cooler or picnic basket to meets. This helps with finances and enables families to take food that they and their swimmers prefer. Swimmers should try and eat breakfast as far ahead of warm-up time as possible and snack nutritiously at break time or immediately after a swimming event.

### **Items to take to Swim Meets**

Swimmer:

1. Team swimsuit and/or personal competition suit (spare suits are handy)
2. Swim goggles
3. Swim caps
4. Towels
5. Warm-up suit or sweat shirt and sweat pants
6. Street clothing and personal articles
7. A small bag to keep your things in. Remember that personal belongings are easily lost or misplaced at meets.
8. Please do not bring valuables to a swim meet.

Label all swimmers' belongings. It is also helpful to include the club name to ease of identification. Most pools have a lost and found. Please be sure to check there if your swimmer loses anything.

Parents:

1. Cash for program
2. Highlighter
3. Pen or Pencil
4. Stopwatch (if you wish, not necessary)
5. Camera
6. Dress lightly (most indoor pools are warm and humid)

The following are a list of general rules pertaining to swim meets.

1. All persons representing the Minot Swim Club and USA swimming will conduct themselves at all times in a manner to uphold the reputation of the club.
2. All general practice rules pertain.

3. All officials working on deck must be USA certified.
4. All swimmers are expected to attend meet warm-ups.
5. Competition suits must be non-transparent and conform to what is deemed appropriate. The Meet Referee shall have the authority to bar offenders from competition under this rule until they are appropriately dressed (2004 USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, 102.9).

## **Swimming Glossary**

**Anchorman:** The swimmer who swims the last leg of the relay.

**Backstroke:** One of the four primary competitive swimming strokes. It is performed with the swimmer on his back and the race starts with the swimmer in the water.

**Backstroke Flags:** A set of flags placed 15 feet from the end of the pool and 8 feet above the water. Used to warn the swimmer of a turn or finish coming up.

**Butterfly:** One of the four primary competitive strokes. The butterfly is an outgrowth of the breaststroke, swum in the Olympics for the first time in 1965.

**Conforming Time:** Qualifying time standard that corresponds to the course that will be competed in a meet.

**Consolation:** (see Finals) Competition for the fastest swimmers who failed to qualify for the finals.

**Course:** Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Meets may be conducted in short course yards (25 yards), short course meters (25 meters), or long course meters (50 meters).

**Disqualified (DQ).** The swimmer's time is not considered in the competition due to an improper stroke technique, false start, etc. This is determined by the stroke and turn judge, starter, or referee.

**Dolphin Kick:** The kick used in the butterfly.

**Dual Competition:** Competition between two clubs.

**Event:** Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance.

**False Start:** An error in which the swimmer leaves the starting blocks too soon, resulting in a disqualification.

**Forward Start:** A forward entry facing the length of the pool.

**Heat:** A division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

**High Points:** The award given to the boys and girls in each age group who earn the highest number of points during the meet. Not all swim meets offer high point awards.

**Individual Medley (IM):** An event where one swimmer performs all four major strokes.

**Initial Distance:** The first portion of a race, which an official time may be recorded, but which is not in itself a completed event.

**Lane:** The specific lane in which the swimmer is assigned to swim, i.e. lane one.

**Lap Counters:** A box of cards or plastic numbers used to let distance swimmers know how far they have swum.

**Leg:** The part of the relay event that is swum by a single team.

**LSC:** Local Swim Committee. An administrative division of USS Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries.

**Meet Approval:** A permit issued by an LSC for meets to a registered USS group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all USS rules.

**Meet Sanction:** A permit issued by an LSC for meets to a USS group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all AUSS rules.

**Negative Split:** A faster swim the second half of the race than during the first half.

**Non-conforming Time:** Qualifying time standard that does not correspond to the course that will be completed in a meet.

**Observed Swim:** A swim observed by an assigned USS official for conformance with USS technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USS rules.

**Official Verification Card:** A three-copy form certifying a national qualifying time by a swimmer and issued by a verifying official where the meet was held. OVC's shall be used for any time that equals or betters a national time standard or international trials time standard.

**Place Judges:** Two place judges, one on each side of the finish line, who will record the order of finish for all swimmers by lane.

**Program:** The order of events offered at a swim meet.

**Scratch:** Withdrawal of an entry from competition.

**Seed:** To distribute the swimmers among the required number of heats and or lanes, according to their submitted times or preliminary times.

**Split Times:** Time recorded from official start to completion of an intermediate distance within a longer event.

**Session:** Any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition, i.e., preliminary and finals, morning, afternoon, or evening, senior and age group.

**Submitted Times:** Those filed with an entry, as having been previously achieved.

**Timed Finals:** Competition in which only heats are swum and final placing is determined by the times performed in the heats.

**Time Standard:** The time standard for any event in a meet is the cut-off time for that event.

**Unattached:** An athlete member who competed but does not represent a club member of USS.

**USS:** United States Swimming. The national governing body for swimming in the United States.

**Warm-up:** A period of time before competition and workout where one swims slowly to stretch muscles to prevent injury.

## **Discipline Policy**

### **General Rules**

For the safety of swimmers and protection of the organization, the following rules have been adopted by the Minot Swim Club and govern the pool, locker rooms:

1. No pushing in any area.
2. No running on deck.
3. No one is allowed on the diving boards, trampoline, or track.
4. No one is allowed in the commons area or other parts of the school.
5. No one is allowed in the pool when coaches are not present.
6. All swimmers will be on time for warm-ups.
7. All swimmers must leave the pool promptly at the end of the practice session.
8. Swimmers are permitted to use the locker rooms for showering and dressing. Be prompt!
9. Swimmers will wait for rides either at the door or on the bleachers.
10. Locker rooms are to be left clean.
11. Misbehavior will not be permitted in any area.
12. No smoking.
13. No drinking alcoholic beverages.
14. No use of controlled substances.
15. No vulgar language or action or permitted.
16. Any other behavior deemed by the coach to be unsafe or unacceptable will not be permitted.
17. Parents may use the track at Magic City Campus, however, it is off limits to all children.

Beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of practice, the following discipline policy will be strictly enforced.

### **Infractions**

1<sup>st</sup>: Warning

2<sup>nd</sup>: Removal from practice, form signed and sent home to parents.

3<sup>rd</sup>: Removal from practice for a week.

4<sup>th</sup> Swimmer and parents will go before the Board of Directors for a discipline hearing.

There may be additional discipline action taken at the discretion of the coaching staff.

In addition to the discipline policy, the Minot Swim Club has adopted the following guidelines:

1. No persons representing the Minot Swim Club will purchase or be involved with adult classified materials.
2. All persons representing the Minot Swim Club and USA swimming will conduct themselves at all times in a manner to uphold the reputation of the club.

**Discipline Form**

Swimmer \_\_\_\_\_ was excused from practice

on \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reason(s):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

The parent or guardian of the swimmer must sign this form before he/she is allowed back into the pool for practice.

Swimmer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

Coach signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **Travel Policy**

As part of USA Swimming's enhanced athlete protection efforts, USA swimming rules now require clubs and Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) to have published policies for team travel. Team travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC. Club and LSC travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

The Minot Swim Club, Inc has approved the following Travel policies:

1. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
2. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
3. 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).
4. 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.
5. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender. 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).
6. Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat form for each athlete.
7. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet session, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
8. The directions and decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
9. 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.
10. Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches/chaperones.

**Minot Swim Club  
Authorization to Treat**

I, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ give permission to  
\_\_\_\_\_ to authorize treatment of my son/daughter in the event of a medical  
situation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Minot Swim Club**  
**Authorization for Travel and Accommodations**

I, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ give permission to  
\_\_\_\_\_ to accompany him/her for the following:

- Travel
- Hotel Room

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Minot Swim Club Code of Conduct**

All MSC Team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

1. Team members and staff will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
2. 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.
3. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
4. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
5. Team members and staff are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the Minot Swim Club program. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club or LSC.
6. Team members are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
7. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.
8. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agree to the Minot Swim Club Code of Conduct.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## **Minot Swim Club Action Plan to address Bullying**

### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Minot Swim Club (the “Club”) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club 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 the Club 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 Minot Swim Club 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:

- i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member’s property;
- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v. 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 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 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.
- c. 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 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. For example:
  - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from 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. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- 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:
  - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
  - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
  - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don’t work or have negative consequences:

- i. 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.
    - ii. 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 issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other 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 kid being bullied 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.