



LOS ALAMOS AQUATOMICS POLICY: Bullying Behavior

PURPOSE:

Los Alamos Aquatomics (LAA) is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members.

POLICY:

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at LAA and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, incidents shall be dealt with promptly and effectively. The objectives of this Policy are as follows:

1. Provide a definition of bullying such that all board members, coaches, parents, and swimmers understand and recognize bullying.
2. To inform parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a bullying policy and protocol and to assure swimmers and parents that the Board and coaching staff of LAA take bullying seriously and that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
3. To provide a process for reporting bullying behavior.

DEFINITION OF "BULLYING":

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/lsc-managementdocuments/interpretations-legislation-bylaws/code-of-conduct-expert-2018.pdf>:

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:

- 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 on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or 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)

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING PROCESS:

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to the following steps in order:

1. Talk to your parents; if not resolved within a reasonable time
2. Talk to a coach or board member; if not resolved within a reasonable time
3. Write a letter or email to the Head Coach or board member; if not resolved within a reasonable time
4. Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

GUIDELINES ON WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS BULLYING:

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, it is stopped immediately using the following steps:



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1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the individuals 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. Do not use the term “bullying” until a follow-up takes place.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION PROCESS IF APPROACHED ABOUT BULLYING:

If coaching staff or board members are approached about a potential bullying incident, the following provides guidance on how to resolve:

1. Collect facts.

- From several sources; adults and kids.
- Listen without blaming. Refrain from calling the act “bullying” during this stage. Discourage the involved parties from using the term “bullying” during this stage.

2. Make a determination.

- Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- To make a determination, consider the following:
 - What is the history between the individuals involved?
 - 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?
- Once a determination has been made, inform the parties involved.

3. Support the kids involved.

- For the bullied:
 - Listen and focus on the child. Show you want to help.
 - 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 ask the child being bullied what can be done to make them 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.
 - 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.
- For the instigator:
 - Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.
 - Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
 - Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example, sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone who is a little different from them. In



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other words, there may be some insecurity involved. Other times kids act out due to external issues and may be in need of additional support.

- Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.
- 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.

4. **Avoid strategies that don't 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.

5. **Everyone can stop bullying.**

There are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening:

- Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- 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."
- Set a good example by not bullying others.
- 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.

LAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APPROVED 9/2020

I hereby acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understood the LAA Bullying Behavior Reporting and Intervention Guidelines.

- By checking this box and type my name below, I am electronically signing this document.

Parent/Guardian's signature

Date