



Burlingame Aquatic Club

BAC Anti Bullying Policy

BAC Anti Bullying Policy is formulated under the guidance of the USA Swimming Guidelines.

Approved by the BAC Board of Directors on :

PURPOSE 1

The following details the Club's action plan to deal promptly and effectively with any bullying incidents. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Burlingame Aquatic Club (the "Club"). 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 becomes aware of bullying is expected to tell a coach, or [board member](#), or athlete/mentor. USA Swimming is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all of its members, with the welfare of its athlete members as the top priority.

Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Club does 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 Burlingame Aquatic 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 in distress that can be physical, emotional, or psychological.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use 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 another 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
- iv. infringing on the rights of another 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:

- Talk to your parents;
- Tell a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Email or write a letter to the Club Coach and cc Board of Directors, Board Member, or Club SafeSport representative (bacsafesport@burlingameaquatics.com).

Report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff. USA Swimming (719)866-4578, US Center for Safe Sport (720)520-5640. The Pacific Swimming Safe Sport representative is Kelly Schott (safesport@pacswim.org).

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to a coach or board member's attention as soon as possible to ensure 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 needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior with intervention.

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, get the facts.**
 - a. Keep all of the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources.
 - 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 or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.
2. **Then 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? A power imbalance can be seen when someone uses physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations. Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. Consider how the targeted child may perceive a power imbalance. 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 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 that bullying has occurred, follow the guidelines below to offer support to all of the kids involved.
- e. If the action is determined not to be bullying, the coaching staff will work toward conflict resolution among the parties. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - I. Meeting with the children, parents and coach to resolve the conflict.
 - II. Meeting with the parent(s) and coach to resolve the conflict.
 - III. Inclusion of other club leadership in meetings to facilitate resolution of the conflict.

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 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 those involved. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child, and parents, know what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harmful to 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:
 - 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.
 - 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:

Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.

Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.

Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.

e. BAC's steps toward resolving bullying behavior

I. Upon first instance of reported bullying, coaching staff will call for a meeting with the children involved and their parents.

II. Upon second instance of reported bullying by the same party, a meeting will be called with the children involved, their parents, the coaches, and a member of the BAC Board of Directors. All swimmers accused of bullying will not be allowed to continue team activities until all meetings have concluded. Consequences will be left to the discretion of the coaching staff and member of the board have discretion to determine additional consequences.

III. If there are further instances of bullying or unacceptable social behavior by swimmers they will be expelled from BAC.

f. Follow up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied 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. Additionally, periodic check ins with the bullied child over a set time period to see how they are doing, are they comfortable.

3. 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.