



ACTION PLAN FOR WWA TO ADDRESS BULLYING

Purpose :

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at White Water Aquatics (WWA) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counter productive to the team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. WWA is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members and families. 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 WWA's Bullying Policy and Action Plan :

1. To make it clear that WWA will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all members (coaches, parents, and athletes) a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, athletes and the 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 White Water Aquatics takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What is Bullying? :

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

Bullying is the severe or repeated use, regardless of when or where it may occur, by one or more USA swimming members or an oral, written, electronic, or 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 or Participating Non-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 or a member club or LSC).

Reporting Procedures :

An athlete who feels that he or she has been or is being bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things;

- Talk to your Parents;
- Talk to a Coach, an Aquatic Director, or Safe Sport Coordinator;
- Write a letter or email to the Club's Coach, Aquatic Director, or Safe Sport Coordinator;
- Make a report to the USA swimming Safe Sport Staff - listed on team's website.

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 people as soon as possible to make sure that the memories of the complaint 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 SPOT BULLYING RIGHT THERE ON THE SPOT using the following steps;

1. Intervene immediately. It is okay 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 WWA or it is reported to be occurring on our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

- FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

I. First, we get the facts.

- Keep all the involved athletes separate.
- Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids - if present.
- Listen without blaming.
- Don't call the act of "bullying" while you're trying to understand what happened.
- It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involved social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

II. 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.

- Review the USA swimming definition of bullying;
- 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?
- 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.
- Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

- SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

III. Support the kids who are being bullied.

- 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.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied athlete. The athlete, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - Ask the athlete 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 the change.
 - Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between WWA and the parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.



IV. Address Bullying Behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- Work with the athlete to understand some of the reasons they bullied. For example;
 - Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone who is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurities involved.
 - Other times, athletes act out because sometimes 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.
- 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 athlete can:
 - Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for WWA, or for other in the community.
 - Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - Zero tolerance or "three strike, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removal of the athlete(s) from the team who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Athletes may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - 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.
- 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.

V. 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.

- Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- Tell a trusted adult - your parent, coach, or Safe Sport coordinator;
- 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 bullying an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.