



## **EAST COAST AQUATIC TEAM**



### **SAFE SPORT HANDBOOK**

#### **USA SWIMMING ATHLETE PROTECTION GUIDELINES**

[usaswimming.org/protect](https://usaswimming.org/protect)

##### **Protecting Athletes**

We believe that the experience of children and young athletes in all organized sports should be guided by what is best for the safe and healthy development of the young person. Young athletes who participate in organized sports activities have a unique opportunity for learning. In working with each child, it is essential that we are mindful of their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. We must also be particularly diligent in recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that are an inherent part of childhood. It is the responsibility of all adults to not only recognize these vulnerabilities, but to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and maintain a safe and child-centered sports environment.

We recognize the important role that USA Swimming plays in providing leadership and creating an organizational culture that is focused on the safety and wellbeing of young people. The protection of children requires that all adults work together to support young athletes. As the child's first and enduring resource for safety, parents and guardians play a critical role in athlete protection. When parents participate they are able to help educate other adults about the needs of the child, and help prepare the child to participate in sports programs in a way that promotes safety, enjoyment, and learning.

Adults, including coaches, officials, staff, facility workers, volunteers, chaperones, and others who interact with children, are in also positions of great trust and influence. The ability to use this position of trust to support the well-being of children is critical. The overwhelming majority of these adults fulfill their roles in a positive and responsible manner. Nonetheless, we must also understand that a few adults may seek to use the trust and authority that comes with their access and status to take advantage of a child.

USA Swimming strives to continually improve the programs and services it offers to its members and among these some of the most important relate to the safeguards for protecting young athletes. Because we aspire to foster safe and positive environments within all our member clubs, we believe it is especially important to provide our member adult leaders with policies and best practice guidelines that help define elements of appropriate behavior and conduct.

##### **Policies and Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection**

In order to provide a positive experience and a safe environment for athletes, all non-athlete adult members of USA Swimming should maintain professionalism and avoid any appearance of impropriety in their relationships with athletes. Coaches, in particular, should recognize the influence, power and position of trust they have with athletes and should use these only in an athlete's best interest.

This document provides specific mandatory policies and best practice guidelines that are strongly recommended.

##### **Policies**

**The following Policies from the USA Swimming Code of Conduct are mandatory for all USA Swimming members.**

##### **Article 304**

##### **USA Swimming Code of Conduct**

**304.1** The mission of USA Swimming is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of Swimming. USA swimming grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to that mission. The privilege of membership may, therefore, be withdrawn or denied by USA Swimming at any time where USA Swimming determines that a member or prospective member's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of the organization or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it. In order to assist all members to better serve the interests of those who participate in swimming, USA Swimming has adopted this Code of Conduct.



**304.2** Any member or prospective member of USA Swimming may be denied membership, censured, placed on probation, suspended for a definite or indefinite period of time with or without terms of probation, fined or expelled from USA Swimming if such member violates the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, set forth in 304.3, or aids, abets or encourages another person to violate any of the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.

**The following policies in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct Article 304 specifically pertain to Athlete Protection:**

**304.3.4** Violation of any of the Athlete Protection Policies set forth in Article 305

**304.3.5** Conviction of, imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest at any time, past or present, or the existence of any pending charges for (i) any felony, (ii) any offense involving use, possession, distribution, or intent to distribute illegal drugs or substances, (iii) any crime involving sexual misconduct, or (iv) any criminal offense against a minor.

**304.3.6** Violation of the Sexual Misconduct Reporting Requirements set forth in Article 306.

**304.3.7** Any sexual conduct, advance, or other inappropriate sexual oriented behavior or action directed towards an athlete by (i) a coach member or other non-athlete member, or (ii) any other adult participating in any capacity whatsoever in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (whether such adult is a member or not). Any nonconsensual physical sexual conduct, or pattern of other sexual harassment in connection or incidental to a USA Swimming-related activity by any person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming (Whether such person is a member or not) directed toward any member or other person participating in the affairs or activities of USA Swimming.

**304.3.12** Physical abuse of an athlete by any person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete.

**304.3.17** Any other material and intentional act, conduct, or omission not provided for above, which is detrimental to the image or reputation of USA Swimming, an LSC, or the sport of swimming .

**The following policies related to Athlete Protection are mandatory components of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct:**

**Article 305**

**Athlete Protection Policies**

**305.1** Inappropriate touching between an athlete and an adult non-athlete member or Participating Non-Member (as defined in 401.1) is prohibited, including, but not limited to, excessive touching, hugging, kissing, sexually oriented behavior, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games, and having an athlete sit on a non-family member adult's lap.

**305.2** Any rubdown or massage performed on an athlete by any adult member or Participating Non-Member, excluding the spouse, parent, guardian, sibling, or personal assistant of such athlete, is prohibited unless such adult is a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. Any rubdown or massage performed at a swim venue by a licensed professional must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only the athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room. Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.

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

**305.4** Employees and volunteers of USA Swimming, LSCs and member clubs who interact directly and frequently with athletes as a regular part of their duties and individuals with any ownership interest in a



member club must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming and satisfactorily complete criminal background checks as required by USA Swimming. This does not apply to volunteers such as timers, marshals, computer operators, etc. who only have limited contact with athletes during a meet.

### **305.5 Travel**

A 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).

*In order to clarify the intent of Article 305.5.A, the Board of Directors of USA Swimming, at its meeting on November 21, 2010, made the following interpretation: For the purposes of Article 305.5.A, where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete member of USA Swimming, and is functioning primarily as a coach, he/she may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach.*

B Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.

C 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.

D Clubs and LSCs shall develop their own travel policies. USA Swimming will provide a model club travel policy as an example. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

**The following policies related to sexual misconduct reporting are mandatory components of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct:**

#### **Article 306**

#### **Sexual Misconduct Reporting Requirements**

**306.1** It is every member's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct by a member as described in Article 304.3.7 to USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Officer. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.

**306.2** No member shall retaliate against any individual who has made a good faith report under 306.1.

**306.3** False reporting of sexual misconduct made in bad faith is prohibited.

**306.4** Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of sexual abuse.

You can report one of three ways to the USA Swimming Athlete Protection Officer, Susan Woessner:

- 1) Online at [www.usaswimming.org/report](http://www.usaswimming.org/report)
- 2) Via email to [swoessner@usaswimming.org](mailto:swoessner@usaswimming.org)
- 3) Via phone at (719) 866-3589

[usaswimming.org/protect](http://usaswimming.org/protect)

#### **Best Practice Guidelines**

**The following Best Practice Guidelines are strongly recommended for all USA Swimming members.**

1. Parents should be encouraged to appropriately support their children's swimming experience.
2. All swimming practices should be open to observation by parents.
3. Two-deep Leadership: One coach member and at least one other adult who is not in the water should be present at all practices and other sanctioned club activities whenever at least one athlete is present. Clubs and coaches should evaluate their seasonal plans and map out how to best accomplish this strongly recommended guideline.
4. Open and Observable Environment: An open and observable environment should be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are



open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.

5. Coaches should not invite or have an athlete(s) to their home without the permission of the athlete's parents (or legal guardian).

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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).

9. 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.

10. Communications between non-athlete adult members and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.

11. Non-athlete adult members should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adult members should protect their own privacy in similar situations.

12. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature with any athletes should be avoided. For example, coaches should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.

13. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.

14. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes should be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.

15. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside club programs and activities.

16. Coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with a former athlete for at least two years after the cessation or termination of professional services. Because sexual intimacies with a former athlete are frequently harmful to the athlete, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the coaching profession and thereby deter the public's use of needed services, coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with former athletes even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances. The coach who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the coach-athlete relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including:

1. The amount of time that has passed since the coach-athlete relationship terminated;
2. The circumstances of termination;
3. The athlete's personal history;
4. The athlete's current mental status;
5. The likelihood of adverse impact on the athlete and others; and
6. Any statements or actions made by the coach during the course of the athlete coach relationship suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the athlete or coach.
7. Both the athlete and the coach must be 18 years of age or older.

*Updated: 8 December 2010*



## Consent, Release & Waiver

This document is intended to provide consent, release and waiver, as a parent or adult member of East Coast Aquatic Team (“ECAT”) on behalf of your swimmer(s) to ECAT’s instruction and motivation techniques, and for the use of the picture, video or likeness for the purposes described below.

ECAT coaches use various instruction techniques to provide exceptional coaching and development of our swimmer athletes. Coaches may engage the swimmers with hands-on instruction in the water or on deck so that swimmers get the correct feel for a proper stroke. Similarly, coaches may use photographs and video (above or below water) as a training tool for correcting swimmer technique. They may also engage the swimmers in a manner intended to provide positive reinforcement such as handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs, or contact above the shoulders. Coach interaction with swimmers occurs in an open and observable environment, and is intended to comply both with USA Swimming Safe Sport Guidelines, and the ECAT Athlete Protection and Travel Policy. Training videos and photographs are not used for any other purpose without the express consent of the swimmer and parents.

In addition, ECAT often takes photographs or videos of our athletes and parents at ECAT events and meets for use in its internet website, social media sites, promotional material, presentations and programs to accentuate the positive impact ECAT has on its members and to aid in the recruitment of new members. We do not permit images to be “tagged” to identify individuals on public sites. Members and guests, however, are not permitted to take photographs or videos of any of the swimmer athletes during any ECAT training session for the protection of the other swimmers.

THEREFORE, we grant permission to East Coast Aquatic Team and its coaches to use various hands-on instruction techniques described above in an open and observable environment, consistent with USA Swimming Safe Sport Guidelines, and to use video and photography as part of the training process. In addition, we grant permission to use our swimmer athlete’s name, picture, video image, or likeness in any form, in any media and for any non-commercial purpose. We hereby waive and release on behalf of our own behalf and on behalf of our swimmer athletes any and all claims, suits, causes of action of any sort or type that might accrue to any one of us against East Coast Aquatic Team, its coaches, employees, officers and directors in connection with the actions and usage detailed above.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature

Print Name





## PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of this code is to promote responsibility among team members and to project a positive image of East Coast Aquatic Team and its members at all times. By signing this Code of Conduct, you agree to comply with its requirements at all ECAT related events or while representing ECAT in any capacity.

### PART I – GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

1. ECAT Parents and family members are to represent East Coast Aquatic Team in a positive manner at all times, realizing that inappropriate behavior reflects badly upon all team members and on the team as a whole.
2. Parents shall be respectful of all individuals, including coaches, USA officials, other parents, members of ECAT as well as members of other teams at all times.
3. Parents shall dress appropriately at all times while representing East Coast Aquatic Team.
4. Parents shall not use inappropriate or foul language both on the pool deck and off.
5. Parents shall follow the direction of the Head Coach and coaching staff at ECAT activities, and will respect and follow the facility and safety procedures applicable at each training or competition location.
6. Parents shall comply with all rules, regulations, by-laws and requirements of ECAT, Virginia Swimming, and USA Swimming.
7. Parents shall not use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, other than those prescribed by your physician, at any ECAT related activity, except, however, Parents may responsibly consume alcohol, at specific designated ECAT social events, or when athletes are not present. Parents shall not smoke at any ECAT related activity.
8. Parents shall not engage in any inappropriate contact with athletes and shall comply with ECAT’s Athlete Protection Policy at all times.
9. Disrespectful, indiscreet or destructive behavior will not be tolerated. Verbal or physical altercations or abuse will not be tolerated, and may be grounds for immediate expulsion.
10. All parents have a responsibility to encourage all other ECAT members and athletes to adhere to the Code of Conduct to help ensure the safety of all program participants.

### PART II- VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

1. The Head Coach or senior coach on deck shall have the discretion to ask the Parent to leave the practice, meet, or function where the offense has occurred.
2. Any violation of the General Rules by a Parent shall be referred to the President, Vice-President or Head Coach, who shall attempt to discuss the violation with the parent in a civil and respectful manner. Any disciplinary action shall be documented.
3. Should the problem continue, it shall be referred to the ECAT Executive Committee, who shall document the violation, and may exercise its discretion in suspending the parent from participating in ECAT related activities, including but not limited to: practice, meets, team trips, social activities, chaperone functions, and participation in meets in any official capacity. Serious or repeated offenses of the General Rules may result in the termination of membership. The Parent and family agree to abide by the final decisions made.

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct, and acknowledge that, should any violations will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of membership status in East Coast Aquatic Team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date



## ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of this code is to promote responsibility among team members and to project a positive image for East Coast Aquatic Team and its members at all times. By signing this Code of Conduct, you agree to comply with its requirements at all ECAT related events or while representing ECAT in any capacity.

### PART I – GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

1. Athletes must represent ECAT in a positive manner at all times, realizing that inappropriate behavior reflects badly upon all team members and on the team as a whole.
2. Athletes shall display proper sportsmanship and respectful towards all individuals, including coaches, parents, siblings, and swimmers from ECAT as well as members of other teams.
3. Athletes must follow the direction of the Head Coach and coaching staff.
4. Athletes will wear designated team suits during competition events.
5. Athletes will respect and follow the facility rules and safety procedures applicable at each training or competition location.
6. Athletes shall comply with all rules, regulations, by-laws and requirements of ECAT, Virginia Swimming, and USA Swimming.
7. Athletes shall dress appropriately at all times when representing East Coast Aquatic Team. Athletes are never permitted to change clothes in public, or on deck.
8. Athletes shall not use inappropriate or foul language both on the pool deck and off.
9. Inappropriate contact between team members of the opposite sex will not be tolerated at any ECAT related activity.
10. Athletes shall not use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, other than those prescribed by your physician, at any ECAT related activity. Athletes shall not smoke at any time.
11. Disrespectful, indiscreet or destructive behavior will not be tolerated. Verbal or physical altercations or abuse will not be tolerated, and may be grounds for immediate expulsion.
12. All participants have a responsibility to encourage other team members to follow this Code of Conduct to help ensure the safety of all program participants.

### PART II - VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

1. The Head Coach or coach on deck, shall have the discretion to immediately discipline any athlete in violation of the General Rules, which may include the following:
  - a. Athlete may be temporarily removed from the practice or ECAT activity;
  - b. Athlete may be sent home immediately from practice;
  - c. Athlete may be scratched from a meet, or may be sent home immediately from a meet at his own expense. If there is an additional expense incurred by the team, it shall be the athlete’s responsibility.
  - d. Athlete may be suspended from ECAT activities until the swimmer and parents have had a conference with the Head Coach and appropriate disciplinary actions have been implemented.
2. Athletes shall be automatically suspended for a violation of rules 9-11 above.
3. Serious or repeated violations of this Code of Conduct may result in review of the athlete’s membership status in ECAT. In such case, ECAT’s Executive Committee shall review the circumstances surrounding the violation of this Code and shall make a final decision in conjunction with the appropriate members of the Coaching Staff. The athlete and the athlete’s family agree to abide by the final decisions made.

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct, and acknowledge that, should any violations will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of membership status in East Coast Aquatic Team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Swimmer Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date



## ECAT SWIM TEAM ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION



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### Electronic Communication Policy

#### **PURPOSE**

ECAT Swim Team (the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club 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.

#### **GENERAL CONTENT**

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 **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

**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 the Club’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 Club. 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.

The Club has an official Facebook page 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:* The Club 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.

*Alternative Option:* Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. 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.



## ECAT SWIM TEAM ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING



### Action Plan to Address Bullying

#### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at ECAT Swim Team (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 (Name of 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.





## **EAST COAST AQUATIC TEAM**

### **SAFE SPORT - LOCKER ROOM POLICY**

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#### **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 currently practice at Virginia Wesleyan. This location has changing areas that are shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with the East Coast Aquatic Team (ECAT) in the changing area around the time of practice.

#### **MONITORING**

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.

ECAT has staggered practices, with different groups arriving and departing throughout the mornings and evenings. It is therefore not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms and changing areas over this extended course of time. While we do not post [staff, coach, parent, other adult] inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas, we do make occasional sweeps of these areas. [Staff, coach, parent, other adult] conducts 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:

**Article 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.*



## ATHLETE PROTECTION AND TRAVEL POLICIES

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1. ECAT strives to have an open and safe environment for all athletes. Protection of our athletes is of absolute importance.
2. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
3. Athletes, Parents and Coaches shall comply with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, and specifically Articles 304 to 306 pertaining to Athlete Protection, which is incorporated into this Code of Conduct.
4. It is every athlete, parent and coach's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct to the ECAT Head Coach or President, and to USA Swimming in accordance with Article 306.
5. 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).
6. For overnight team travel, athletes of the opposite gender may not share a room, regardless of age, unless they are siblings.
7. All team chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
8. ECAT strives at all times to have at least one coach and one other adult who is not in the water present at all practices and competitions. 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.
9. Coaches shall not invite or have an athlete alone at his/her home without the written permission of the athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
10. Coaches, parents and non-athletes should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing clothes, showering, etc. Coaches, parents and adult athletes should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
11. When traveling, athletes will follow the guidelines established by the coaching staff or chaperones for mixed company (male and female) in an Athlete's room. These rules include:
  - a. Doors of hotel rooms will be fully open at all times in which males and females are visiting;
  1. b. No male and female athlete pair shall be alone in an Athlete's room unless they are siblings.
12. Communications between adults and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
13. Athletes should not ride in coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parent permission is obtained.
14. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside ECAT activities. Coaches should avoid discussing their own personal problems with athletes.
15. Coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with a former athlete for at least two years after the cessation or termination of professional services, as provided by USA Swimming guidelines.



## ATHLETE PROTECTION AND TRAVEL POLICIES

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### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

A. Violations of the Athlete Protection Rules shall result in the immediate suspension of the parent from all ECAT related activities pending an investigation by the Board of Directors. A hearing shall be scheduled before the ECAT Board of Directors, and it shall be the burden of the Parent or adult to demonstrate why termination of membership of the parent is not the appropriate action of the Board.

B. Violations of the Athlete Protection Rules by a coach shall result in the immediate suspension of the coach, pending an investigation by the Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors conclude credible evidence exists of a violation of the Athlete Protection Rules, immediate termination of the coach may be appropriate.