Runcorn REPS ASC

Bullying Policy

Forward

This bullying policy is based on the ASA Anti-bullying policy for swimming. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can swim in a relaxed secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows bullying is occurring is expected to tell the club Child Welfare Officer (CWO) or any Committee Member, Coach or Team Manager.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, exclusion (physically and emotionally), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting (e.g. stealing, hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures)
- Physical – pushing, hitting, kicking, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal – name-calling, spreading rumours, sarcasm, teasing.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Swimmers who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

A club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives & Policy

- All Committee Members, Coaches and Teachers, Swimmers and Parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Committee Members, Coaches and Teachers should know the club policy on bullying and should follow it when bullying is reported.
- All Swimmers and Parents should know the policy on bullying and should know what to do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying occurs.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs & Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or damage to equipment
- Has possessions go "missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Cries them selves to sleep or starts to have nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to Child Welfare Officer, Committee Member or Swimline.
2. In cases of serious bullying the incidents will be referred to the ASA for further advice.
3. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate the police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats must be investigated quickly and the bullying stopped.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) to change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

Recommended Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate to deal with situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/is not appropriate a small panel (Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, Committee Members) should meet with the parent and child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be clearly made and these should be agreed by all parties as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parents and put the incident to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has, in their view, taken place the alleged bully should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or the bullied swimmer can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and it is appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with the swimmers concerned should be made aware of the concerns and of the outcome i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults bullying swimmers under 18:

1. The ASA should always be informed and will advise on the action to be taken.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made concerning a teachers or coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure.

Prevention

- The club has a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
- All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the constitution when joining the club.
- The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

Conclusion

This policy is taken from the ASA Anti-bullying policy for swimming developed by the ASA from the KIDSCAPE policy supplied to schools.