



The Swim Wales Anti Bullying Policy

Swim Wales have noted an increase in referrals of bullying in clubs in recent years. This is due to the proper identification of bullying and the pro-active nature of clubs in dealing with allegations. All clubs should have adopted the Swim Wales Anti Bullying policy.

Swim Wales have also formed a relationship with Swim Wales & Kidscape and have access to services for children in our sport who have been bullied as well as videos that clubs can use to educate children and adults in the club about bullying, its effects and how it can be identified and dealt with through good practice.

It is for clubs to identify to parents and children that they have an anti bullying policy and to ensure the children and parents are aware of how to refer concerns.

Anti-Bullying Policy For Swimming Clubs

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can swim in a relaxed and 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 that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

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, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures). Physical – unwanted contact, pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence. posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. A club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.



Objectives of this Policy

All committee members, coaches and teachers, swimmers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is. All committee members, teaching and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported. All swimmers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises. As a club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they 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 swimming equipment damaged. 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. Cry themselves to sleep at night or has 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 a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the committee or ring Swimline.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to Swim Wales for advice.
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) 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 for them to deal with the 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 (made up from Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.

3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised 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 swimmer should be warned and put on notice of further action ie. 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 bullied swimmer can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if 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 both swimmers should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process ie. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying swimmers under 18

1. Swim Wales should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a teacher 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 will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part. All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon 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. This policy is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.

KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300. NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 ChildLine 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk



Policy Guide to Club Welfare Officers to assist in dealing with bullying

1. The Welfare Officer should be informed of allegations of bullying of a swimmer under the age of 18. 2. Ensure you receive information in writing, agree who will take the lead in investigating the concern. Usually this will be the Welfare Officer but in some cases the coach or teacher may wish to take the lead.

3. Initially try to effect mediation between the parties. The mediator could be the Welfare Officer and/or the Coach. 4. When children involved are under 16 years of age ensure a parent/guardian is present when the child is spoken to or another adult nominated by the parent. 5. If the young person is 16/17 years of age the parent and young person can agree no parent to be present or nominate another adult. 6. If mediation fails then follow the following policy:

- Set up a committee of 3 people – normally this would be the Welfare Officer, a suitable committee member or coach and a committee member who will take notes.
- Ensure all members of the committee are fully aware of the concerns raised and not involved in or related to any of the parties involved.
- Meet initially with the bullied young person and his/her parents as appropriate. Allow the young person concerned to explain the issues including what happened, where and how the incident made them feel. Reassure them they did right to raise the concern and that you take their concern seriously.
- In cases where the swimmer is 10 or under the parents may prefer to meet with the committee of 3 without the swimmer but with a letter in writing (self written or with parents help if required) produced by the swimmer as to what happened etc.
- Ask the swimmer if there were any witnesses to what took place and if so ask the parents of those under 18 consent to either speak to them or ask the parent to get in writing any information they have/what they saw etc. If the witness is over 18 you can approach them directly for this information.
- When you have all the information from the bullied swimmer speak to the alleged bully and his/her parent in line with above policy. In some cases you will find they admit to wrong doing and you can go straight to taking appropriate action.
- If the alleged bully denies the incident(s) ask them for their side of the issue and if they have anyone who they wish you to speak to and do so in line with the above policy.

When you have no agreement or evidence on what happened it is for the committee of 3 to consider all the information and “FORM A VIEW” on what took place on the “BALANCE OF PROBABILITIES”. This should be formed based on the information gathered and your view of what was alleged, previous concerns, knowledge of those involved etc. 7. Once an outcome is achieved confirming bullying took place either through evidence or on the balance of probabilities, consider what action you wish to take. Some options are:

- An apology and agreed proper behaviour in future;
- A behaviour contract; and/or
- suspension for a specified period of time in line with club disciplinary policy.

8. Ensure everything is recorded and that all parties are kept informed of what is happening and outcomes/action. 9. Time is of the essence in matters involving children. Ensure there is minimum delay in considering the matters