



Wellington Swimming Club Anti- Bullying Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Wellington Swimming Club is committed to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment for our members so they can swim in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Whilst bullying is very rare in our club, we are committed to addressing any issues promptly and effectively. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our club. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach or committee member in confidence, who will pass your concerns to the Club's Welfare Officer.

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 – pushing, kicking, hitting, 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, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

Here at Wellington Swimming Club we aim to create a nurturing environment for all children so that they can learn and achieve in their own right. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. We aim to support every child who is being bullied as well as helping the bully learn different ways of behaving.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

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

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

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

- Says he/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- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;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 kit 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 is wrong;
- Give improbable excuses for any of the above;

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering;
- Cries 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 be investigated. If you need help or support please do not hesitate to contact the Club Welfare Officer.

PROCEDURES

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer
2. In cases of serious bullying, the case will be referred by the Welfare Officer to the ASA for advice;
3. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem in confidence;

4. If necessary, the Police will be consulted;
5. The Welfare Officer will support all the children involved in the incident, including the child who is being bullied and the child who is bullying;
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the club will initiate disciplinary action according to the Wellington Swimming Club anti-bullying policy.

RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

1. Reconciliation, by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem;
2. If this fails, a small panel made up of the Welfare Officer, Chair, Head Coach and Child's Coach should meet with the parent and the child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity and agreed by all as a true account;
3. The same panel should meet with the parent and child against whom allegations have been made so that their side of the incident can be put forward and taken into consideration. Minutes should be taken and agreed;
4. If bullying has, in the view of the panel, taken place, the swimmer should be warned and put on notice of further action, i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether reconciliation between parties is appropriate at this time;
5. Full co-operation of parents/guardians is expected in order to monitor and resolve the situation and prevent re-occurrence of any further incidence;
6. All coaches involved with both swimmers will be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process;
7. All information will be confidential and only those concerned with the case will be made aware of the situation;

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

1. The ASA will be informed and will advise on action to be taken;
2. It is expected that any case of alleged bullying, whether a parent or coach, will be taken seriously according to ASA guidelines;
3. More serious cases will be referred to the Police or Social Services;

PREVENTION

- The Club is required to adhere to ASA law, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, for which the anti-bullying policy is one part;
- All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the anti-bullying and acceptable behaviour policy 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;

SWIMMERS, COACHES AND PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Respect the individual rights of all members;
- Be sensitive to the feelings of fellow swimmers;
- Have a caring manner to all Club members;
- Immediately report any incidents of bullying, knowing that whenever possible all information will be dealt with confidentially. Swimmers should report incidents to the Club Welfare Officer;

COACHES ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Treat all swimmers with respect;
- Avoid the use of sarcasm or ridicule;
- Deal with any incidents quickly and effectively, emphasise the need for lane discipline and respect for fellow swimmers;