

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### RATIONALE

Bullying takes many forms and is open to different interpretations by individuals. It can be short-term or long-term; physical or verbal or just a look; overt or subtle intimidation. An agreed definition of bullying is important if an active policy is to be successful.

### DEFINITION

Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association defines bullying as the wilful, conscious and often frequent action resulting from a desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else.

### RECOGNISING BULLIES

A Bully tends to:

- have aggressive attitudes over which they may have no control.
- lack empathy; some cannot imagine how the victim feels; others can, and derive satisfaction from this
- lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow 'deserves' the bullying treatment

### RECOGNISING LIKELY VICTIMS

Victims May Be Swimmers Who:

- Are new to the club or squad
- Are different in appearance, speech or background
- Suffer from low self-esteem
- Demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied e.g. tantrums, loss of control
- Are more anxious or nervous
- Just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and react wrongly

Behavioural Indicators Of Bullying Include:

- A reluctance to attend training/participate fully
- A drop in performance and/or becoming withdrawn or depressed
- Reduced concentration
- Being emotionally up and down (e.g. tearful)

Physical Indicators Of Bullying May Include:

- Frequent stomach-aches or headaches
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Scratching or bruising
- Damaged clothes
- A shortage of money and/or frequent loss of possessions
- Bingeing (e.g. on food, cigarettes or alcohol)
- Self-harm

### AIMS OF THE POLICY

1. To involve all swimmers, staff and parents in understanding bullying, in preventing bullying, in identifying bullying and in taking appropriate and effective action.
2. To make bullying an open issue – to be seen to recognise and act on bullying – silence and secrecy nurture bullying.

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3. To encourage swimmers to speak out in the knowledge that they will be listened to, believed and action will be taken.

4. To identify a named person (or persons) to whom victims of bullying can turn to for help, in the knowledge that appropriate action will be taken.

## PREVENTING BULLYING

### Factors Which Help Prevent Bullying:

- An active policy, understood and implemented collectively
- An open approach, involving everyone in discussion and by promotion of literature and organisations such as 'Swim-Line' which give advice and support to bullies and their victims
- Anticipating problems e.g. individuals, routines, buildings etc
- Fair but firm discipline
- Training for staff/volunteers to ensure that a whole club approach to dealing with bullying is both understood and implemented.

### Action To Be Taken If Bullying Occurs:

#### A. First Steps:

- Be firm but remain calm and in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give them control of the situation. Reacting aggressively may give the message that it is all right to bully if you have the power.
- Take the incident or report seriously – listen sympathetically, give reassurance.
- Take action as soon as possible
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to both the victim and bully.
- Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove.
- Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
- Any punishment must be appropriate, considered and consistent (e.g. removal from training)
- Explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given

#### B. Involve Others:

- Inform the Child Welfare Officer as soon as possible and be guided by them.
- With the CWO, inform others if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant e.g. unsupervised areas.
- Ask the CWO to inform parents if appropriate.

#### C. Avoid:

- Allowing the incident to 'live on' in the form of inappropriate punishment.
- Being overprotective – allow the victim to help him/herself
- Keeping the incident a secret
- Hiding the incident from parents
- Calling in parents without a constructive plan to offer.

### And Finally

Think ahead – try to prevent a recurrence of the incident.