



## **Action Plan to Address Bullying**

### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at San Dimas Aquatics and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. SDA is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. If a swimmer or parent is aware of any bullying behavior, they are expected to tell a coach, SDA staff member, team captain, parent volunteer, or **complete the SDA Grievance form online**.

Objectives of SDA's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that SDA will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all 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 behavior clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that SDA takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

According to USA Swimming:

Bullying is the severe or repeated use, regardless of when or where it may occur, by one or more USA Swimming members of an oral, written, electronic or 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 (or participating non-member) that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;

- i. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- ii. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iii. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or

iv. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which includes 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:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a SDA Coach, SDA staff member, team captain;
- Fill out the online **SDA Grievance Form**, or write a letter or email to an SDA Coach or staff member.
- Make a report to the USA Swimming SafeSport 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 SDA 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. The most efficient way to report bullying behavior is to complete the **San Dimas Aquatics Grievance Form** that can be found under the “MAAPP” tab on our website [sandimasaquatics.org](http://sandimasaquatics.org).

## **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 okay 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 we intervene.

If bullying is occurring at SDA or it is reported to be occurring at SDA, 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 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 cyberbullying. 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. We will:

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, we will 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. We will also 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 we have determined if the situation is bullying, we will support all of the kids involved.

## **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED**

**3. In order to support the kids who are being bullied, SDA staff will:**

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show them we 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.

**4. To address bullying behavior, we will:**

- 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 is bullied.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. For instance, ask the child to do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for SDA or San Dimas Recreation Center, or for others in the community.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences.
- f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how and what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good

teammate.

**5. SDA will also 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 parent volunteer;
- 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.