



Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

Wallingford Family YMCA Dolphins

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Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

- All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
- Participating non-members (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
- Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes.

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

USA Swimming member clubs and LSCs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

I. Observable and Interruptible

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult unless meeting with a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider (see below) or under emergency circumstances.

II. Meetings

- a. Meetings between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open. If available, it must occur in a room that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. Meetings must not be conducted in an Applicable Adult or athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during team travel.

III. Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers

If a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider meets with a minor athlete in conjunction with participation, including at practice or competition sites, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

- a. The door remains unlocked;
- b. Another adult is present at the facility;
- c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and

- d. Written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider, with a copy provided to the Club Name.

IV. Individual Training Sessions

Individual training sessions outside of the regular course of training and practice between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the training session.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

I. Content

All electronic communication from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

II. Open and Transparent

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult must copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete.

When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

III. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by Club Name, LSC or by an Applicable Adult subject to this Policy. The organization must abide by any such request that the minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as

opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued. Minor athletes may “friend” Club Name and/or LSC’s official page.

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms.

TRAVEL

I. Local Travel

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete’s legal guardian.

Legal guardians must pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

II. Team Travel

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete’s legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each competition for the minor athlete to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

Team Managers and Chaperones who travel with Club Name or LSC must be USA Swimming members in good standing.

- b. Unrelated Applicable Adults must not share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with a minor athlete.

Minor athletes should be paired to share hotel rooms or other sleeping arrangements with other minor athletes of the same gender and of similar age.

- c. Meetings during team travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (i.e., any such meeting must be observable and interruptible). Meetings must not be conducted in an individual’s hotel room or other overnight sleeping location.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

I. Requirement to Use Locker Room or Changing Area

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Applicable Adult changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

II. Use of Recording Devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a minor athlete or an Applicable Adult is prohibited.

III. Undress

An unrelated Applicable Adult must not expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a minor athlete under any circumstance. An unrelated Applicable Adult must not request an unrelated minor athlete to expose the minor athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the unrelated Applicable Adult under any circumstance.

IV. One-on-One Interactions

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

V. Monitoring

The Wallingford Family YMCA Dolphins must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- a. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- b. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- c. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- d. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.

Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.

VI. Legal Guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas

Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.

MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETE TRAINING MODALITIES

- I. Definition: In this section, the term "Massage" refers to any massage, rubdown, athletic training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).
- II. General Requirement
Any Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an open and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.
- III. Additional Minor Athlete Requirements
 - a. Written consent by a legal guardian must be obtained in advance by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to Club Name.
 - b. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage.
 - c. Any Massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.
 - d. Any Massage of a minor athlete must only occur after a proper diagnosis from a treating physician and be done in the course of care according to the physician's treatment plan.

ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable on the Wallingford Family YMCA Dolphins and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Dolphins are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

OBJECTIVE OF THE DOLPHIN'S BULLYING AND ACTION PLAN:

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, 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 clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that the Dolphins 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.

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;

- Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;

- Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, 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 things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport 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 club 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.

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 you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, 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 you are 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 cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

2. Then, we determine if it's bullying.

b. 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.

c. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;

d. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, 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. 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.

e. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved

1. Support the kids who are being bullied

a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you 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. It may help to:

- i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
- ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- iii. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behavior

- 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 bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
 - iii. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
- d. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
- e. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.

f. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:

i. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.

ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

g. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

5. 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 club board member;

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.

EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS

For additional information on Safe Sports MAAPP please visit www.usaswimming.org/Home/safe-sport or the links below.

Applicable Adults ([Click Here](#))

One-On-One Interactions ([Click Here](#))

Social Media and Electronic Communications ([Click Here](#))

Travel ([Click Here](#))

Locker Rooms and Changing Areas ([Click Here](#))

Massages, Rubdowns and Athletic Training Modalities ([Click Here](#))

APT Requirement for Adult Athletes ([Click Here](#))

Non-USA Swimming Activities ([Click Here](#))

COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of this code of conduct for coaches is to establish common expectations for all members of the coaching staff of the club. It is to be used as a guide to promote a positive team environment and good sportsmanship.

- ☐ At all times, adhere to USA Swimming's rules and code of conduct.
- ☐ Set a good example of respect and sportsmanship for participants and fans to follow.
- ☐ Act and dress with professionalism and dignity in a manner suitable to his/her profession.
- ☐ Respect officials and their judgment and abide by the rules of the event.
- ☐ Treat opposing coaches, participants, and spectators with respect.
- ☐ Instruct participants in sportsmanship and demand that they display good sportsmanship.
- ☐ Coach in a positive manner and do not use derogatory comments or abusive language.
- ☐ Win with humility and lose with dignity.
- ☐ Treat every athlete fairly, justly, impartially, intelligently, and with sensitivity.
- ☐ Always place the well-being, health, and safety of swimmers above all other considerations, including developing performance.
- ☐ Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching and teaching children.
- ☐ Always maintain a professional separation between coach and athlete.

Any complaints of a coach violating this code of conduct will be brought to the attention of his/her supervisor and/or the club's board of directors.

Coach _____

Date _____