

WESTTOWN AQUATIC CLUB

Anti-Bullying Policy

2025 - 2026 Season

APPROVED 05/31/2025

Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose

Westtown Aquatics is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all athletes. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is detrimental to team spirit and can cause lasting harm. We are dedicated to ensuring a positive and supportive atmosphere where all swimmers feel safe, valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential. If bullying occurs, it will be addressed promptly and effectively. All athletes, parents, and coaches are expected to uphold this commitment and report any incidents.

Objectives

- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.
- Define bullying to ensure all members recognize and understand it.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing bullying incidents.
- Foster a culture where athletes feel safe reporting bullying without fear of retaliation.
- Emphasize that Westtown Aquatics takes bullying seriously and will support all affected individuals.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying includes any intentional, severe, or repeated actions –verbal, written, electronic, or physical–that harm, intimidate, or create a hostile environment for another individual. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical aggression, verbal harassment, or exclusionary behavior.
- Online or electronic harassment, including social media abuse.
- Any behavior that causes fear, emotional distress, or disrupts training.

Reporting Bullying

Any athlete experiencing or witnessing bullying should:

- Talk to a parent, coach, or club representative.
- Submit a written or email report to Head Coach JJ Rudisill or SafeSport Coordinator Melissa Ash.
- Report incidents to USA Swimming Safe Sport staff if necessary.
 - ***Note that SafeSport Reports should be filed in cases of abuse or exploitation towards minors, including verbal, physical, or sexual abuse or assault. In most cases, please initially reach out to your coach or team SafeSport Coordinator.***

Reports should be made as soon as possible to ensure a prompt response.

Response to Bullying

If bullying occurs, we will take immediate action:

- Intervene promptly – Coaches or staff will address the situation as soon as it is identified.
- Ensure safety – Any immediate threats to an athlete's well-being will be managed first.
- Gather facts – We will speak with all involved parties to understand the situation.
- Determine appropriate action – Based on the nature of the incident, corrective measures will be taken, including counseling, mediation, or disciplinary action.
- Follow up – Continued support will be provided to ensure the issue is resolved and does **not** reoccur.

Supporting Athletes

- For those who experience bullying – We will provide a safe space, encourage open communication, and develop an action plan to prevent further incidents.
- For those who engage in bullying – Education and intervention strategies will be implemented to correct behavior and promote accountability.
- For bystanders – We encourage all team members to report bullying, support their teammates, and foster a culture of inclusion and respect.

At Westtown Aquatic Club, we are committed to creating a positive, safe, and respectful swimming environment where every athlete can thrive.



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