



UCity Swim Club Bullying Policy

(This policy can also be found at universitycityswimclub.com.)

Purpose

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at University City Swim Club (the “Club”) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a child. The purpose of this Policy is to provide a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all of our athletes during Club-related activities. In furtherance of its purpose, this Policy sets forth an action plan to address all reported instances of bullying promptly and effectively, and highlights the need for all athletes involved to receive the support they need to prevent bullying.

What is Bullying?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7 as: The severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming [athletes] (“[Athletes]”), regardless of when or where it may occur, of an oral, written, electronic or other 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 [Athlete] that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of: (i) causing physical or emotional harm to the other [Athlete] or damage to the other [Athlete]’s property; (ii) placing the other [Athlete] in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creating a hostile environment for the other [Athlete] at any USA Swimming activity; (iv) infringing on the rights of the other [Athlete] at any USA Swimming activity; or (v) 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 immediately:

- Talk to your parents or guardians about it;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Officer, and/or Board Member;
- Write a letter or email to a Club Coach, Officer, and/or Board Member.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to promptly report their athlete’s complaint to a Club Coach, Officer, and/or Board Member.

While it is not always practical to report a complaint immediately following an incident, every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the Club’s leadership as soon as possible to stop the bullying behavior, and to increase the likelihood that the most accurate facts can be gathered concerning the incident.



How We Handle Bullying

If bullying is occurring during Club-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately and separate the athletes involved, if necessary. Whenever possible, it is advisable to seek help from another parent, Coach, Officer, or Board Member.
2. Make sure everyone is safe, and address any immediate medical needs.
3. Stay calm, model respectful behavior, and encourage others involved to do so as well.

Next, we address the situation by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE INVOLVED ATHLETES using the following approach:

A. Finding Out What Happened

1. First, we get the facts.
 - a. A member of Club leadership will separately interview each of the athletes involved.
 - b. A member of Club leadership will separately interview any other persons known to have information about the incident.
 - c. During the interview process, the interviewer will listen without casting blame and will not refer to the act as “bullying” while trying to understand what happened.
2. Then, we determine if it's bullying according to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.
 1. A member of Club leadership will review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
 2. A member of Club leadership will consider the following questions:
 - o What is the nature of the conduct complained of?
 - o Was that conduct directed towards the affected athlete?
 - o Is it severe or repeated?
 - o Is it reasonable to believe that the conduct has caused physical or emotional harm?
 - o Was property damaged?
 - o Is the affected athlete in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or of damage of his/her property?
 - o Is it reasonable to believe that the conduct has created a hostile environment for the affected athlete at any Club-related activity?
 - o Is it reasonable to believe that the conduct has infringed on the rights of the affected athlete at any Club-related activity?
 - o Is it reasonable to believe that the conduct has materially and substantially disrupted the training process or the orderly operation of any Club-related activity?
 3. If a member of Club leadership concludes that bullying has occurred, the Club will notify the parents or guardians of the athletes involved and will attempt to provide support to those athletes in order to prevent future instances of bullying.

B. Supporting The Athletes Involved

1. Support the athletes who have been bullied.
 - a. Listen and focus on the athlete. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure them that bullying is not their fault.



- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the athlete. The athlete, parents, fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 1. Ask the athlete 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 athlete should not be forced to change.
 2. 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.
 - c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the athlete.
2. Support the athlete exhibiting the bullying behavior.
- a. Make sure the athlete knows what the problematic behavior is. It is important for them to understand that the behavior is hurting someone else.
 - b. Calmly and respectfully tell the child that the problematic behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
 - c. Work with the athlete to understand the cause of the problematic behavior. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because of some other issue like abuse or stress. They also may have been bullied. These athletes may be in need of professional help.
 - d. Give the athlete the opportunity to make things right. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter of apology; or
 - ii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
 - e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Suspending or removing the offending athlete from the team will not reduce bullying behavior. In fact, those athletes may be less likely to admit and correct their problematic behavior 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.
 - f. Follow-up. After the issue appears to be resolved, continue finding ways to help the athlete remember that what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate and to have good sportsmanship.

3. Support bystanders who witness bullying.

Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Reassure them that they have the power to help in the following ways:

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, Coach, Officer, or Board Member;
- c. Help the person being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way out of the situation (e.g., "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.