

## **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable here at DC Wave and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. DC Wave is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes, coaches, officials, and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is occurring is expected to tell a coach, official, parent, or athlete/mentor.

### **Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures Objectives**

- 1 To make it clear that we will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- 2 To define bullying and give all athletes, coaches, officials, and parents a clear understanding of what bullying is.
- 3 To make it known to all athletes, coaches, officials, and parents that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
- 4 To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
- 5 To make it known and spread the word that DC Wave takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of 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 member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- i causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- ii placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv infringing on the rights of the other member 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:

- Talk to your parents;
  - Talk to a DC Wave coach, official, parent, or other designated individual;
  - Write a letter or email to a DC Wave coach 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 ok to get another adult to help.
- 2 Separate the those involved.
- 3 Make sure everyone is safe.
- 4 Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- 5 Stay calm. Reassure the those involved, including bystanders.
- 6 Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring or it is reported to be occurring at DC Wave, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED** using the following approach:

### ***FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED***

#### **1. First, we get the facts.**

- a Keep all those involved 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.** 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.

- a Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
  - •What is the history between those 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 bullied individual worried it will happen again?
- c Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse bullying behavior.
- d Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of those involved.

### ***SUPPORTING THE THOSE INVOLVED***

### **3. Support those who are being bullied**

- a Listen and focus on the bullied individual. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the bullied individual that bullying is not their fault.
- b Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied individual. The bullied individual, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
  - i Ask the one being bullied what can be done to make them feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. They are 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 one who is bullied should not be forced to change.
  - ii Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the team 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 bullied child.

### **4 Address bullying behavior**

- a **Make sure the bullied individual knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.**
- b **Show the bullied individual that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the bullied individual that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.**

- c Work with the bullied individual to understand some of the reasons they bullied. For example:**
  - i Some 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 a bully acts out because something else —issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These bullies may be in need of additional support.**
  
- d Involve the individual 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:**
  - i Write a letter apologizing to the individual who was bullied.**
  - ii Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the team, or for others in your community.**
  - iii Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.**
  
- e 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. Athletes 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 those who have been bullied.**

- 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 other trusted adult;
  - c Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the one 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.
  - d Help the one 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.”
  - e Set a good example by not bullying others.
  - f 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.