Seals Swim Club   **Action Plan to Address Bullying**

Purpose:
Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Seals Swim Club and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parent should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of Seals Swim Club's Bullying policy and Action Plan:
1. To make it clear that Seals Swim Club 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 clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that Seals Swim Club 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 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 hast he 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 pruposes 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
- Write a letter or e-mail to the club coach or other designated individual
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff

There is not 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 behavoior 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.
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:

1) **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED:**
   a. First, we get the facts.
   b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids
   c. Listen without blaming
   d. Done 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 available information.

2) **DETERMINE IF IT IS BULLYING:**
   a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying
   b. Consider the following questions
      i. What is the history of the kids involved?
      ii. Have there been past conflicts?

   iii. Is there a power imbalance

   iv. 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 his does not excuse the bullying behavior.

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

3) SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

 a. Support he kdis who are being bullied

   i. Listen

   ii. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child

   iii. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe.

   iv. Develop a game plan

 b. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop consistently support the bullied child.

4) ADDRESS THE BULLYING BEHAVIOR

 a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.

 b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously

 c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied

 d. Involve the kids who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.

 e. Avoid strategies that don't work or negative consequences.

 f. Follow up.