



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

In response to USA Swimming's requirement for clubs to implement an action plan to address bullying, NOVA has developed the following policy to enhance existing safeguards for the Safe Sport Program.

NOVA strives to provide a safe environment for all of our members so that they can succeed in a secure atmosphere. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our club. If bullying does occur, the incident will be taken seriously, and dealt with by staff members promptly and effectively.

"Bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including those electronically transmitted) that is reasonably perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress. Bullying is a repeat offense against one or more victims.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Report bullying incidents to a member of the coaching staff, and in cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the board for advice.
- The bullying behavior or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- Parents should be informed and if appropriate, will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change his/her (their) behavior.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the club will initiate disciplinary action.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

### **CLUB DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

If the club decides it is appropriate, it will follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel of 3 (consisting of 2 coaches and 1 board member) will meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, and these will be agreed upon by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons will meet with the alleged bully and parent(s). The allegation will be explained to them and a chance will be given to give any alternate version of the events. Minutes will again be taken and agreed upon by all, as representing the truth.
4. If bullying has, in their view, taken place, the swimmer will be warned and put on notice of further action (e.g., temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues). Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases, the parent of the bully or bullied swimmer may be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The staff members will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both swimmers will be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process.

NOVA will refer to USA Swimming's anti-bullying policy as a default for procedures not covered in the above document.