

Bullying policy

Seagulls SC are committed to providing a caring, friendly & safe environment for all of our members so they can swim in a relaxed & secure atmosphere.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a deliberate form of abuse & the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain & distress to the victim & if left unchecked can have long-term adverse effects on the victim.

Bullying can occur in a number of forms:

- Emotional: being unfriendly; excluding (emotionally & physically); undermining; sending hurtful text messages; tormenting, (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures).
- Physical: pushing; kicking; hitting; punching, or any use of violence.
- Racist: racial taunts; graffiti; gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal: name-calling; sarcasm; spreading rumours (gossiping) & teasing.

Bullying of any kind is **unacceptable** at our club & if bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell & know that incidents will be dealt with promptly & effectively.

As a result we are a **TELLING** club, in that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to **TELL** the appropriate club Welfare Officer or any Committee member.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

It is hurtful & no-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Any Seagulls SC member who is bullying needs to learn about appropriate positive behaviour.

Seagulls SC has a responsibility to respond promptly & effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

All committee members, coaches & teachers, swimmers & parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All Committee members, teaching & coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying & follow it when bullying is reported.

All swimmers & parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, & what they should do if bullying arises.

As a club, we take bullying seriously. Swimmers & parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs & they should investigate if a child:

- Says he/she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or swimming equipment damaged

- Has possessions go “missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases the child may:

- Start stammering
- Cry themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares
- Start bedwetting
- Become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Be bullying other children or siblings
- Stop eating
- Attempt or threaten suicide, or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility & should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the appropriate Seagulls SC Welfare Officer, or a member of the Committee, or ring Swimline.
2. Reassure the victim that they were right to report it & re-inforce that it is not their fault if they are being bullied.
3. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will initially be investigated through individual discussion with the alleged bully & the victim.
4. The primary aim is to investigate & stop the bullying quickly.
5. Seagulls staff & Committee will be made aware of the problem so that they can monitor the situation & offer support as appropriate.
6. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the ASA for advice.
7. Parents should be informed & will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
8. If necessary & appropriate, police will be consulted.
9. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
10. If mediation fails & the bullying is seen to continue, the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.
11. Seagulls SC will keep a detailed record of each bullying incident & how it was dealt with.
12. Where necessary, Seagulls SC Child Protection Procedures will be enacted.