



Action Plan to Address Bullying

Purpose

Bullying of any kind prohibited by the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and is unacceptable at Gator Swim Club and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. GSC is committed to providing a safe, caring and supportive environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents 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 administrator.

What is Bullying?

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:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- 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 club coach or team administrator.

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 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 kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
5. Model respectful behavior when intervening.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying using the following approach:

1. We collect the facts.
 - Keep all the involved children separate.
 - Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - Listen without blaming.
 - Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - 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. 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. Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
3. We work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child, maintaining open communication between GSC coaches and staff and parents. If warranted, adjustments at practice may be made.
4. We work with the bullying child to be sure he or she knows what the problem behavior is and why the behavior is wrong and harms others. Additional consequences such as suspension from practice or competition may be warranted.
5. After the bullying issue is resolved, we continue to model respectful and sportsmanlike behavior, and show kids that bullying is taken seriously by the club.