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## **Action Plan of the West Shore YMCA Competitive Swimming program to Address Bullying**

### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the YMCA and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The YMCAs committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly 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, YMCA staff or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of the YMCA's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the YMCA 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 the YMCA 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 YMCA 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 WSY activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any WSY activity; or materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any WSY activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of our competitive swimming program).

## **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 Coach, or other YMCA staff person;
- Write a letter or email to the Director of Competitive Swimming, practice group coach;

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 YMCA staff person 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. 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 the YMCA or it is reported to be occurring at one of the offsite facilities, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following procedure:

Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, the Director of Competitive Swimming will investigate the complaint as appropriate under the circumstances and depending upon the results of the investigation and the seriousness of the occurrence, may:

1. Take no action;
2. Notify the parents of the bully of the incident and issue a verbal warning;
3. Issue a formal written warning to the bully and his parents; or
4. Invoke a disciplinary policy (which can result in suspension or expulsion of a swimmer)