

# **SEVENSOAKS SWIMMING CLUB**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so that they can swim in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer or any committee member.

### **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), 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, teasing

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

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

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

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

As a club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

#### **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 and that 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- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence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 bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

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

### **Procedures**

- Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the committee or ring SwimLine
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to Swim England for advice
- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution

### **Disputes procedure**

Sevenoaks Swimming Club (the 'Club') is committed to providing high quality training and services to all its members and volunteers. It aims to provide a supportive environment and to be responsive to concerns when they are raised. It is recognised that problems may arise of a teaching-related or service-related nature. Those problems need addressing in order to ensure that normal high standards are maintained.

Dealing with small problems or areas of concern as they arise will often prevent them becoming larger and harder to resolve ones. Members and volunteers are encouraged therefore to raise any issues of dissatisfaction, at an early stage, so that

they can be dealt with effectively. The Club undertakes to take seriously all issues that are raised and to deal with them through processes that are timely, fair, consistent and easy to follow.

The Club defines a dispute as any specific concern about teaching-related, service-related provision or a breach of the Equity Policy or Disability Statement. Members and volunteers are advised to use the informal mechanisms for resolving such concerns before they invoke the formal disputes procedure. The informal processes are outlined below.

Where a dispute is upheld, whether through an informal process or the formal procedure, appropriate redress will be determined and notified as part of the decision.

The Club is concerned that individuals should feel able to raise any grievance and to be aware that no member or volunteer will be penalised for doing so unless the dispute is untrue and not made in good faith.

Where a dispute involves opposing parties, the Club is under a duty to act fairly towards both parties and this duty must follow the procedure adopted by the Club.

### **Who to contact**

In the first instance contact the teacher/coach or Club Secretary. If the teacher/coach is unable to resolve the issue the matter may be referred to the Chairman as are issues such as breaches of the Club's rules, Equity Policy or Disability Statement.

### **Informal ways of resolving issues**

Most concerns can be resolved informally, and it is the responsibility of the member or volunteer to bring forward issues at the time they arise and to try and resolve them through informal means.

Informal resolution is taken to mean by agreement with appropriate Club organisers without having recourse to the formal procedure described below

### **The responsibilities of the Club are to ensure, as far as possible, that:**

- the process for responding to issues of concern or dissatisfaction raised by members and volunteers is clear
- teachers/coaches/committee members are accessible and approachable for those who wish to raise concerns
- concerns are dealt with promptly, sympathetically and with respect for privacy and confidentiality
- issues are considered and outcomes reported in an appropriate manner, eg: through personal contact or via e-mail/letter

## Formal disputes

The formal procedure may be invoked for problems that are too serious to be dealt with informally such as abusive behaviour, any action likely to cause injury to, or impair the safety of members and volunteers, and unauthorised disclosure of confidential information to a third party. It may also be invoked for problems where there has been a serious but unsuccessful attempt at informal resolution.

The member or volunteer should submit their dispute in writing with any relevant evidence to the Chairperson of Sevenoaks Swimming Club. This should be submitted within a reasonable period of the subject of the dispute occurring. The complainant will not be disadvantaged if they have delayed submitting the form in order to seek informal resolution of the dispute. A third party (eg: parent) may submit a dispute on behalf of the member who is under 18 years of age. In addition, if either party is under 18 years of age, they will be advised of their right to be accompanied by a parent (or person with parental responsibility for them) or coach to help them present their case.

Where the dispute is against the Chairperson, he/she will determine whether the disputes procedure is appropriate, or whether the issue should be dealt with by some other procedure, e.g.: an appropriate outside body.

In any event, the Chairperson will, within five working days of the receipt of the dispute, send a letter of acknowledgement to the complainant which will:

- indicate whether or not the disputes procedure is appropriate, including an explanation if it is deemed inappropriate
- where it is appropriate to operate the disputes procedure, outline the sequence of meetings/actions and approximate timetable to be followed in order to investigate the dispute and reach a conclusion. Such timetable and process will be sufficient to ensure that a reasoned judgement is possible while recognising the desirability of a speedy outcome.

Once investigations have been undertaken and a conclusion has been reached, the Chairman will communicate the outcome verbally to the parties wherever possible, and in writing within five days. If the dispute is upheld this will include an indication of appropriate redress. If the dispute is rejected, this will include:

- the reason for the decision
- the option to pursue a complaint under Swim England's Judicial Rules which can be found in the Swim England Handbook or the Extracts of Swim England Laws and Technical Rules