

**SAFE SPORT**  
**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**  
**HARASSMENT & BULLYING**

Unsportsmanlike conduct, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated at the ATOM under any circumstances and may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by ATOM Head Coaches.

**UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Displaying behaviors inconsistent with the Vision, Mission and Values of the Club such as disrespecting another individual or group, being discourteous to others, displaying bad temper, using inappropriate language, raising voices, being unfair or knowingly violating the rules, cheating, etc.

**HARASSMENT**

Harassing behaviors of any nature that have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's or coach's work performance, with a swimmer's participation in the program, or in any way creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by the ATOM Head Coaches.

**BULLYING**

Bullying is considered a form of harassment and is potentially devastating to the victim, counterproductive to team spirit and may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by the ATOM Head Coaches and ownership.

Because bullying is increasingly prevalent in contemporary life, we will provide more detail on this important topic in separate handouts and team awareness and training sessions every season.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct specifically prohibits bullying. Should anyone become aware of a bullying incident, he/she is expected to immediately report the matter to his/her coach, the Head Coaches. ATOM considers the act of bullying as defined in this document to include and apply to all ATOM members.

## **SAFESPORT**

USA Swimming's top priority continues to be keeping our athletes safe. No form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, has a place in our sport. As a part of our continued commitment to safeguarding our athletes, USA Swimming has enacted enhancements to our Safe Sport policy and education requirements.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport, the separate, independent, organization that oversees all sexual misconduct reports in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement created the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies to set a baseline for acceptable safety standards that limit one-on-one interactions between adults and minor athletes.

On April 29, 2019, USA Swimming released its Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) addressing one-on-one interactions, social media and electronic communications, travel: local and team, locker rooms and changing areas and massages, rubdowns and athletic training modalities. All USA Swimming member clubs were required to implement MAAPP in full by June 23, 2019.

Training our members in abuse prevention and mandatory reporting is just as important as creating policies. USA Swimming is required to provide regular and consistent training for all adults who interact with and have direct contact with minor athletes, including adult athletes. Starting June 23, 2019, as a condition of membership, all athlete members ages 18 and over must complete Athlete Protection Training.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. If you are not sure who to contact with a concern please *contact Safe Sport Staff at the National Office* and we will be sure to talk through your concern, answer your questions and connect you with the correct people.

If your concern deals with any of the following:

- Sexual Misconduct
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexually Explicit/Inappropriate Communication through Social Media
- Criminal Charges
- Use, Sale, or Distribution of illegal drugs
- Physical Abuse
- Inappropriate Touching
- Lap Sitting
- Coaches sharing hotel rooms with Athletes
- Rubdown or Massage performed by coaches
- Pictures or video taken in locker rooms or changing areas
- Peer to Peer Bullying
- Adult to Athlete Bullying
- Parent Issues
- Violations of team rules and team code of conduct

[USA SWIMMING CODE OF CONDUCT](#)

## **MANDATORY REPORTING RULE**

### ARTICLE 306 - SEXUAL MISCONDUCT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 306.1 It is every member's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct by a member as described in Article 304.3.8 to USA Swimming's Director of Safe Sport. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.
- 306.2 No member shall retaliate against anyone who has made a good faith report under 306.1.
- 306.3 False reporting of sexual misconduct made in bad faith is prohibited.
- 306.4 Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of sexual abuse."

## **USA SWIMMING MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY (MAAPP)**

USA Swimming **requires all adult athletes to complete the online Athlete Protection Training (APT) course. This includes 17 year old athletes who must complete the training before their 18th birthday or will risk ineligibility.** Per USA Swimming, failing to complete the requirement on time "will result in an athlete's inability to swim in a meet or at practice." To summarize:

- All adult athletes (18 years or older) must complete the APT.
- Any 17-year-old athlete must complete the APT by their 18th birthday or risk ineligibility once they turn 18.
- Adult athletes must complete the APT every year – it expires 12 months after you complete all three courses.
- Athletes who do not fulfill this requirement will be ineligible to compete in meets or practice, and times swum while ineligible will not count for qualification to any meets.

### **Additional points of information:**

- All electronic communication between a minor athlete and a coach must take place between 8am & 8pm except in emergency circumstances.
- All electronic communication between a minor athlete and a coach must include a parent/guardian in the conversation/thread (in the past we've allowed any 3rd set of eyes but now it must be a parent/guardian as per the MAAPP).
- No coach may friend/follow a minor athlete or have a minor athlete as a friend/follower on any social media account. Coaches may not send any type of instant/direct message to a minor athlete through any social media platform.

## **ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING**

ATOM does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. ATOM is 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 or team owner. Retaliation for reporting incidents will not be tolerated.

Objectives of the ATOM Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

- To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To define bullying and give all board coaches, parents, and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
- To make it known to all parents, swimmers, and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
- To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
- To spread the word that ATOM takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

### **What is Bullying?**

#### **USA Swimming Code of Conduct 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:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property.
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property.
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity.
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
5. 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 PROCESS**

An athlete who feels that they have been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to a Coach.
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach or the club's Safe Sport Representative.
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

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 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 taking 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 our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

## **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED**

1. We get the facts.
  - Keep all the involved children separate.
  - Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
  - Actively 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. Then, 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.
  - Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying.

- To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
  - What is the history between the kids involved?
  - Have there been past conflicts?
  - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
  - Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- 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.
- Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

### **SUPPORTING KIDS INVOLVED**

#### 3. Support the kid(s) who are being bullied.

- Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
  - Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make them feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. They are not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
  - Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between ATOM and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

#### 4. Address bullying behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly, tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons they bullied. For example:
  - Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.

- Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may need additional support.
- Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
  - Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
  - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the whole team, or for others in your community.
  - Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
  - Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you're out” strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
  - Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

### **SUPPORT ADDITIONAL ATHLETES**

Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member.
- Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. Example: “Let's go, practice is about to start.”
- Set a good example by not bullying others.
- Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.