



YBAC POLICY: ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING

USA Swimming member clubs are required to establish their own anti-bullying policy. The following is a model policy as an example which shall serve as the default for any club that fails to establish its own policy. Club anti-bullying policies should be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches, and other non-athlete members of the club. Once a customized plan is developed and approved by your club, the default plan will no longer apply. Each member club is responsible for the approval and implementation of its action plan.

Action Plan of the YBAC Hurricanes Swim Team to Address Bullying

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at YBAC (the “Club”) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club 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 report the concern to a coach, Safe Sport Club Coordinator, or other designated club representative.

Objectives of the Club’s Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, 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 YBAC takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

Bullying is the severe or repeated use, regardless of when or where it may occur, by one or more USA Swimming members of an oral, written, electronic or 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 or Participating Non-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;

- i. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of



- damage to his/her property;
- ii. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iii. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- iv. 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, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- 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** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is okay 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. **First, we get the facts.**
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.



- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - e. 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.
- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
 - b. 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?
 - c. 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.
 - d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

YBAC Response Following Review

Once the available information has been reviewed, YBAC Coaching Staff will determine whether the behavior constitutes bullying, another violation of the YBAC Athlete Code of Conduct or team policies, or a matter requiring referral under USA Swimming, YMCA, or Safe Sport policies.

When a violation of YBAC team policy or the Athlete Code of Conduct is identified, the athlete and parent/guardian will be informed of the concern and the appropriate response. Disciplinary action will follow the process established in the YBAC Team Handbook and may include:

1. A verbal or written warning to the athlete and/or parent or guardian.
2. A meeting with the athlete and parent or guardian to address the behavior and establish a plan for resolution.
3. Suspension from team practices, competitions, or other team activities.
4. Removal from the YBAC Hurricanes when behavior continues or circumstances warrant removal.

YBAC Coaching Staff and Alamance County Community YMCA Leadership Staff will determine the appropriate response based on the circumstances of the incident, applicable team policies, and the safety and well-being of the athletes involved.



Conduct that may fall under USA Swimming Safe Sport, MAAPP, or other mandatory reporting requirements will be handled and reported through the appropriate process. YBAC's internal disciplinary process does not replace any reporting obligation required by USA Swimming, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, the YMCA, or applicable law.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the athletes who are being bullied

- a. 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.
- b. 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:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is 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.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

4. Address bullying behavior

YBAC will address confirmed bullying behavior directly with the athlete involved and, when appropriate, the athlete's parent or guardian. The athlete will be clearly informed of the behavior that violated team expectations and why the behavior is unacceptable.

When appropriate, YBAC Coaching Staff may establish expectations for correcting the behavior, repairing harm, and demonstrating appropriate conduct moving forward. The response may include increased supervision, changes intended to protect the affected athlete, a behavioral plan, or disciplinary action consistent with the YBAC Team Handbook.

Any corrective action will prioritize the safety and well-being of the athlete who experienced the bullying. An athlete who has been bullied will not be required to participate in mediation, confrontation, or reconciliation with the athlete responsible for the behavior.

- 5. 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.



- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- c. 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. “Let’s go, practice is about to start.”
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. 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.