

MLY Phoenix Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at MLY Phoenix and will not be tolerated. As stated in our Code of Conduct, we follow the four core principles of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. Not only is bullying a direct violation of these principles, but it is also counterproductive to training and overall team morale, in addition to the physical and emotional harm it may cause the victim. MLY 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 immediately.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying as the severe or repeated use 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 USA Swimming activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v. 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:

1. Talk to your parents
2. Talk to your coaches either in-person or via email
3. 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 will intervene immediately using the following steps:

1. Separate the kids involved
2. Make sure everyone is safe
3. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
4. Find out what happened
 - a. Get the facts.
 - i. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - ii. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - iii. Listen without blaming.
 - iv. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying occurs outside of practice or through texting or social media. Collect all available information.
 - b. Determine if it is bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches.
 - i. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
 - ii. 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?
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.
5. Support the kids 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.

6. Address bullying behavior

a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.

b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.

c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:

i. 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.

ii. 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 be in need of additional support.

d. 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:

i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.

ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for the team

iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.

e. 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.

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 or coach

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.

Note: the MLY Anti-Bullying Policy is based on the USA Swimming Safe Sport Action Plan to Address Bullying. To learn more about bullying and bullying prevention, visit www.stopbullying.gov, or go to www.usaswimming.org/learn (or learn.usaswimming.org for non-members) to take the Safe Sport "Preventing Bullying" free online course.