

# **DONNER SWIM CLUB**

## **BULLYING POLICY & ACTION PLAN**

### **2026–2027 Membership Year**

Donner Swim Club is committed to providing athletes with a safe, respectful, and supportive environment.

Bullying is inconsistent with Donner Swim Club standards and will not be tolerated.

This policy establishes how bullying concerns may be reported and how the Club will respond when bullying is suspected or reported.

## **1. What Is Bullying?**

Bullying generally involves severe or repeated behavior directed at another person that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause, physical or emotional harm, fear, a hostile environment, interference with participation, or significant disruption of Club activities.

Bullying may occur through:

- verbal conduct;
- physical conduct;
- written communication;
- electronic communication or social media;
- images, recordings, or other digital content;
- exclusion or social behavior; or
- other repeated or serious conduct directed at another person.

Not every disagreement, conflict, mistake, or isolated inappropriate interaction constitutes bullying.

The Club will consider the circumstances, history, repetition, impact, and any imbalance of power when evaluating reported behavior.

## **2. Reporting Bullying**

Athletes and families are encouraged to report suspected bullying as soon as reasonably possible.

A concern may be reported to:

- the athlete's coach;
- the Head Coach;
- a Donner Swim Club Board member;
- the Donner Swim Club Safe Sport Coordinator; or
- another appropriate reporting resource.

Reports may be made verbally or in writing.

Bullying concerns that may also involve Safe Sport, abuse, harassment, or another governing-body violation may be reported directly through the appropriate Safe Sport or external reporting process.

A person does not need to prove that bullying occurred before raising a concern.

### 3. Immediate Response

If suspected bullying is occurring during a Donner Swim Club activity, coaches or other appropriate adults should take reasonable steps to:

- stop the behavior;
- separate the individuals involved when necessary;
- ensure immediate safety;
- address any urgent medical or emotional needs; and
- stabilize the situation before determining what occurred.

Immediate intervention should focus first on safety rather than assigning blame.

### 4. Reviewing the Concern

When a bullying concern is reported, Donner Swim Club will make reasonable efforts to understand what occurred.

The review may include:

- speaking separately with the athletes involved;
- speaking with coaches, parents, witnesses, or others with relevant information;
- reviewing available electronic communications or other records;
- considering prior related incidents; and
- determining whether the conduct constitutes bullying, another policy violation, or a conflict requiring a different response.

The Club should avoid assuming that conduct is bullying before sufficient information is gathered.

Relevant considerations may include:

- whether the behavior was repeated or severe;
- the relationship and history between the individuals;
- whether a power imbalance exists;
- the effect of the conduct on the targeted athlete;
- whether the behavior has disrupted training or participation; and
- athlete age and maturity.

### 5. Supporting Athletes

When bullying has occurred, Donner Swim Club will seek to protect and support the athlete who experienced the behavior.

Appropriate steps may include:

- listening to the athlete's concerns;
- discussing reasonable steps to improve safety;
- maintaining communication with the athlete and family;
- adjusting the environment when necessary; and
- monitoring the situation after intervention.

Whenever reasonably possible, the athlete who experienced bullying should not be unnecessarily isolated, penalized, or required to bear the primary burden of correcting the situation.

## 6. Addressing Bullying Behavior

An athlete who engages in bullying should understand what behavior was inappropriate, how it affected others, and what is expected moving forward.

The Club's response may include:

- coaching intervention;
- athlete or parent conferences;
- behavioral expectations;
- restorative or corrective actions when appropriate;
- temporary participation restrictions;
- changes to the training environment;
- disciplinary action; or
- other action consistent with Club policies.

Responses should consider the seriousness of the conduct, athlete age and maturity, prior behavior, safety, and the opportunity for learning and correction.

Serious conduct may warrant immediate or more significant action.

## 7. Bystanders and Team Responsibility

Athletes who witness bullying are encouraged to:

- avoid encouraging or reinforcing the behavior;
- support the athlete being targeted when safe to do so;
- leave or help disengage from the situation when appropriate; and
- report the concern to a trusted adult.

Athletes should not place themselves at risk in attempting to intervene physically.

## 8. Follow-Up

Donner Swim Club may follow up after a bullying concern is addressed to determine whether:

- the behavior has stopped;
- additional support is needed;
- further corrective action is appropriate; or
- the training environment requires additional changes.

Bullying concerns may require continued monitoring rather than a single intervention.

## 9. Non-Retaliation

Retaliation against a person for making a good-faith bullying report, participating in a review, supporting another athlete, or raising a legitimate safety concern is prohibited.

Knowingly false or intentionally misleading reports may be addressed under applicable Club policies.

## 10. Relationship to Other Club Policies

This policy should be read together with:

- The Donner Swim Club Parent & Athlete Standards
- Grievance Reporting Policy
- Communication Policy
- Facility Access & Athlete Privacy Policy
- Safe Sport & MAAPP requirements
- Other applicable Club or governing-body policies.

Bullying concerns that involve conduct within the jurisdiction of USA Swimming, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, law enforcement, child-protection authorities, or another governing body may be referred or reported through the appropriate external process.

Nothing in this policy limits mandatory reporting obligations or a person's right to make an appropriate external report.