

MAVERICK SWIM CLUB: ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at The Maverick Swim Club (MAVS) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. MAVS is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members.

Objectives of MAVS Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

- To make it clear that MAVS will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To define bullying to give board members, coaches, parents/guardians and swimmers a knowledge of what bullying is.
- To communicate to parents/guardians, swimmers and coaching staff the policy and protocol regarding bullying issues.
- To communicate how to report bullying.
- To communicate that MAVS takes bullying seriously and that swimmers and parents/guardians can be assured that they will be supported if bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING? The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, that hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is 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:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to their property
- placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property
- creating a hostile environment for the other member
- infringing on the rights of the other member
- 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, meets, and other events of a member club or LSC).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

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

- Talk to your parents/guardians
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual
- Write a letter or email to MAVS Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff

There is no time limit for initiating a complaint, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of club leadership as soon as possible. This ensures that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled so that bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW MAVERICK HANDLES BULLYING

If bullying occurs during team activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT with these steps:

- Intervene immediately. Involve additional adult help, as needed.
- Separate the persons involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure those involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when intervening.

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED

Get the facts.

- Separate those involved.
- Gather information from several sources.
- Listen without blaming. Don't call the act "bullying" while trying to understand what happened.

Determine if it's bullying.

- Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying.
- Keep in mind that it may not matter "who started it."
- If it is determined that the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED

Support those being bullied:

- Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show we want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. Minimize changes to routine while not singling out the child being bullied. Communicate game plan with parents/guardians.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop while continuing to support the bullied child.

Address bullying behavior:

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously and is not tolerated. Model respectful behavior.
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons they bullied. Provide support as some children who bully are facing their own challenges. Help the child who bullied find ways to make amends.
- Follow-up and monitor. Continue to help the child who bullied understand how their actions affect others.

Steps that athletes can take to help stop bullying when they see it happening:

- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Tell a trusted adult – your parent/guardian, 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. "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.