

ECAC HARASSMENT, BULLYING + HAZING POLICY

This policy of East Coast Aquatic Club is to provide an environment free from harassment, bullying and hazing. As a club we are committed to protecting our athletes from any form of verbal or physical abuse.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment includes any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, contact or communication that is motivated by or related to individual characteristics such as race, color, national origin, gender, economic status, disability, religion, religious affiliation or sexual orientation and that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Although harassment that creates a hostile environment may take many forms, some examples include name calling and other derogatory comments, jokes, gestures or looks, posting or distribution of derogatory pictures, notes or graffiti, blocking, pushing, hitting or other forms of physical aggression.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying includes aggressive, negative physical or verbal conduct by one athlete toward another who reasonably perceives the conduct to be intimidating. Bullying most often will occur when an athlete asserts or attempts to assert physical or psychological power over, or is cruel to, another athlete who is perceived to be weaker. Such behavior may include but is not limited to: pushing, hitting, threatening, name-calling and other physical or verbal conduct of a belittling or browbeating nature.

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 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 or Participating Non-Member that to a reasonable objective person has the effect of: (i) causing physical or emotional harm to either person or damage to the other person's property; (ii) placing the other person in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;(iii) creating

a hostile environment for the other person at any USA Swimming activity; (iv) infringing on the rights of the other person at any USA Swimming activity; or (v) materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts, and other events of a member club, LSC, or Zone).

DEFINITION OF HAZING

Hazing is an act that subjects an athlete to physical or verbal harassment, mental or physical discomfort, intimidation, embarrassment, ridicule, or demeaning activity committed by an individual athlete or group of athletes for the purpose of initiation, maintaining membership, or holding office in any organization, club, or athletic team.

CONTRACT

It shall be a violation of the ECAC Policy for an athlete to harass, bully or haze another athlete based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability, or to engage in conduct which would contribute to such actions.

It shall also be a violation of the ECAC Policy for an athlete to retaliate against an athlete for instituting a good-faith complaint of harassment, bullying or hazing, or for an athlete to complain of harassment, bullying or hazing without a good-faith basis.

Athletes who violate this policy will also be subject to appropriate discipline in accordance with the ECAC Disciplinary Code and Procedures up to and including expulsion.

Athletes may be disciplined for acts of harassment, bullying or hazing occurring at Swim Club and at Swim Club hours. In the same manner, actions that take place outside of the swimming environment, organized events or practice times may be taken into consideration at the staff's discretion when such acts:

- Affects the club climate or atmosphere.
- Affects the peace, health, safety, or welfare of athletes, coaches, or any other personnel.
- Disrupts or interfere with ECAC or ECAC activities.
- Affect ECAC's reputation.

COMPLAINTS

An athlete who feels that he or she has been harassed, bullied or subjected to hazing is invited to act by doing one or more of the following:

- Talk to their parents.
- Talk to an ECAC Coach.
- Write a formal letter to the ECAC staff.
- Make a formal complaint to USA Swimming Director of Safe Sport.
- There are no express time limits for initiating complaints under this ECAC Policy; however, every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate authorities as soon as possible while memories are fresh and witnesses continue to be available.

Complaints will be investigated and where it is determined that a violation has occurred, prompt corrective action will be taken. During the investigation, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. Complainants will be informed of the results of any investigation.

I _____ a swimmer at the East Coast Aquatic Club, accept to abide by the present Harassment, Bullying and Hazing Policy. By signing, I state that I understand what acts and behaviors constitute harassment, bullying and hazing and I agree to respect my fellow swimmers accordingly. I also understand that if I feel victim of harassment, bullying and/or hazing I will be able to contact ECAC coaches and staff to present a complaint. My parents/guardians are aware of this policy and sign with me today agreeing to its terms and its consequences.

POLICY VIOLATION

Upon violation of the East Coast Aquatic Club Code of Conduct, the coaches have to power to impose the following penalties. The following penalties include:

- The coach will contact the parent/guardian
- The swimmer will be temporarily or permanently dismissed from the team
- Upon return, the swimmer must be accompanied by a parent or guardian for 10 consecutive days.

- The swimmer will be prohibited from participating in some or all team activities for a period of time. This includes meets, team functions and team travel. This probation will be at the coaches discretion.

The coach in charge, as well as the Head Coach, will make the final decision in matters of discipline or dismissal based on the degree of the violation of the above code.

I agree that upon violation of the above rules, I will be subject to disciplinary action determined by the coaching staff.

I hereby agree to abide by the East Coast Aquatic Club Code of Conduct as set forth above and acknowledge that should I violate any provision of the ECAC governing documents, I will be subject to disciplinary action, per the applicable document. I understand that any and all decisions made by the ECAC coaching staff are final and absolute. I have read and acknowledged this document. I have reviewed it with my parent(s)/guardians before signing.

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ECAC HARASSMENT, BULLYING + HAZING POLICY cont.

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.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. 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.
4. 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, for the Club, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
 - e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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.
 - f. 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, 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.

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