

ASA Anti-bullying Policy

This policy has been modelled on the anti-bullying guidance provided by Kidscape. Please visit www.kidscape.org.uk for more information.

Statement of intent

The ASA is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can learn to swim or train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at all of our affiliated organisations. If bullying does occur, all members should be able to speak out and feel reassured that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING organisation. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the welfare officer, coach, teacher or another officer or employee of the organisation.

Objectives of this policy

- All officers, teachers, coaches, members and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All officers, teachers and coaches should know what the organisation's policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All members and parents should know what the organisation's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All organisations should take bullying seriously. Members and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace, and comes in many different forms:

Bullying can include:

- **Emotional:** Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.
- **Cyber:** Cyber bullying is the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
- **Racist:** Bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, language, religion or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic:** Discrimination based on sexuality and/or gender identity.
- **Sexual:** Unwelcome sexual advances or remarks that are intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation. This could include pressure to send images of a sexual nature.
- **Disablist:** The bullying of children who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Based on 'difference':** Bullying based on any real or perceived difference. This can include, but is not limited to, factors surrounding the way someone looks or dresses, hobbies and interests, family situation or social behaviour.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Members of the organisation who are bullying others need to learn to behave more appropriately.

Organisations have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.



Signs and symptoms

Although a child may not necessarily explicitly state that they are being bullied, they may still display signs or behaviours that indicate he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and be prepared to investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from the organisation.
- Doesn't want to go on the club bus.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to the club when they previously could not wait to go.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Feels ill at training times and does not want to go.
- Starts to drop in their level of training or competition.
- Comes home with clothes torn or equipment damaged/lost.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (in order to pay a bully).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying siblings or other children.
- Stops eating or has less of an appetite.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Is afraid to use the internet or their mobile phone.
- Is nervous or jumpy when a message is received.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

- Report incidents of bullying to the welfare officer, coach, teacher or another officer or employee of the organisation.

- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents are to be recorded by that person and referred to the welfare officer if he/she is not already aware.
- In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour, or threats of bullying, must be investigated and the bullying must be stopped quickly.
- If bullying is found on the 'balance of probability' to have taken place, then appropriate action will be taken. This includes attempting to help the bully/bullies to change their behaviour – see the Behaviour Contract Template on p. 123.

Outcomes

- The bully/bullies may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
- If possible, the members will be reconciled.
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

We will use Kidscape methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of 'club rules'.
- Signing a behaviour contract (see p. 123).
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

Other helpful organisations:

Swimline: 0808 100 4001

Kidscape Parents Helpline: (Mon-Fri, 10-4)
0845 1 205 204

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Child Power Leaflet: available from
jenni.dearman@swimming.org

Child Power Online: via the ASA website
www.swimming.org/asa

Youth Access: (Mon-Fri, 9.30pm-1pm and
2pm-5.30pm) 020 8772 9900

Family Lives: (formerly Parentline Plus)
0808 800 2222



BullyingUK: (part of Family Lives)
www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links, advice and downloads.

The ASA acknowledges with gratitude the work of Kidscape in helping in the development of this policy.

Guide for welfare officers: how to deal with bullying

- You should be informed of any allegations involving bullying of a member under the age of 18.
- Ensure you receive the information in writing and agree who will take the lead in investigating the concern. Usually this will be you, but in some cases the coach or teacher may wish to take the lead.
- Initially, try to reconcile the parties through mediation. The mediator could be you and/or the coach or teacher.
- Where any member under 16 is involved, ensure a parent/guardian, or another adult nominated by the parent, is present when the member is spoken to.
- If the young person is aged 16-17 then the parent and young person can agree to nominate another adult or to have no parent or adult present.
- If mediation fails then follow the guidance below:
 - Set up a subcommittee of three people; this would normally include you, a suitable committee member or coach and a committee member who will take notes.
 - Ensure all members of the subcommittee are fully aware of the concerns raised and are not involved in the matter or related to any of the parties involved.
 - Meet initially with the bullied young person and his/her parents as appropriate. Allow the young person concerned to explain the issues including what happened, where and how the incident made them feel. Reassure them that they did the right thing in raising the concern and that you take their concern seriously.
 - In cases where the member is 10 or under, the parents may prefer to meet with the subcommittee without the member but with a letter in writing (self-written or with the help of the parents if required) produced by the member as to what happened, etc.
- Ask the member if there were any witnesses to what took place; if so, ask the parents of those under 18 for consent to either speak to them or ask the parent to get any information they have/what they saw, etc., in writing. If the witness is over 18 you can approach them directly for this information.
- When you have all the information from the bullied young person, speak to the alleged bully and his/her parents by following the same protocol for the bullied young person, as set out above. In some cases, you will find they admit to wrongdoing and you can go straight to taking appropriate action.
- If the alleged bully denies the incident(s), ask them for their point of view; if they have anyone who they wish you to speak with, do so in line with the above guidance.
- When you have no agreement or evidence on what happened, it is for the subcommittee to consider all the information and form a view on what took place, based on the balance of probabilities. This should be formed by taking all the available information into account, including your view of what was alleged, previous concerns, knowledge of those involved, etc.
- If the outcome of your considerations confirms that bullying took place, based either on evidence or on the balance of probabilities, then consider what action you wish to take. Some options include:
 - An apology from the bully and an agreement for proper behaviour in future.
 - A behaviour contract (see p. 123).
 - Temporary suspension in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.
 - A mix, or all, of the above.
- Ensure everything is recorded and that all parties are kept informed of what is happening, the outcome, and of any actions to be taken.
- Time is of the essence in matters involving children and young persons. Ensure there is minimum delay in considering the matters and agreeing an outcome.

