

## Wigan BEST Swim Squad

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Swim Squad is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our swimmers so that they can train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind, including cyber bullying, is unacceptable at our squad. If bullying does occur, all swimmers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** squad which means that: **IF WE KNOW BULLYING IS OCCURRING WE TELL THE HEAD COACH OR ANY INSPIRING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES LEISURE CENTRE SENIOR MANAGER OR THE DUTY MANAGER** (or the coach if preferred, who will in turn inform the appropriate Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Officer) to enable the appropriate action to be taken.

#### **What is bullying?**

Bullying may be defined as repeated deliberate actions or hurtful behaviour by one or more people that is repeated over a period of time and which is difficult for the bullied person to defend themselves. The bullying causes hurt to an individual or group the damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

#### **Bullying can be:**

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| Verbal -    | Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.  |
| Emotional - | Being unfriendly – sending hurtful text messages, cyber bullying, tormenting (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, using threatening gestures), asking for money and humiliation    |
| Physical -  | Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing equipment and other forms of violence threats.   |
| Racial -    | Racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.   |
| Sexual -    | Unwanted physical contact or any comments which make you feel uncomfortable in a sexual way including homophobic taunts, abusive comments.                                 |
| Cyber -     | All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & call, misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video use |

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person.
- A young person and young person.

- A parent and their own child.

The competitive nature of sport can create an environment, which provides opportunities for bullying. Examples of bullying in swimming could be:

- A parent who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.
- A young swimmer who intimidates inappropriately.
- An older swimmer who intimidates inappropriately.
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying in swimming can be when a swimmer is ostracised by others in his or her lane / age group, refusing to talk to them and encouraging others to treat them with contempt.

### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be hurt – everyone should be treated with respect and dignity.

Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **INSPIRING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES SWIM SQUAD WILL RESPOND TO BULLYING PROMPTLY AND EFFECTIVELY!**

The object of this policy

- To ensure that all, coaches, swimmers, and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To ensure all coaching staff know what Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Swim Squad policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All swimmers and parents know what the club policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a swim squad we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents will be supported when bullying is reported, and all reports will be treated in a confidential manner.
- Bullying will not be tolerated

### **Signs and symptoms:**

A child may show they are being bullied by physical signs or by behaviour. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says they are being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions when previously they couldn't wait
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence

- Falls ill before training sessions
- Training or competition level drops off.
- Comes home with clothes torn or swimming equipment damaged
- Has possessions go “missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has night mares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

### **Procedures**

If you are being bullied or have concerns and suspect that someone else is being bullied, you must report the incident to a Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Senior officer. Alternatively, you can tell your coach who will in turn inform his /her line manager.

### **Action taken:**

- Bullying is reported.
- Parents informed and asked to meeting.
- Bullying behaviour will be investigated and stopped.
- An attempt will be made to make bully (or bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue disciplinary action will be taken.

### **Action on bullying**

1. An attempt will be made to get those involved together and see if a simple action like an apology or change in behaviour will solve the problem.
2. If this is not appropriate or possible a small panel comprising of Head Coach Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Swim Squad and at least one Duty Manager who will meet with the child who claims they are being bullied and their parents. Minutes will be taken to ensure there are no misunderstandings and will be signed and agreed as a true account by the child.
3. The same group of people will meet with the alleged bully and their parents to tell them of the accusations and to give them a chance to give their own views. Minutes will be taken to ensure there are no misunderstandings and agreed as a true account by the child.

4. If bullying of a squad member is deemed to have occurred, regardless as to whether it has occurred on Inspiring healthy lifestyles premises, the following action(s) will be taken:

- The bully will be excluded from all squad sessions for a minimum period of 2 weeks. The exclusion will include all facilities where a squad session takes place and will come into force 30 min prior to the squad session commencing to 30 min after the session concludes.
- On the swimmers return a meeting will be held with representatives of the squad and include the parents for swimmers under 18 years of age. Where it will be explained that if the swimmer is deemed to have acted inappropriately or brought the squad in disrepute then this will lead to an instant permanent exclusion from the squad.
- The coaches involved with all parties will be kept informed of the progression and outcomes of these meetings.

Other additional actions may include:

- The parties may be asked to attend a reconciliation meeting.
- The parents of the bully or bullied swimmer may be asked to attend training sessions for a given period of time.

If the reported case involves adults bullying swimmers under 18 then:

1. The Development Manager-Aquatics of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles will be informed, and advice taken on possible action.
2. Child protection awareness training will be recommended if appropriate.
3. Serious cases will be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure as documented in Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles Safeguarding Policy.

**HEAD COACH**