



## Letchworth Amateur Swimming Club (LASC) Anti-bullying Policy

LASC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can learn to swim or train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within our sports. If bullying does occur, all our members or parents/guardians should be able to tell and know 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 Club Welfare Officer, coach, teacher or another club officer.

### Objectives of this policy

- All club members, coaches, teachers, officers of the club and parents/guardians should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, coaches, teachers, officers of the club and parents/guardians should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- As an organisation we take bullying seriously. Members and parents/guardians should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### What is bullying behaviour?

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as “the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace”.

#### **Bullying can include:**

**Verbal:** name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.

**Physical:** any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing. Intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions.

**Emotional:** excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.

**Cyber:** 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.

## Why are children bullied?

Children are most commonly bullied because of a real or perceived “difference”. This difference can be anything but could be attributed to:

**Racist:** bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.

**Homophobic and transphobic:** bullying based on sexuality or gender identity.

**Disablist:** bullying children who have special educational needs and disabilities.

**Sexual:** unwelcome sexual advances, comments that intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.

**Discriminative:** Bullying based on any perceived weakness or difference. This could be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. It could also be factors surrounding the way someone looks or the clothes they wear, their family and social situation, hobbies and interests.

## Signs and indicators

A child may not always ask for help or tell you their concerns. There may be signs or behaviours that indicate they may be being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these signs and be prepared to investigate if a child is:

- Unwilling to go to club sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before or during training sessions or feigns sickness.
- Starts to drop in their level of training or competition.
- Doesn't want to travel with the club or attend club events.
- Comes home with clothing torn or training equipment damaged.
- Has possessions that go “missing”.
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Starts stammering.
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating or poor appetite.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

This list is not exhaustive and could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **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. Individuals who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

Most bullying incidents are not crimes. But some types of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. This includes bullying that involves violence, assault and theft; harassment or intimidation over a period of time including calling someone names or threatening them, making abusive phone calls and sending abusive emails or text messages (one incident is not normally enough to get a conviction); and anything involving hate crimes.

All Swim England affiliated organisations have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Procedures**

- Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer, coach, teacher or other officer at the club.
- The Club Welfare Officer should be informed if a report of bullying is received by another officer so that appropriate action is taken.
- The Club Welfare Officer will discuss the concerns with the Club Chair to decide whether the matter should be dealt with as an alleged breach of the club Code of Conduct (see pages 60-67) or whether the matter proceeds under the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Advice can be sought at any time from the County or Regional Welfare Officer, Swim England Child Safeguarding Team or Swimline.
- If necessary and appropriate the police should be consulted.
- Parents/guardians should be informed and may be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- If bullying is found appropriate action will be taken.
- Attempts will be made to help the bully to change their behaviour.
- If bullying is seen to continue despite best efforts to stop the behaviour the club may initiate disciplinary action under their club constitution.