



# City of Hereford Swimming Club

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 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, City of Hereford Swimming Club 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:** including, 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, including the City of Hereford Swimming Club 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, 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 on the 'balance of probability' to have taken place, appropriate action will be taken. This includes attempts 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.

### **Outcomes**

The bully 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**

Everybody within the club has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying. It is mandatory for all Swim England clubs to have a written constitution and adhere to the Swim England Code of Ethics and accompanying Codes of Conduct. Wavepower provides Code of Conduct templates for clubs to use and adapt. We expect that all City of Hereford club members sign a copy of the Code of Conduct when they join the club so they are aware and understand acceptable standards of behaviour.

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.

Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

### **Cyberbullying**

Behaviour that is classed as cyberbullying can include:

- Abusive comments, rumours, gossip and threats over the internet or using other digital communications. This includes "trolling".
- Sharing pictures, videos or personal information without consent and with the intent to cause harm and/or humiliation.
- Hacking into someone's email, phone, or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send abusive or inappropriate content while posing as that person.
- Creating specific websites that negatively target an individual or a group.
- Blackmail or pressuring someone to do something online they do not want to do.

Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Malicious Communications Act (1988) and the Protection from Harassment Act (1997).

Whilst City of Hereford Swimming Club can commit to ensure that club websites and club social networking sites are being used appropriately and deal with any bullying behaviour on these platforms it becomes more challenging when behaviour being reported is happening outside the environment of the club. The club does not have the power to be able to investigate children allegedly using their personal social media sites to cyberbully or use their personal social media inappropriately towards others.

### **Practical steps parents and guardians can take**

- Many incidents of cyberbullying allow those experiencing it to keep evidence, for example, a screen shot, to show their parent/ guardian or in serious cases the police.
- Make sure your child knows how to block anyone who posts hateful or abusive things. This can usually be found on the help or online safety area of the app or online service.

- Report anyone who is bullying your child to the platform that carried the offending comments, audio, image or video. Many online services and apps have a 'Report Now' button that can be used.
- Advice can always be sought from the police.

### **Other Helpful Organisations**

Swimline: 0808 100 4001

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Family Lives: (formerly Parentline Plus) 0808 800 2222

BullyingUK: (part of Family Lives) [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Visit the Kidscape website for further support, links, advice and downloads at [kidscape.org.uk](http://kidscape.org.uk)

Anti-Bullying Alliance [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit [thecpsu.org.uk](http://thecpsu.org.uk)

Childline [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

