

KILLARNEY GATORS SWIM CLUB: ANTI BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Kilarney Gators Swim Club (KGSC) is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can swim in a relaxed and secure environment.

To this extent, bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach or any Board member.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- ≡ Emotional-being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures)
- ≡ Physical-pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- ≡ Racist-racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- ≡ Sexual-unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- ≡ Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- ≡ Verbal-name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Why it is 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.
- ≡ Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.
- ≡ At KGSC we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this policy

- ≡ All Board members and coaches, swimmers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- ≡ All Board members and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- ≡ All swimmers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- ≡ At KGSC we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

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- ≡ Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- ≡ Say s/he is being bullied
- ≡ Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- ≡ Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- ≡ Feels ill before training sessions
- ≡ 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

In more extreme cases:

- ≡ Starts stuttering
- ≡ Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- ≡ Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- ≡ Is bullying other children or siblings
- ≡ Stops eating
- ≡ Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

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

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to a coach or a member of the Board;
2. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
3. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action which may include removal of the bully or bullies from the club.