



Kingfisher Swim School Anti Bullying Policy- April 2024

Kingfisher Swim School upholds the principle that all swim school members must treat one another with courtesy and respect. Ensuring safety and security within the school is paramount, fostering an environment where all individuals can thrive without fear of mistreatment or harassment. The stance on bullying is unequivocal: it is never tolerated and the swimming school is committed to preventing it at all costs.

Bullying manifests in various forms, encompassing any behavior that induces discomfort or threat to another person, regardless of intent. All grievances are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Combatting bullying is a shared responsibility, inherent in every parent's duty of care to their children and among swimmers themselves, both on and off-site. This policy aims to support swimmers and their families in addressing concerns about bullying and ensures a consistent approach to handling such incidents.

The repercussions of bullying can be severe, leading to psychological harm and, in extreme cases, even suicide. While bullying may not be categorized as a distant criminal offence, laws regarding harassment and threatening conduct are applicable and enforceable.

What is bullying?

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 online”.

Instances that could be considered bullying or harassment include racism, sexual bullying, derogatory remarks about appearance, abilities, health conditions, home circumstances, nationality, religion, culture, disability, gender, sexuality, SEND, or cyberbullying. Sometimes, the perpetrator may act without consideration, yet their actions can still cause harm. Being different or made to feel different can be hurtful, instilling fear and distress in the victim and potentially disrupting their swimming activities. Moreover, witnessing bullying can also impact other swimmers and create a negative atmosphere within lessons or the entire swim school.

Different types of bullying can be seen in the formats below:

- Verbal: name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats
- Physical: any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing.
- Intimidating behavior, 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.
- ‘Banter’: can include any of the above types of bullying in a way that may not be intended to cause harm to someone, but doesn’t account for the impact such behavior can have on an individual.

What are the signs of bullying?

Recognizing when someone is upset isn't always straightforward, and individuals experiencing emotional distress may struggle to communicate their feelings. Signs of distress can manifest in various behavioral changes, including shyness, nervousness, seeking attention, or feigning illness. Sleep patterns may be disrupted, and there may be difficulties with concentration or withdrawal from activities. A swimmer who is being bullied or feels vulnerable may exhibit reluctance to attend lessons, further indicating their distress.

What is expected of teachers, swimmers and parents?

All those involved in the swim school, have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable - and to set an example, which reflects that view. All members of the Kingfisher Swim School community should help to create an atmosphere in which bullying will be spoken of openly, taken seriously and responded to with appropriate action. A young swimmer who is being bullied should tell their parents, their teacher, another adult or the Welfare Officer.

It is important that any cases of bullying are reported to someone whom the victim feels able to talk to. Any swimmer or parent who suspects bullying should report it to the teacher.

The swim school wants to help and it expects teachers, swimmers, parents to:

- treat each other with respect and sensitivity
- think carefully before speaking/acting (whether face-to-face or via any form of media) in ways which may cause upset
- respect differences and variety
- be sensitive to the fact that what may seem fun to some (especially a group) may seem much more threatening to others (especially an individual)
- show kindness and consideration to those who appear unhappy or vulnerable
- make a stand against those who ignore or go against these aims

Implementation of the policy

Teachers will remind swimmers of their responsibility (when necessary) to ensure that bullying does not occur and to talk to a teacher or trusted adult if they witness or suspect bullying.

In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying, the facts will be ascertained from the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and witness(es). The individual initially contacted/witness will record who was involved, what happened, when and where. This will be passed to the Welfare Officer who will liaise with the relevant parents. The Welfare Officer will identify patterns and decide what action needs to be taken to prevent similar occurrences.

The swim school will keep parents informed if and when it may be dealing with a significant bullying situation. Parents are asked to let the swim school (usually the teacher) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own child or because of rumours about incidents involving others. The swim school always tries to handle information discreetly, and although what teachers and committee members are told will be in confidence the club cannot promise secrecy. If matters need to be followed up, this will be done with sensitivity. It is much easier to counter problems at an early stage. Once investigated, every effort will be made to resolve the problem and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). This process will normally be carried out by the Welfare Officer.

For all incidents of bullying (whether isolated or occurring over a period of time), disciplinary sanctions will normally be applied, and may extend to suspension or in the gravest cases of

severe or persistent bullying expulsion from the swim school. The policy is applied in conjunction Swim England's Wavepower and Code of Conduct.

Contacts:

Kingfisher Activities Welfare Officer- Clare Fox- welfare@kingfisheractivities.co.uk

Swim England's Devon county welfare officer- Rosemary Jane Brimacombe

Welfare.officer@devonswimming.org.uk

Swim England National Safeguarding Team: safeguarding@swimming.org

Useful links:

Swim England's wave power-

www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/

Child Protection in Sport-

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/safe-sport-events-activities-and-competitions/>

Anit Bullying Alliance-

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/whole-school-and-setting-approach/anti-bullying-policies>