

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

The British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) is committed to promoting an environment that is free from any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation. It seeks to comply with UK and European Law, in particular with regards to the Sex Discrimination Act, The Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

Bullying adversely affects working and social conditions for members, volunteers and spectators and is unacceptable. This Anti-Bullying policy applies to everyone involved in BLDSA business. This includes all members of the executive committee, life members, individual members, spectators, all volunteers, boat crews, boat or kayak support whilst they are acting on behalf of the BLDSA or a member of the BLDSA, or at a BLDSA event.

This policy aims to present definitions of bullying, actions and outcomes of reported bullying incidents. It is our duty to protect, support and create an inclusive environment. The BLDSA will always act on reports of inappropriate behaviour.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can occur between children, young people or adults.

Bullying differs from assault and abuse in that bullying tends to be an accumulation of many incidents, often repetitive or repeated. Each incident, on its own may seem trivial, however over a period of time it develops into something more serious.

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

Most bullying is traceable to one person. Bullying can present in a number of ways, examples of possible scenarios can be seen in **Appendix 1**. Bullying is different to **Hate Crime**, but the two are not exclusive.

Bullying can be

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. 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, threatening language
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.

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Effects of Bullying

Bullying can cause stress and anxiety, lack of self-confidence, fear or health problems and in the extreme attempted or actual self-harm or even suicide.

Signs and symptoms of Bullying can be found in the Appendix 2.

This mainly refers to children and is significant in the protection of children and young people in the organisation.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

If you feel that you are being subjected to bullying in any form by anyone, do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. The primary concern is that anyone who is subjected to bullying should receive support and assistance and, where appropriate, remedy. We also recognise that confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

Any discussion will be confidential and further action involving you will not be taken without your express permission; in particular, the person about whom you are complaining will not be given your name as a complainant without your express permission. Further details in **Appendix 3**.

- Report bullying incidents to nominated person (CVAP) officer.
- Incidents will be recorded and all documentation connected will be retained.
- Parents of children under 18 will be informed of the incident. (Providing they are not the subject of the complaint)
- If necessary and appropriate the police or other agencies will be consulted.
- Incidents will be investigated and taken to the Emergency Committee and then the Disciplinary Panel.
- Outcomes will be recommended by the committee.
- Monitoring to ensure no further repetition of bullying.
- Ensuring people involved in the incident are not labelled or victimised in reprisal.

Recommended outcomes

- The person who found to be responsible for bullying will be expected to apologise showing understanding of the impact of their actions.
- Ideally reconciliation between the 2 parties is sought.
- In serious cases suspension or exclusion will be considered

Prevention

- The BLDSA has a written constitution including what is acceptable and poor behaviour for all members.
- All members sign to accept and agree to the terms and conditions of membership.
- All members of the executive committee, swim secretaries are responsible for the promotion and modelling of a positive and inclusive environment.
- The CVAP officer will report on incidents and nil reports, confirming no incidents, from events to the executive committee.

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Appendix 1

How bullying may be identified.

- Constant "nit-picking", fault finding and trivial criticism
- Constant refusal to acknowledge you and your contribution and achievements
- Constant attempts to undermine you and your position, status, worth or value.
- Being singled out from a group and treated differently.
- Being isolated or separated from a group, or ignored or constantly overruled.
- Being belittled, demeaned or patronised especially in front of others.
- Being humiliated, threatened or shouted at in front of others.
- Being overloaded with work, or given no work at all.
- Being denied training necessary to carry out your tasks.
- Being victimised as a result of reporting an inappropriate action.

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Appendix 2

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:

- is fearful of going to swims.
- changes their usual routine
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill before events
- comes home with clothes torn or equipment damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

At Swimming events the child may be reluctant to start the race, or quiet and withdrawn at the briefing.

Adults may be observed to be over assertive or aggressive towards the child or young person, or even another adult. They may be kept in the water when they want to retire.

The swimmer may be criticised, or not supported. Their welfare may not be considered.

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Appendix 3

Recommendations of possible courses of action, which you can take to deal with bullying: These are for the person being bullied, those supporting them and the committee or panel dealing with the incidents.

1. You are encouraged to talk about the problem with the Child Protection Officer or any of the agencies on the list given in page 31 of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The Child protection Officer has received special training and is willing to listen to your views about the incidents or problems however large or small they may seem and could advise you on a course of action, take the matter up on your behalf or refer you for specialist advice. They may suggest a way of resolving the problem, which you had not thought of. Do not hesitate to contact someone even if an incident occurs only once.

2. If at all possible you should make it clear to the person causing the offence that such behaviour on that person's part is unacceptable to you and that it interferes with your sporting or social life. You may find it easier to do this by letter (you should keep a copy). Alternatively, you may wish to get support from a friend or colleague to help you explain your feelings to the person bullying you. If you feel unable to confront the person concerned this does not constitute consent to the bullying.

3. It is important to begin to make a note of the details of any relevant incidents which distress you - particularly if you feel unable to speak to the person concerned or, if having spoken, the behaviour persists. You should include a note of the way in which the incidents cause you to change the pattern of your sporting or social life.

If the bullying continues (or is of a more serious nature than can be dealt with by means of the above) then you are strongly advised to seek the help of the Child Protection Officer if you have not already done so. This will enable you to discuss the nature of your complaint in confidence and by that to arrive at an acceptable solution.

4. If the bullying is serious or has not been resolved by the above means then you or someone acting on your behalf has the right to make a formal written complaint to the organisation/authorities. You may call upon an officer of the BLDSA to support you in making this complaint.

5. We will keep the information you share confidential. However, if we are concerned about someone's safety we would need to inform the appropriate authorities.