



## BNSC Anti-bullying Policy

Bristol North Swimming Club (BNSC) is committed to providing a nurturing, friendly and safe environment for all our members, parents/carers, and volunteers who wish to participate in swimming.

To achieve this, we have established a set of policies and procedures which include this document. Our full set of policies and procedures with which all our members, parents/carers, and volunteers are expected to comply, are available on our website.

Our policies and procedures are founded on Swim England's Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, known as **Wavepower v2.1**. Links to Wavepower can also be found on our website.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at BNSC. If bullying does occur, all members, parents/carers, and volunteers must feel confident that they are able to tell us 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 the welfare officer or any committee/coaching member.

### 1 What is bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate action or hurtful behaviour by one or more people that is repeated over a period of time and which has the intention of hurting another person. Bullying can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, in extreme cases, harm.

- **Physical:** Any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking, pushing, theft, intentional damage of possessions and intimidating behaviours.
- **Verbal:** Name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.
- **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. Includes abusive comments, rumours, gossip and threats over the internet and 'trolling'. Also includes sharing pictures, videos or personal information without consent with the intent to cause harm and/or humiliation. Can also be hacking into someone's email/ phone or online profile to extract and share personal information or to send abusive or inappropriate content while posing as that person.
- **Racist:** Bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, language, religion or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic/ transphobic:** Discrimination based on sexuality and/or gender identity.
- **Sexual:** Unwelcome sexual advances or remarks that are intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation. This could include pressure to send images of a sexual nature.
- **Disablist:** The bullying of children who have special educational needs and disabilities.



- **Based on 'difference'**: Bullying based on any real or perceived difference. This can include, but is not limited to, factors surrounding the way someone looks or dresses, hobbies and interests, family situation or social behaviour.

## 2 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. Those involved with the club who are bullying others, need to learn to behave. BNSC accepts that it has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## 3 Signs and symptoms

Although a child may not necessarily explicitly state that they are being bullied, they may still display signs or behaviours that indicate he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and be prepared to investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from the organisation.
- Doesn't want to travel with the club or attend club events.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to the club when they previously could not wait to go.
- 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 at training times and does not want to go.
- Starts to drop in their level of training or competition.
- Comes home with clothes torn or equipment and possessions damaged/lost.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (in order to pay a bully).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying siblings or other children.
- Stops eating or has less of an appetite.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Is afraid to use the internet or their mobile phone.
- Is nervous or jumpy when a message is received.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- Starts having sleep problems

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

## 4 Procedures

- 1 Report incidents of bullying to the welfare officer, coach, teacher or another officer or employee of the club.



- 2 **All incidents will be recorded** by that person and referred to the welfare officer if he/she is not already aware, and possibly to Swim England for advice.
- 3 The welfare officer will discuss concerns with the club chair to decide if the matter should be dealt with as a breach of the code of conduct or whether the matter proceeds under the anti-bullying policy.
- 4 The club will address reports of bullying as follows:
  - For minor cases, the person to whom the incident is reported will attempt to reconcile all parties.
  - For serious cases, the club welfare officer will appoint a lead to deal with the incident. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem. For more information on this see below.
- 5 If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- 6 The bullying behaviour, or threats of bullying, will be investigated with the intention to stop the bullying quickly.
- 7 If bullying is found on the 'balance of probability' to have taken place, then appropriate action will be taken. This includes attempting to help the bully/bullies to change their behaviour.
- 8 If bullying persists despite best efforts, disciplinary action might be initiated.

Following reporting, if the club welfare officer decides it is a serious case and appropriate for the club to deal with formally, then the following action will be taken:

### **Initial Action**

- 1 A lead will be appointed by the welfare officer to deal with the incident
- 2 The lead will arrange a meeting with all parties, including parents of affected children
- 3 The lead will try to reconcile the parties through mediation. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- 4 The outcome of the reconciliation attempt will be recorded and shared with parents.

### **Further Action**

If mediation fails or is not felt appropriate, then a small panel of three independent club committee members will form and follow this procedure:

- 1 The panel will meet initially with the bullied young person and his/her parents or another adult as appropriate. They will allow the person concerned to explain the issues including what happened, where and how the incident made them feel. The panel will reassure them that they did the right thing in raising the concern and that the club takes their concerns seriously. A written account by the child in their own words is acceptable if the child does not feel comfortable talking to the panel. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and agreed as a full and accurate account of the meeting.
- 2 The panel will next meet with any witnesses and his/her parents as appropriate. The panel will follow the same protocol for the witnesses, as set out above. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and agreed as a full and accurate account of the meeting.
- 3 The panel will then meet with the alleged bully and his/her parents following the same protocol as set out above to put the allegation to them and allow them the opportunity to respond. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and agreed as a full and accurate account of the meeting.
- 4 If bullying is admitted then, the panel can make decisions about appropriate actions.



- 5 If the bullying is denied with parties disagreeing then, the panel needs to consider and form a view based on the balance of probabilities.
- 6 Potential actions if bullying is found:
  - An apology from the bully is made with an agreement around future behaviour.
  - A formal behaviour contract with ongoing monitoring
  - Disciplinary action such as a written warning, temporary suspension or permanent exclusion
  - All coaches involved with both swimmers will be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying swimmers under 18 years then, Swim England will always be informed and will advise on action to be taken. For serious incidents, Swim England will also be informed.

## 5 Prevention

The club has a code of conduct, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, parents/carers, and volunteers, of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.

- All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the code of conduct upon joining the club
- The club welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This policy is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying, and contact details are on Swim Club Manager. See club document - **BNSC Contact Details**.

### Other related policies

BNSC Welfare and safeguarding policy 2025  
BNSC Complaints policy 2025  
BNSC Codes of conduct

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