

Guidelines to Address Bullying at the Burt German TriCounty Championship Meet 2019 v031019

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the TriCounty Swimming Pool Association Championship Meet and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to league spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The TCSPA is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur at the championship meet, all participants and their families should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a referee, coach, parent or TriCounty Representative.

Objectives of the League's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the league will not tolerate bullying in any form at the championship meet.
2. To define bullying and give all league athletes, coaches, parents and officials a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers, coaching staff and club members that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that the TCSPA takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any activity; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any activity

TRICOUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP MEET REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete/who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, TriCounty Representative, or other designated individual from their

respective club.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate league leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during the TriCounty Championship meet, we **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at the championship meet or it is reported to be occurring at the championship meet, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.

- a. Keep all the involved children separate.
- b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- c. Listen without blaming.
- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - ♣ What is the history between the kids involved?
 - ♣ Have there been past conflicts?
 - ♣ Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - ♣ Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.

b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input.

4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can apologize to the bullied child.

While we should do everything in our power to resolve these issues in the manner set forth above, we also recognize that bullying is unsportsmanlike conduct and should be addressed as such. To that end we created a procedure for dealing with unsportsmanlike conduct in the form of bullying at the TriCounty Championship meet involving a committee with procedures to sanction a swimmer who engages in such conduct.

5. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let's go, practice is about to start.”
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.