



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT**

Melksham Amateur Swimming Club are committed to ensure that any bullying which involves children should be seen in the same light as other child protection concerns. In this respect, the club follows the guidelines laid down in the ASA's "Code of Ethics" and follows our own code of Ethics Policy.

MASC are keen to encourage an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for self and others. We believe that 'prevention' is better than 'cure' and that the chances of bullying happening in a club can be greatly reduced if there is a general atmosphere where members are valued and cared for. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at MASC. We take bullying seriously and we recognise that tackling bullying is the responsibility of everyone in the club.

We are a 'Telling' club. All swimmers and parents should be able to 'tell' and be assured that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club Welfare Officer or any committee member or pool-side staff and be confident that they will be supported and that their concerns will be listened to and taken seriously. Please remember that if we don't know about a particular bullying problem, then we cannot deal with it.

### Objectives of the Anti-Bullying Policy

MASC is committed to ensuring that:

- All Committee Members, coaches, officials, pool-side staff, swimmers and parents have an understanding of what bullying is, its effects and how to recognise it.
- All Committee Members, coaches, officials and pool-side 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.

To help raising awareness to the issues, we submit the following guidance:

### **What is bullying?**

In general terms, bullying is the use of aggression or intimidatory behaviour towards another person (especially to smaller or weaker people), with the intention of hurting that person.

Bullying can cause considerable distress to children.

Bullying has several forms and can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, and tormenting (e.g hiding clothes, goggles/floats, threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking or using any other form of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

- Homophobic - focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours etc.

### **Response**

It is important for the club to respond quickly to bullying because it can be very distressing to the victim. Everyone in our club has the right to be treated with respect and no-one, under any circumstances, deserves to be victimised or intimidated by others. At the same time, under the ASA's 'Code of Ethics', the club accepts that swimmers who are bullying others also need support to in order to learn to change their behaviour.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

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

- Says he or she is being bullied.
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before training sessions.
- Come home with clothes torn or swimming equipment damaged.
- Has possessions go missing.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong, giving improbable excuses for any of the above.

In extreme cases:

- Starts stammering.
- 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.

It is important to note that these signs and behaviors may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated.

### **Procedures**

The following procedures define what should be done in specified circumstances:

- Members and parents should report incidents of bullying to any member of the committee or to the club Welfare Officer, who will deal with it or escalate it as necessary.
- If concern is raised by a club member, the members' parents should be informed immediately and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- The person doing the bullying (and if deemed necessary their parents or guardians) will be spoken to in an attempt to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- The ASA Child Protection Procedures will be implemented if a serious concern is raised.