



## **KINGSBRIDGE KINGFISHERS SWIMMING CLUB**

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Kingsbridge Kingfishers Swimming Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within our sport. If bullying does occur, all our members or parents/guardians should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a telling organisation. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer, coach, teacher or another club officer.

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 through cyberspace”.

Bullying can include:

- Verbal: name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.
- Physical: any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing. Intimidating behaviour, 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.

A child may not always ask for help or tell you their concerns. There may be signs or behaviours that indicate they may be being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and be prepared to investigate if a child is:

- Unwilling to go to club sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before or during training sessions or feigns sickness.
- Starts to drop in their level of training or competition.
- Doesn't want to travel with the club or attend club events.
- Comes home with clothing torn or training equipment damaged.
- Has possessions that go “missing”.

- Has unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Starts stammering.
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating or poor appetite.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

This list is not exhaustive and could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Individuals who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. Most bullying incidents are not crimes. But some types of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. This includes bullying that involves violence, assault and theft; harassment or intimidation over a period of time including calling someone names or threatening them, making abusive phone calls and sending abusive emails or text messages (one incident is not normally enough to get a conviction); and anything involving hate crimes.

Where an incident of bullying is witnessed or experienced within the club, the following procedures should be followed:

- Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer, coach or other officer at the club.
- The Club Welfare Officer should be informed if a report of bullying is received by another officer so that appropriate action is taken.
- The Club Welfare Officer will discuss the concerns with the Club Chair to decide whether the matter should be dealt with as an alleged breach of the relevant Code of Conduct or whether the matter proceeds under the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- To proceed under the Anti-Bullying Policy, a panel will be formed consisting of 3 individuals, led by the Welfare Officer, alongside either the Club Secretary, Chairman, committee member or coach.
- The panel will first meet with the child and their parent/guardian alleging the bullying. The child will explain in their own words what has been happening, so that full details of the allegation are known. The panel will need to know when and where this has been happening, by whom and whether they think anyone witnessed the behaviour. The child may give a written account, in their own words, for the child's parent/guardian to then provide this account to the panel.
- If there were any witnesses, the same panel will speak to them to determine what they saw and any other information they have. If the witness is a child the panel will make that contact via the parent/guardian. The child may give a written account, in their own words, for the child's parent/guardian to then provide this account to the panel.
- The panel will lastly meet with the alleged bully and their parent/guardian to put the allegation to them and allow them the opportunity to respond to the allegation in their

own words. The child may give a written account, in their own words, for the child's parent/guardian to then provide this account to the panel.

- If the bullying is admitted then the panel can make decisions immediately on appropriate actions.
- If the bullying is denied the panel will consider and form a view on what is alleged on the balance of probabilities. This view will be formed on all the available information gained by the panel from all sides, previous concerns and knowledge of the parties involved.
- At all stages minutes will be taken for clarity and agreed by all as a true account.