



## ANTI BULLYING POLICY: PHOENIX AQUATICS INCORPORATED

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***We are a telling organisation. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell either a coach, committee member or another club officer. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within our sport and if it does occur, all our members, parents/guardians should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.***

### **1: Objectives of this Policy:**

1. All club members, coaches, officers of the club and parents/guardians should understand what bullying is.
2. As an organisation we take bullying seriously. Members and parents/guardians should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
3. All club members, coaches, officers of the club and parents/guardians should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

### **2: What is Bullying:**

To help us define what is bullying we have turned to the online resource [www.bullyingfree.nz](http://www.bullyingfree.nz). As they state, it is easy to assume everyone knows what bullying is. But often the term bullying is used to describe other aggressive behaviour such as a one-off fight or argument, or difference of opinion, a single act of social rejection or act of meanness, a thoughtless use of a sexist or racist term.

These other behaviours may be just as upsetting and serious, but may need to be dealt with in a different way. You will need to use your judgment to decide whether or not a specific incident is bullying.

#### **2.1 Identifying Bullying**

Whether bullying is physical, verbal, or social (relational), four widely-accepted factors can be used to identify it:

- Bullying is deliberate - harming another person intentionally
- Bullying involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- Bullying is usually not a one-off - it is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time
- Bullying involves behaviour that can cause harm - it is not a normal part of growing up.

Kids who bully use their **power** — such as physical strength, knowing something embarrassing, or popularity — to **control** or **harm** others. This behaviour is also repetitive, one child (or a group of children) keeps picking on another child again and again to make them feel bad. They repetitively say or do things to upset them, make fun of them, stop them from joining in, or keep hitting or punching them.

#### **2.2 Different kinds of Bullying**

Bullying can happen anywhere, in person or online (cyberbullying), at any time, and can be verbal, physical or social (relational). It can be obvious or hidden.



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- **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.

### **3: Why are children Bullied**

Children are most commonly bullied because of a real or perceived “difference”. This difference can be anything but could be attributed to:

- **Racist:** bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic and transphobic:** bullying based on sexuality or gender identity.
- **Disablist:** bullying children who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Sexual:** unwelcome sexual advances, comments that intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Discriminative:** Bullying based on any perceived weakness or difference. This could be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. It could also be factors surrounding the way someone looks or the clothes they wear, their family and social situation, hobbies and interests.

### **4: Signs and Indicators**

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.



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- 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.

### **5: Why is it important to respond to Bullying.**

Bullying has detrimental effects on a person's health, wellbeing and learning. It can make a person feel lonely, unhappy and frightened. It's not just the individual being bullied who is affected. Most people, especially children, say they don't like seeing bullying in their communities. It makes them feel worried and uncomfortable. Children who bully others are also more likely to have problems and be unhappy.

Being bullied can affect everything about a child: how they see themselves, their friends, school, club and their future. Children who are bullied often experience depression, low self-esteem that may last a lifetime, shyness, loneliness, physical illnesses, and threatened or attempted self-harm. Members may end up missing training, see their performance drop or even leave swimming altogether because they have been bullied. **The effects of verbal and social/relational bullying can be just as harmful as physical bullying.**

Children who engage in bullying also risk poor long term outcomes. It is also important that we support those who bully others to learn more appropriate behavior and ways to get on with others and deal with conflict and social challenges.

Bullying may also have a negative impact on bystanders, those who witness bullying. Even if a child isn't being bullied, they can be affected by it. No one can do well when they feel unsafe.

### **6: Procedures**

PA has provided clear standards of behaviour, including consequences of this unacceptable behaviour, in our Code of Conduct and Disputes and Discipline policies.

Due to the fact that bullying is a result of a prolonged period of behaviour, an instance of Bullying will be dealt with as a "Serious Misconduct" due to its grave and repeated nature.

As also covered in our Disputes and Discipline policy, the Panel of enquiry, after reviewing the evidence, will determine all procedures to be adopted. The determined procedure will be clearly communicated to all parties involved.

### **7: Determination**

**When dealing with bullying, PA acknowledges that we have a responsibility to contribute to better communities,** so while PA has a zero tolerance of bullying, addressing bullying effectively has benefits for the future of everyone. The clear messaging concerning Bullying is that while the use of direct sanctions may produce compliance it will not necessarily result in a change in an underlying attitude. With that in mind, the Panel of Enquiry will, in the case of a violation of our Code of Conduct that involves Bullying, recognise the clubs Anti-Bullying Policy messaging and



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will apply the approach of:

1. Protecting the victim
2. Letting the victim know they are supported and we are listening
3. Strengthening the target to help them more effectively deal with bullying behaviour
4. Offer a process of mediation by which the members in conflict are invited to take part in a session with a mediator, coach, panel member or peer mediator to help resolve their differences without any compulsion. However, the choice of mediation will not be pursued if the victim does not agree.
5. Encourage the bully to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for the conflict.

In all other applications of the determined outcome, the Panel of Enquiry will follow our Disputes and Discipline Policy. This includes the outcome that **penalties may still be applied** as the Panel considers appropriate, including temporary or permanent expulsion of the offender from the club. Such penalties will have immediate effect.

It is also worth noting that while most bullying incidents are not crimes, 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.