

Purpose

Bullying and harassment of any kind is not acceptable at the Immanuel Piranhas Swim Club Inc (IMSC) and will not be tolerated. Bullying or harassment is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members.

If bullying or harassment does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, parent, team manager or Club Committee member.

Objective

- To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To define bullying and harassment and educate all coaches, swimmers, parents and board members of the types of behaviour that constitute bullying.
- To inform all coaches, swimmers and parents that there is a policy and protocol, should any bullying or harassment issues arise.
- To make clear the responsibility of all Club members to report bullying and harassment.
- To spread the word that the Club takes bullying and harassment seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported if reported.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Harassment is treating others in a way that makes them feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, frightened, sad, or upset.

Bullying is treating others like this over a long period of time.

Cyber-bullying is bullying which uses e-technology as a means of harming and victimising others.

The Swimming Australia Child Safeguarding Policy as part of the National Integrity Framework defines bullying as:

“means a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. Bullying may be done in person, by phone, email, SMS or other means.”

You may feel bullied or harassed if someone:

- Makes unpleasant or unwelcome comments about you or your appearance
- Touches you in an unwelcome or unpleasant manner
- Makes racist or sexist comments, jokes about you or tricks you
- Makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Chooses to ignore or exclude you
- Verbally or physically bullies or threatens you
- Impersonates you
- Sends you repeated negative messages

Bullying and harassment can occur:

- Between swimmers
- Between coaches
- Between parents
- From a swimmer to a coach and vice versa
- From a parent to a coach and vice versa
- From a swimmer to a parent and vice versa

Reporting Procedure

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied or harassed should do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to his or her parents;
- Talk to a Club coach, Committee member or Member Protection Officer (MPO); or
- Write a letter or email to a Club coach, Committee member or MPO.

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 club leadership as soon as possible.

How We Handle Bullying and Harassment

If bullying or harassment is occurring during team-related activities, we stop the bullying on the spot using the following steps:

- Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
- Separate the parties involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behaviour when you intervene.

If bullying or harassment is occurring at our Club or it is reported to be occurring at our Club, we address the situation by finding out what happened and supporting the parties involved.

Find out what happened

- 1) First, we get the facts.
 - a) Keep all the involved parties separate.
 - b) Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids, and gather all available information regarding the circumstances under which the incident occurred.
 - c) Listen without blaming.
 - d) Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- 2) Then, we determine if it's bullying or harassment. There are many behaviours that look like bullying or harassment but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying, harassment or something else.
 - a) Review the Swimming Australia definition of bullying or definitions under '[What is Bullying and Harassment?](#)'
 - b) To determine if the behaviour is bullying, harassment or something else, consider these questions:
 - i) What is the history between the parties involved?
 - ii) Have there been past conflicts?
 - iii) Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength and can include things like the "popularity" of the parties involved.
 - c) Has this happened before? Is the victim worried it will happen again?
 - d) Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some people who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behaviour.
 - e) Once you have determined if the situation is bullying or harassment, support all of the parties involved.

Support the people involved

- 1) Support the person who is being bullied or harassed
 - a) Listen to and focus on the victim. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the victim that this is not their fault.
 - b) Work together to resolve the situation and protect the victim. Children, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i) Ask the victim what can be done to make him or her feel safe.
 - ii) Remember that changes to routine should be minimised. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the person who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - iii) Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and affected parties. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
 - c) Be persistent. Bullying or harassment may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the victim.
- 2) Address bullying behaviour
 - a) Make sure the person who engaged in the bullying or harassment behaviour understands why it is unacceptable. Young people who bully must learn their behaviour is wrong and harms others.

- b) Show your members that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the bully that bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. Model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.
- c) Work with the bully to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i) Sometimes children bully or harass to fit in or to make fun of someone who is different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii) Other times children act out because something else is going on in their lives (issues at home, abuse, stress). They also may have been bullied. These children may need additional support.
- d) Involve the bully in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the bully can:
 - i) Write a letter apologising to the person who was bullied.
 - ii) Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, or for the Club.
 - iii) Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e) Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - i) Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" are generally unsuccessful strategies. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - ii) Similarly, conflict resolution and peer mediation often don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
 - iii) Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the person who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

3) Support bystanders who witness bullying or harassment.

Every day, children witness bullying or harassment. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying or harassment when they see it happening:

- a) Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- b) Tell a trusted adult - your parent, coach or a club committee member.
- c) Help the person 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.