SG28 - ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
Safeguarding Guidance Document

Introduction
Scottish Swimming understands that children, young people and adults' wellbeing can be seriously impacted upon by bullying behaviour and therefore recognises the information provided by respect *me*, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service:

'Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a person better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up/life.'

Bullying is a behaviour that can make a person feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. Something only has to happen once to make a person feel worried or scared to go to the aquatics club or other places they enjoy going. For the purposes of this policy, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years and adult is someone 18 years or over. This policy applies to all children and young people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

Bullying is between peers e.g. child to child, there are times when adults' behaviour towards children can be described as "bullying" such as a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' mentality. Scottish Swimming believes that adults who behave in a manner that causes distress, hurt, or upset to a child or young person are behaving on a spectrum that runs from poor practice to abuse and that behaviour is more appropriately dealt with via the Scottish Swimming Safeguarding policy.

It should be recognised that bullying can take place both in person and in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying a definition:
Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, in situations where it's difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, including:

- *Physical* - hitting, kicking, theft, punching, shoving, any use of violence
- *Verbal* - threats, name-calling, spreading rumours, teasing
- *Emotional* - isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of the peer group, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures)
- *Harassment* e.g. using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress
- *Cyber* - vindictive posts on all areas of the internet such as social media sites e.g. Facebook or Instagram, nasty messages, emails, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of connected technology, i.e. camera and videos
- *Prejudiced based* - e.g. racist, homophobic or sectarian using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

Cyber Bullying
Cyber Bullying refers to bullying and harassment through the use of electronic devices such as personal computers and mobile phones - using email, texting and social networking websites. Cyber Bullying is wilful and involves recurring or repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic devices and is meant to cause emotional distress.

Cyber Bullying might include:
- A peer who intimidates through the use of a social networking website
- A coach who sends negative feedback about a participant via personal text message
- A club member who posts negative comments about a fellow member on a club forum

Cyber Bullying may also include threats, sexual remarks and hate speech. E-Bullies may publish personal contact information of their victims at websites. They may attempt to act as the victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that would defame or ridicule them.

Cyber Bullying is particularly serious due to the nature in which the abuse occurs. It can be very personal and take place in a closed private format where the victim may feel isolated and the content will not be viewed by parents, friends or siblings. Alternatively, it could take place in a public format. It may lead to the victim rereading any material in private perhaps leading to feelings of paranoia, depression, or loneliness.

Scottish Swimming will take all cases of Cyber Bullying seriously and deal with them in line with the standard bullying procedures.

Potential signs of Bullying
The person may:

- Become withdrawn
- Hesitation or reluctance to come to attend training or activity
- reluctance to work with a certain individual
- Often last one picked for a team or group activity for no apparent reason, or being picked on when they think your back is turned
- Clothing or personal possessions go missing or get damaged
- Act out and bully others
- Believe that there is something wrong with them
- Suffer from depression / develop feelings of worthlessness
- Exhibit self-harm behaviours such as cutting, an eating disorder, taking of drugs/alcohol
- In extreme cases, lead to suicide

Indicators of bullying
A child/young person may indicate by their behaviour that they are being bullied, it is the responsibility of all adults interacting with children to be vigilant of the following signs:

- Does not want to attend training or other club activities
- Changes in their usual routine
- Begins to be disruptive during sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or appears to lack confidence
- Becomes aggressive towards others, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts to stammer
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Start to bully other children
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong

Bullying should not be ignored, and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Responding to Bullying:
When talking about bullying, it's never helpful to label a child or an adult as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick and can isolate a person and others involved such as friends/parents/carers whose support will be required to help address the situation. It is preferable to talk about someone displaying bullying behaviour rather than label them a 'bully' – behaviour can be changed with help and support.

How should bullying be dealt with?
Scottish Swimming encourages all children and adults to report any suspected instances of bullying to one of the club coaches/helpers or to the club Wellbeing & Protection Officer (WPO). Children in particular need to be assured not to keep worries to themselves, but to tell their parent and/or coach. The club should ensure that all instances of bullying are taken very seriously and will be investigated thoroughly.

- Listen carefully.
- Discuss the potential courses of action with the child, young person or adult.
- Record the information on an Incident Report Form.
- Report bullying incidents to the club WPO or a member of the committee.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Scottish Swimming Safe Sport Team for advice. The individual should be made aware of this course of action.
- Where appropriate parents/carers should be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem with the athlete present.
- Where appropriate and the bullied athlete consents, police may be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution, or where appropriate under Scottish Swimming disciplinary procedures.

Remember: Adults have a right to self-determination and must consent to any actions you take

Management of bullying
In order to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour Scottish Swimming encourages all clubs to implement this policy through:

- Respecting the rights of the person reporting bullying is paramount
- Working together to develop positive relationships amongst club members (children and adults that are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting; and promote their emotional health and wellbeing.
- Training, supporting and supervising parents, coaches and volunteers to adopt best practice to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.
- Addressing the needs of those who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.
- Responding to any concerns raised either in the experiences of the child/adult of poor practice/misconduct or abuse caused by an other's bullying behaviour
- Highlighting bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy and guidelines and include children's & adults views in this process
- It is essential that all committee members, coaches, volunteer, parents and children are aware of this policy

Review
This Policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in guidance on anti-bullying or following any changes within Scottish Swimming
- Following any issue or concern raised about bullying within Scottish Swimming
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years

Model anti-bullying policy
Scottish Swimming advises member clubs to adopt an anti-bullying policy. A model anti-bullying policy designed by *respect me* is available at: https://respectme.org.uk/

Clubs should adopt an anti-bullying policy to cover the following areas:

- All committee members, coaches, athletes and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises
- All committee members and coaches should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- Clubs should take bullying seriously. Athletes and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated