

# HEATH TOWN SWIMMING CLUB

## Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our swimmers so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Heath Town Swimming Club. If bullying does occur, all swimmers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening should contact the Club Welfare Officer.

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

## Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullies need to learn different ways of behaving.

We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## Objectives of this Policy

- All coaches and teachers of Heath Town Swimming Club and parents of swimmers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Committee Members, Officials and Volunteers 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.
- As a swimming club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## Signs and Symptoms

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

- doesn't want to attend a swimming class/training session
- changes their usual routine
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- continually feels ill when due to attend the swimming club
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"

- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to Welfare Officer or other Official.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the Welfare Officer and the ASA informed.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

### **Outcomes**

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- If possible, the swimmer and his/her bully (bullies) will be reconciled
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Heath Town Swimming Club acknowledge the help of Kidscape in this matter (Kidscape.org.uk)