**Policy on Inappropriate Behavior**

**Statement of Intent**

We, The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Swim Club, is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in swimming in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. The Club is committed to providing each member a responsive environment free of discrimination, violence and bullying. Our Club works to ensure that all members have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a meaningful bond with people in the club community. The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Swim Club believes that we all have the responsibility to keep ourselves and others safe and that we all have the responsibility to respect ourselves, others, and the property of others.

Inappropriate behavior of any kind is unacceptable in our Club.

If inappropriate behavior does occur, all club members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING Club. This means that anyone who knows that inappropriate behavior is happening is expected to tell the Coach, parent, Club Representative or other trusted adult.

**What is inappropriate conduct:**

Inappropriate behavior is the use of aggression in any form with the intention of hurting another person. Inappropriate behavior results in pain and distress to the victim.

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Swim Club considers inappropriate behavior to include: Bullying, harassment, inappropriate language, inappropriate touching, inappropriate gestures, intentional destruction of personal property, inappropriate use of a cell phone, inappropriate use of social media, misuse of any form of technology.

Inappropriate Behavior can be:

* Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening, intimidation
* Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, inappropriate

comments, unwanted touching, staring & whistling, intentional destruction of personal property

* Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, name calling
* Homophobic because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
* Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing, taunting
* Cyber All areas of internet, such as email and social media

Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Inappropriate use of a cell phone in the locker room. Misuse of technology

**Why is it important to Respond?**

Any form of inappropriate behavior hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of inappropriate behavior. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are acting inappropriately need to learn different ways of behaving and communicating.

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Swim Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to these issues.

**Objectives of this Policy**

* All Club members, coaches and volunteers, and parents needs to understand what inappropriate behavior is.
* All Club members, coaches and volunteers should know what the club policy is on inappropriate behavior and follow it when an incident is reported.
* Provide clear guidelines and procedures in the event a problem arises.
* As a club we take any form of inappropriate behavior seriously. Athletes and parents should be assured that they will be supported when an incident is reported.
* Any form of inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

**Sign and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behavior that he or she is the victim of inappropriate behavior. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

* Is frightened of walking to or from swim practice or meets
* Doesn’t want to go to practice or meets
* Changes their usual routine
* Is unwilling to attend club events
* Begins to be truant
* 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
* Feels ill in the morning
* Begins to do poorly in school
* Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
* Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
* Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
* Has dinner or other monies continually “lost”
* Has unexplained cuts or bruises
* Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
* Is bullying other children or siblings
* Stops eating
* Is frightened to say what is wrong
* Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
* Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
* Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
* Not wanting to be alone with a particular person(s)
* Outbursts of anger
* Sudden unexplained personality changes
* Becoming withdrawn or clingy

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but inappropriate behavior should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

**What is expected of club members**

* Follow and abide by the Club Policy regarding Inappropriate Behavior
* Ensure they communicate their concerns if they find themselves or others being bullied or harassed.

1. Tell the Coach
2. Tell a parent
3. Tell a Club Representative
4. Tell a trusted adult

* If any individual or groups of individuals begin to harass someone, others shouldn’t encourage the behavior by giving it an audience. Instead of laughing or supporting it, they should make it clear that such behavior is not entertaining and will not be tolerated.

**What can a club member do if he/she is being bullied or harassed**

1. Initially ignore it and walk away
2. Tell the person to stop (You may need a friend to help you)
3. Tell them how the behavior makes you feel
4. Tell them it is a serious offense and they will be reported
5. Tell your Coach, Club Representative or a trusted adult. Tell them exactly what happened (your side of the story).
6. Tell your Coach, Club Representative or trusted adult if the behavior continues as the Club will take all steps to work with you and your family to ensure your protection and well-being.

**What can parents do**

* Stay calm and listen carefully when your child tells you about it
* Affirm that they have the right to feel safe and that you will help them
* Notify the Coach, Club Representative or trusted adult as soon as possible
* Rehearse with your child ways of responding to inappropriate behavior
* Watch for signs of inappropriate behavior

**What members can expect from the Club**

* Treat complaints seriously
* Act promptly
* Treat people fairly and listen to both sides of the story
* Stay neutral
* Keep parties to the complaint informed
* Try to maintain confidentiality if possible
* Protect against victimization
* Keep accurate records
* Make decisions based only on information gathered not personal views
* Disciplinary action should be relative to the infraction

**Procedures**

1. Coach, Club Representative or trusted adult will listen seriously to all members who report incidents of inappropriate behavior.
2. As soon as the Coach or other adult becomes aware of an incident, procedures will be initiated for dealing with the problem.
3. Immediate separation of both parties involved during training sessions or in the locker room until the incident has been investigated fully.
4. Counsel will be provided to all parties involved.
5. The inappropriate behavior must be investigated and stopped quickly.
6. If mediation fails and the inappropriate behavior continues, the club will initiate disciplinary proceedings according to the Club Policy.
7. If necessary and appropriate, the police may be consulted.

**Recommended Club Action**

If the Coach or Club Representative decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Attempt reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem. This process can be facilitated by the Coach or Club Representative.
2. If this fails, the Coach or Club Representative should meet with the parent and child alleging inappropriate behavior to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed upon by all as a true account.
3. The Coach or Club Representative should meet with the alleged bully or harasser and their parent/s and discuss the alleged inappropriate behavior. Give ample opportunity for them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed on.
4. If inappropriate behavior is determined to have taken place, the individual/s should be:
5. warned that the behavior must stop immediately
6. Give notice of temporary suspension for a period of one week
7. Give notice that permanent suspension will occur if the behavior continues.
8. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
9. The Coach should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure no new incidents have occurred.
10. All Coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning, punishment.
11. Open communication with all parties involved regarding investigation results, disciplinary action taken.

**Outcomes**

1. The offending parties may be asked to genuinely apologize. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
3. If possible, the individuals will be reconciled.
4. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated behavior does not take place.

**Prevention**

The Club will have a written policy regarding inappropriate behavior by any club member.

All Club members and parents will read/sign club policy upon joining the club.

The Club will raise awareness about inappropriate behavior and why it matters, and if issues arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.