

Hydra Aquatics of Northern Virginia Anti-Bullying Policy

Acknowledgment and Purpose:

Hydra Aquatics of Northern Virginia LLC dba Hydra Aquatics of Northern Virginia (“HYAQ”) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all athletes, coaches, volunteers, and families. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying, in accordance with USA Swimming guidelines and Virginia’s model anti-bullying policies for youth organizations and educational institutions. HYAQ strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports bullying or participates in an investigation. Retaliation will be treated as a serious violation of this policy

Definition of Bullying

Bullying includes as any intentional, repeated behavior—verbal, physical, written or digital—that causes or is reasonably likely to cause:

- Physical or emotional harm
- Fear or intimidation
- Interference with participation
- Disruption of the club environment
- Creation of a hostile or unsafe setting

Examples include:

- Verbal abuse (e.g., name-calling, taunting, or threats)
 - Physical aggression (e.g., hitting, pushing)
 - Social manipulation, isolation or exclusion
 - Cyberbullying (e.g., harassing via texts, emails, or social media)
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USA Swimming Regulations

Hydra Aquatics adheres to the following USA Swimming policies:

- **Anti-Bullying Policy:** As defined in Section 304.3.7 of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, bullying includes severe or repeated use of words, actions, or online expressions that:
 - Cause harm or distress
 - Create fear or a hostile environment
 - Disrupt training or participation
 - Infringe on a swimmer's rights
 - **Code of Conduct:** All members must abide by USA Swimming's Code, which prohibits all forms of bullying and harassment.
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Prevention and Education

HYAQ is committed to proactive education and training:

- Coaches and staff will receive annual training on conflict resolution, reporting procedures, and Safe Sport guidelines.
- Athletes will be provided with developmentally appropriate guidance on respectful behavior and how to report concerns.

Reporting Procedures

Any member who witnesses or experiences bullying is encouraged to report the behavior to:

- A coach or team administrator
- HYAQ's Safe Sport Coordinator
- USA Swimming's Safe Sport Program

Reports will be kept as confidential as possible. There is no time limit for reporting bullying, but prompt reporting is encouraged.

Investigation and Resolution

Upon receiving a report:

- HYAQ will separate those involved and ensure immediate safety.
- Provide immediate medical/mental health support if needed
- Stay calm and model respectful behavior
- An impartial investigation will be conducted, gathering information from all relevant parties.
- Findings will be evaluated to determine whether bullying occurred.

Supportive Actions

For the victim:

- Ensure safety and emotional support
- Involve the athlete and parent/guardian in a resolution plan
- Avoid punitive changes such as removing the victim from a preferred practice group or meet

For the aggressor:

- Clearly communicate that bullying is unacceptable
- Impose age-appropriate, restorative consequences
- Use education and accountability, rather than automatic suspension, when possible

For bystanders:

- Encourage reporting and responsible intervention
- Discourage enabling behavior or silence

Ongoing Monitoring:

- Maintain open communication with the victim and family
- Praise respectful behavior
- Follow up to prevent recurrence

Consequences

Disciplinary actions may include:

- Warnings or behavior contracts
- Suspension from team activities
- Expulsion from the team
- Referral to law enforcement or child protective services, if appropriate

Compliance with Virginia Law

This policy aligns with Va. Code § 22.1-279.6, which requires youth organizations to maintain effective bullying prevention policies that promote respectful learning and recreational environments.

Acknowledgment & Agreement

By signing below, I confirm I have reviewed and understand the HYAQ's Anti-Bullying Policy. I agree to support a culture of respect, report incidents, and adhere to all related rules and expectations. I understand that failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from HYAQ.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Swimmer's Name(s): _____