



**Empowering Alaskans through Water Safety, Education, and Competitive Spirit**

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# Yeti Swim Bullying Policy and Action Plan

**Effective Date:** October 10, 2025

**Approved By:** AFA Board of Directors

**Last Reviewed:** October 10, 2025

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## 1. Purpose

At the Aquatic Foundation of Alaska (AFA), we believe every athlete deserves a safe, respectful, and empowering environment.

Bullying has no place in our pools, locker rooms, decks, or community. It undermines trust, damages confidence, and threatens the integrity of our team culture.

AFA is committed to preventing, addressing, and resolving all forms of bullying through education, accountability, and support.

Our goal is to develop athletes who are strong in skill, character, and compassion.

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## 2. Scope

This policy applies to **all members** of AFA, including:

- Athletes (Swim School, Youth Competitive, and Legends)
- Coaches and staff
- Parents/guardians and volunteers

- Board members and officials

It covers all interactions in AFA environments, including practices, meets, camps, travel, and digital communication platforms.

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### 3. Policy Goals

AFA's Bullying Policy aims to:

1. Make it clear that **bullying is not tolerated** in any form.
  2. Define bullying and distinguish it from other types of conflict or disagreement.
  3. Provide clear **reporting pathways** for athletes, families, and staff.
  4. Ensure **consistent, fair, and timely responses** to all reports.
  5. Support both those affected by bullying and those responsible for harmful behavior through education and accountability.
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### 4. Definition of Bullying

**Bullying is repeated, aggressive behavior**—physical, verbal, social, or digital—that causes harm, exclusion, or distress.

It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power and creates an unsafe or hostile environment.

#### Examples Include:

- Name-calling, mocking, or intimidating behavior
- Excluding a teammate on purpose
- Spreading rumors or gossip (in person or online)
- Physical aggression or threats

- Misusing social or leadership roles to control or humiliate others
- Repeated teasing or disruption of practice targeting an individual

## What Is Not Bullying

- One-time disagreements or conflicts
- Constructive feedback or coaching direction
- Respectful debates or differences in opinion

AFA distinguishes between conflict (a normal part of team life) and bullying (a pattern of targeted harm).

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## 5. Reporting Bullying

Everyone has the right and responsibility to report bullying.

Reports can be made by any athlete, parent, coach, or witness through the following channels:

- Speak directly with a **Yeti coach** or **Safe Sport Coordinator**
- Email: [yeti@aquaticfoundationalaska.org](mailto:yeti@aquaticfoundationalaska.org)
- Contact **USA Swimming Safe Sport** at [usaswimming.org/safesport](https://usaswimming.org/safesport)
- Speak with a **trusted adult** or **board member** if you are unsure where to begin

There is no time limit on reports, but early communication allows quicker and more effective resolution.

All reports will be treated confidentially and respectfully.

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## 6. Immediate Action (If Bullying Occurs During AFA Activities)

If bullying is witnessed or reported during an AFA event or practice, coaches or staff will:

1. **Intervene immediately** to stop the behavior.
  2. **Separate those involved** to ensure safety.
  3. **Reassure and support** the individual targeted.
  4. **Model calm and respectful behavior.**
  5. **Involve another adult** if needed for witness or support.
  6. **Document the incident** and report it to the Head Coach or Safe Sport Coordinator within 24 hours.
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## 7. Investigation and Response

When a report is received:

1. The **Head Coach** and/or **Safe Sport Coordinator** will review and assess the situation.
  2. **Separate interviews** will be conducted with all involved parties and relevant witnesses.
  3. The goal is to **gather facts**, avoid assumptions, and understand context.
  4. The team will determine whether the incident meets the definition of bullying.
  5. Parents/guardians will be notified, and a **corrective action plan** will be developed.
  6. Follow-up meetings will occur to ensure safety, accountability, and closure.
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## 8. Support and Accountability

### For the Athlete Who Was Bullied

- Coaches will listen, validate, and develop a support plan together.

- The athlete will not be isolated or made to feel at fault.
- Regular check-ins will occur to ensure ongoing safety and well-being.
- The athlete will be encouraged to stay engaged in team activities and feel valued.

### **For the Athlete Who Engaged in Bullying Behavior**

- The behavior will be addressed directly, respectfully, and with accountability.
- The athlete will be guided to understand the impact of their actions.
- Restorative measures may include written apologies, service acts, or structured reflection assignments.
- Repeated or severe behavior may result in disciplinary action consistent with the **AFA Code of Conduct** and **Removal Policy**.
- Growth is the goal but accountability is non-negotiable.

### **For Teammates Who Witness Bullying**

- Bystanders are encouraged to show support for those targeted.
- Teammates will be taught safe ways to intervene and report concerns.
- Athletes are reminded that silence or laughter reinforces bullying — walking away and reporting helps stop it.

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## **9. Confidentiality**

AFA will maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible while ensuring safety and accountability.

Information will be shared only with those directly involved in responding to or resolving the incident.

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## 10. Protection from Retaliation

AFA prohibits retaliation of any kind against anyone who reports or participates in an investigation of bullying.

Retaliation will be treated as a separate and serious violation of this policy.

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## 11. Prevention and Education

- AFA coaches will discuss respect, teamwork, and sportsmanship regularly.
- Safe Sport reminders will be integrated into team meetings, dryland sessions, and pre-meet briefings.
- Annual team culture education will reinforce what to do if bullying occurs and how to build an inclusive environment.

Prevention starts with daily awareness — how we speak, listen, and support each other.

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## 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the **AFA Coaching Staff**, **Safe Sport Coordinator**, and **Board of Directors** to ensure continued alignment with USA Swimming's Safe Sport guidelines and AFA's mission to provide a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for all participants.

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### Footer

**Aquatic Foundation of Alaska (AFA)** — *Promoting safety, excellence, and inclusion through the power of water.*

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