

SALMO VALLEY SWIMMING POOL
ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the Salmo Valley Swimming Pool (“SVSP”) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to the spirit of the pool and can be devastating to a victim. SVSP is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our staff and patrons. If bullying does occur, all patrons should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a life guard, supervisor, or a board member.

Objectives of the SVSP Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

To make it clear that SVSP will not tolerate bullying in any form.

1. To define bullying and give all board members, guards, and patrons a good understanding of what bullying is.
2. To make it known to all guards, parents, and swimmers that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
3. To make the process of how to report bullying clear and understandable.
4. To spread the word that SVSP takes bullying seriously and that all patrons can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

We have adopted WorkSafe BC guidelines for bullying and harassment in the workplace for SVSP staff and use those guidelines for our patrons as well:

As per WorkSafe BC:

Not every unpleasant interaction, instance of disrespectful behaviour, or workplace conflict is bullying and harassment. WorkSafe BC’s OHS policies use the phrase “bullying and harassment” as a single term, which:

(a) includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but

(b) excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.

Examples of conduct or comments that might be bullying and harassment include: verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings, and spreading malicious rumours. This is not a complete list.

Other, more subtle behaviours, such as patterns of targeted social isolation, might also be considered bullying and harassment if they are humiliating or intimidating and fit the definition set out in the OHS policies. Intent does not determine whether the behaviour is bullying and harassment. A person cannot excuse his or her behaviour by saying he or she did not intend it to be humiliating or intimidating.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

If any patron who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a life guard, supervisor, or board member;
- Write a letter or email to SVSP or other designated individual;

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate SVSP board member as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during pool hours, we **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at SVSP or it is reported to be occurring at SVSP, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. **First, we get the facts.**
 1. Keep all the involved children separate.
 2. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 3. Listen without blaming.
 4. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 5. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple patrons are involved or the bullying involves [social bullying](#) or [cyber bullying](#). Collect all available information.
2. **Then, we determine if it's bullying.** There are [many behaviors that look like bullying](#) but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
 1. Review the WorkSafe BC definition of bullying;

2. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
3. What is the history between the kids involved?
4. Have there been past conflicts?
5. Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
6. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
 1. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
 2. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

1. Support the kids who are being bullied

1. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
2. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, guards, parents, board members and fellow patrons may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - 2.1. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
 - 2.2. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between SVSP and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
3. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

1. Address bullying behavior

1. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
2. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
3. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - 3.1. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - 3.2. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.

4. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - 4.1. Write a letter apologizing to the child who was bullied.
 - 4.2. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for SVSP, or for others in your community.
 - 4.3. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
5. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - 5.1. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the pool patrons who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked out of the team is the consequence.
 - 5.2. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
6. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk.

2. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

1. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
2. Tell a trusted adult—your parent, guard, or board member;
3. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go over here."
4. Set a good example by not bullying others.
5. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

DISCLAIMER: Salmo Valley Swimming Pool is a unique environment, in that we are in charge of young humans in an extremely dangerous location. A school or community center has the luxury of talking things out and problem-solving, whereas we have two or three young guards with people's lives in their hands. While the Salmo Valley Swimming Pool encourages all guests to treat each other with respect, the first and foremost goal of the lifeguards is the safety of the patrons. Therefore, issues of possible bullying will only be addressed at a safe time when the lifeguard on duty can be approached regarding matters of physical safety only."