

Coastal Cities Aquatic Association

This packet contains information on the rules and policies to be followed for all adults that are in direct contact with the league swimmers. This includes volunteers 18 and older that will be helping coach or working with the swimmers on a continuous basis. If you only volunteer at meets in a position such as a timer, computer operator, official, etc. then you are excluded from the completing all the requirements, however are encouraged to read the material.

This document includes the following sections:

1. *CCAA Policies and Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection*
 - a. The policies are for Athlete Protection and are mandatory for all CCAA teams.
2. *Safe Sport Handbook for CCAA*
 - a. The handbook outlines the fact that CCAA Swimming is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all of its swimmers, with the welfare of its athletes as the top priority and is mandatory for all teams.

These documents are required reading, and requires the attached forms be filled out by each adult or volunteer (18 and over). These forms include:

1. An acknowledgement that you have received and read the sections above and agree to comply with all the requirements.
2. A criminal background check for the state of Texas will be required. There is a release form to be filled out and signed authorizing the background check.
3. A check of the Sexual Offender database for the state of Texas will also be done. This will need to be authorized also.
4. Coaches or volunteers who are currently employed at an educational institution that requires background and sexual offender checks are exempt from items 2 and 3, but must still complete item 1.

If you are interested in coaching and /or volunteering on a continuous basis within our league you must comply with this document. Any questions or concerns can be addressed by the League President, however each team is expected to administer and follow these requirements. These requirements should be met before any coach or volunteer as described above that interacts with the league swimmers on a continuous basis. **Each team should keep a record of these forms along with the required checks for future reference as needed.**

CCAA Policies and Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection

Policies

The following policies for Athlete Protection are mandatory for all CCAA teams. This includes the document *Safe Sport Handbook for CCAA*.

1. Inappropriate touching between an athlete and an adult athlete or not non-athlete member is prohibited, including, but not limited to, excessive touching, hugging, kissing, sexually oriented behavior, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games, and having an athlete sit on a non-family member adult's lap.
2. Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.
3. Coaches and volunteers (18 and over) who interact directly and frequently with athletes as a regular part of their duties must satisfactorily complete criminal background checks. The background check should be statewide for the state of Texas, and include a Sexual Offender check. This does not apply to volunteers such as timers, marshals, computer operators, etc. who only have limited contact with athletes during a meet.
4. Travel ... All teams who are part of the CCAA shall have their own travel policies.

Best Practice Guidelines

The following Best Practice Guidelines are recommended for all CCAA teams.

1. One coach member and at least one other adult should be present at all practices and other sanctioned team activities whenever at least one athlete is present. This is known as the "three person rule".
2. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
3. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
4. Communications between non-athlete adult members and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
5. Non-athlete adult members should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adult members should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
6. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.

NOTE: Any known or suspected abuse incidents must be reported to law enforcement.

Coastal Cities Aquatic Association

SAFE SPORT HANDBOOK

Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."

Nelson Mandela

INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of great reasons to swim – at any level. As a life-long activity people often swim to have fun and spend time with friends. Swimming also encourages a healthy lifestyle and builds self-confidence. Swimmers even benefit from the sport out of the water.

Unfortunately, sports, including swimming, can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including physical and sexual abuse. **All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the values of the Coastal Cities Aquatic Association (CCAA) Swimming.**

CCAA Swimming is committed to fostering a fun and a healthy safe sport environment for all its participants. We all must recognize that the safety of swimmers lies with all those involved in the sport and is not the sole responsibility of any one person at the local team or the CCAA organization level.

Safe Sport Program Philosophy

Mission Statement

CCAA Swimming is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all of its swimmers, with the welfare of its athletes as the top priority.

Guiding Principles

1. CCAA Swimming believes that every swimmer should have a safe, healthy, fun sport environment.
2. CCAA Swimming believes that every young person should be protected from abuse and safe from harm.
3. CCAA Swimming believes that all non-athlete members share a collective responsibility to protect our swimmers.
4. CCAA Swimming will provide resources, information, and guidance on Safe Sport related issues to all including coaches, parents and athletes.
5. CCAA Swimming will treat all allegations of abuse or concerns regarding athlete safety seriously and will respond appropriately.

Policies and Guidelines

Bullying

1. Bullying is prohibited.
2. Bullying may be but not limited to the following:
 - Causing physical or emotional harm to the other athletes or damage to the other athlete's property
 - Placing the other athletes in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property
 - Creating a hostile environment for the other participants at any CCAA Swimming activity;
 - Infringing on the rights of the other participants at any CCAA Swimming activity;

Sexual Conduct

1. Any inappropriate sexual conduct or advance, or other inappropriate oral, written, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed towards an athlete by a coach or any other adult participating in any capacity whatsoever in the activities of CCAA Swimming (whether such adult is a swimmer or not).
2. Any act of sexual harassment, including without limitation unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate oral, written, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature in connection with or incidental to a CCAA Swimming-related activity by any person participating in the affairs or activities of CCAA Swimming and directed toward any swimmer or other person participating in the affairs or activities of CCAA Swimming.

Abuse

1. Physical abuse of an athlete by any person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete. "Physical abuse" is defined as a non-accidental injury and/or an injury primarily caused by the gross negligence on the part of the person in a position of authority over the athlete.
2. Bullying of an athlete by a coach member or other non-athlete member who is in a position of authority over that athlete.

Other

1. Any non-consensual physical contact, obscene language or gesture, or other threatening language or conduct directed towards any meet official and which is related to any decision made by such official in connection with a CCAA Swimming competition.

Best Practices

1. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.
2. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes should be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.
3. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes' outside team programs and activities.

Screening and Selection Guidelines

BACKGROUND CHECKS

CCAA Swimming's background check requirement is designed to deter individuals who should not be working with athletes from ever applying for membership. Additionally, it identifies any unsuitable criminal history of those individuals who do apply for participation. The background check should be for the State of Texas and include a check for being on the sexual offender list.

Automatic Disqualifiers: An individual will be disqualified from CCAA Swimming participation if a background search reveals that such individual has been convicted of, received an imposition of a deferred sentence for, or entered a plea of guilty or no contest at any time, or the existence of any pending charges for the following:

1. Any felony involving:
 - a. Violence against a person;
 - b. Violent crimes involving weapons;
 - c. Animal abuse.
2. Any felony or misdemeanor involving:
 - a. All sexual crimes, including misconduct, lewd conduct, sexual assault, rape, and register violations;

- b. Drug use or possession, (including the use of drug paraphernalia) within the previous 3 years (2 years with approval of the League President);
- c. Other drug related crimes including drug distribution, intent to distribute, manufacturing, trafficking, sale, or maintaining disorderly house within the previous 7 years;
- d. Child endangerment, neglect or abuse.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING

Teams are responsible for hiring and supervising their own coaches and staff and managing their own volunteers. Responsible and thorough hiring practices are critical to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our members.

RECOGNIZING

This section offers guidance on how to recognize abuse. Abuse can be categorized into different types, including: sexual abuse, bullying, and physical abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at a given time.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adult staff in positions of authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and being informed.

Definition

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Last, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

Notes on Definition

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of Sexual Misconduct

Touching examples

- Fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favor
- Sexual relations or intimacies between an athlete and other sport participant in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over that athlete
- Genital contact

Non-touching examples

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior
- A coach or non-athlete discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- A coach or non-athlete asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- A coach or non-athlete requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- A coach or non-athlete exposing an athlete to pornographic material
- A coach or non-athlete sending an athlete sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., “sexting”)
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)

Grooming examples

- Sexually explicit, excessive, or otherwise inappropriate use of email, text messaging, social media, or other electronic communication
- Massaging or stretching an athlete
- Excessive or inappropriate gift giving
- Any combination of above or other behaviors that establish a pattern of grooming behavior

Exception

These guidelines do not apply to a preexisting relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Any allegation of sexual misconduct of an athlete will be investigated.

Bullying

Sports can help individuals build self-esteem and confidence, making them stronger and better able to deal with challenges. The wide range of emotions athletes experience in practice and competition are normal, healthy components of sports. However, severe behavior or a repeated pattern of behavior by either coaches or teammates that inflicts psychological or emotional harm has no place in sports. By gaining a complete understanding of the actions that qualify as bullying, participants can be in a stronger position to take action.

Exceptions

Bullying does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance. Constructive criticism about an athlete’s performance does not constitute bullying.

Examples of Bullying

Verbal acts

- Repeatedly and excessively verbally attacking an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting)
- Repeatedly and excessively yelling at participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose

Physical acts

- Throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants
- Punching walls, windows or other objects

Acts that deny attention and support

- Ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time
- Routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice

Any allegation of bullying of an athlete will be investigated.

Physical Abuse

Almost all sports involve strenuous physical activity. In practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to their maximum effort. While these efforts are a necessary part of improving performance, activity that physically harms an athlete is unacceptable. One of the best ways to promote safe conditions is to understand exactly where the boundaries lie and take a team approach to monitoring athletes.

Definition

Physical abuse is defined as a non-accidental injury and/or an injury primarily caused by the gross negligence on the part of a person in a position of authority over the athlete

Exceptions

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

Examples of Physical Misconduct

Contact examples

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to practice or competition prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury or concussion.
- Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of the athlete

Non-contact examples

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

Any allegation of physical abuse of an athlete will be investigated.

RESPONDING

You have a responsibility as a coach or other non-athlete participant, and as an adult, to protect the children within your care. They cannot protect themselves. They rely on you to keep them safe. If you observe a boundary violation, policy violation, or suspicious or inappropriate interactions, this section will help you know how to respond.

Responding to Code of Conduct Violations

Interrupt the action and speak directly to the person involved.

Try to begin the conversation with something positive, and then describe the actions you've seen that concern you and suggest what should be done. Interrupting doesn't mean you are accusing anyone of molesting a child. You are just making sure that everyone follows the rules that keep kids safe.

Share your concerns with the head coach, team manager or Team Board President.

If you see something, say something. If you don't speak up, nothing will change and the situation could get dangerous. Tell your supervisor exactly what you've observed. Arrange a time when you can speak with leadership privately and without distractions. Share your observations and concerns with as much detail as you can and explain why you are concerned and what you would like to see changed.

Responding to "Red Flag" Behavior

Sometimes we recognize behavior that is not a CCAA Swimming Code of Conduct violation but is still concerning behavior that needs to be addressed, such as an adult who has poor boundaries with athletes. Texting athletes frequently, discussing marital problems with the athletes or buying gifts for a certain athlete are examples of poor boundaries.

Always respond quickly, if you witness or become aware of the behavior.

A child's safety may be in jeopardy and a delay in action could allow abuse to occur. Red-flags can quickly lead to abuse. That means you need to respond right away, no matter how busy you are. Similarly to a Code of Conduct violation, your concerns should be shared with the head coach, team manager or Team Board President.

If you are in a leadership position at your club and you witness 'red flag' behavior or such behavior is reported to you, follow these guidelines to address it:

Find out as much as you can about the situation, if red flag behavior is reported to you. Get as much information as you can from the person making the report and from any others who may have relevant information, like co-workers. You may also find it helpful to review personnel records to determine if this is a first time report or a recurrence.

Address next steps internally. Because you and/or the team's actions can have serious legal implications, it's always a good idea to review what you've learned with your supervisor and/or the Board and to discuss what steps should be taken next.

Based on what you find out, take the necessary disciplinary action.

Follow your club's progressive disciplinary procedure for dealing with policy violations, or otherwise address the behavior as necessary.

*Thoroughly document what you learned from your investigation and what **actions** you took in response.*

Documentation can be crucial if you must later prove that you exercised due diligence in acting on a report of inappropriate or suspicious behavior.

Decide who else needs to know about the situation.

You may need to advise other coaches or the parents of the children involved. Other coaches may have heard rumors or have questions that you can put to rest. Parents may need information to allay any fears they may have and to discuss the situation with their children. Most people appreciate being in the know directly, rather than hearing stories through the rumor mill.

Use the situation to strengthen training, monitoring and supervision, and enhance your policies.

Red flag incidents can teach us a great deal, if we let them. Use what happened in this situation to ask yourself, "How could this happen?" as well as, "What did we do well?" Maybe you'll see that your coaches need more training on how to supervise children or how to respond if they see a red flag. Don't let an incident go by without learning something from it so you can do an even better job in the future.

REPORTING

When to Report:

It's critical for teams, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse to the proper officials and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

By working together, we can create safe conditions for our sport and protect athletes.

The guiding principles for reporting Code of Conduct violations are:

- The safety and well-being of the athlete must take priority;
- Reports of Code of Conduct violations are required without delay to the CCAA League President. Reports of red flag behavior or boundary violations should be made without delay to the head coach, or Board of Directors of your team.

The appropriate people should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a member may have violated the Code of Conduct or a member is being abused.

How to report:

A report can be made by telephone, letter, email, or a meeting in person.

Coastal Cities Aquatic Association

(CCAA)

Guidelines and Policies

and

Safe Sport Handbook

Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, have received and read a copy of the **CCAA Guidelines and Policies** and the **CCAA Safe Sport Handbook** which defines the goals, policies and expectations of individuals working with the athletes and families within the association.

I have familiarized myself with the contents of these documents. I hereby acknowledge, accept and agree to comply with the Guidelines and policies mentioned in these documents.

I understand these documents serve as general requirements for the goals, policies and practices of this organization to be followed by the coaches and adult volunteers (18 and over) working directly with the athletes on a regular basis.

I understand that failure to comply with the guidelines and policies could result in termination of opportunity to participate in CCAA and could result in criminal charges being filed.

I understand that this form will be recorded in my personal file.

Printed Name of Employee or Adult Volunteer:	Team Affiliation:	Date:
Signature of Employee or Adult Volunteer:		
Printed Name of Exec. Board Member or Team Representative:	Team Affiliation:	Date:
Signature of Exec. Board Member or Team Representative:		