



ACTION PLAN OF CHEER DERBY TO ADDRESS BULLYING

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Cheer Derby and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. Cheer Derby is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, program owner or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of Cheer Derby's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that Cheer Derby will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all program owners, coaches, parents and athletes a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, athletes and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that Cheer Derby takes bullying seriously and that all athletes and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USASF Professional Responsibility Code defines bullying in section 2A. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USASF members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USASF activity
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USASF activity
- v. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USASF activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member program or event producer.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete 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 team coach, program owner, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the team coach, program owner, 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 program leadership 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 at a Cheer Derby event, 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 people 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 Cheer Derby or is reported to be occurring at our event, 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.
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes 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.
 - a. Review the USASF definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily

- ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for Cheer Derby, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
 - e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team athletes who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Athletes may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - ii. 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.
 - f. 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 about what it means to be a good teammate.
5. 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.
- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
 - b. Tell a trusted adult - your parent, coach, or program owner;
 - c. 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, practice is about to start."
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. 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.