



How to Make Your Claim Heard

Mini-lesson objectives

- Help swimmers and families understand what makes a concern easier to act on.
 - Provide a step-by-step guide for organizing facts, evidence, and requests.
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A. What Evidence and Facts Do You Need?

Key teaching points

- You do **not** need “perfect proof” to speak up—but clear facts make it easier for adults and systems to respond.
- Focus on **who, what, when, where, how often, and impact**, not just feelings.

Helpful details to record

- **Who:** names of people involved and any witnesses.
- **What:** what was said or done, using simple, concrete language.
- **When:** dates and approximate times; note if a pattern has repeated.
- **Where:** practice, meet, bus, hotel, locker room, online platform, etc.
- **How often:** one time, once a week, “almost every practice,” etc.
- **Impact:** how it affected safety, performance, or wellbeing (fear, pain, distraction, dread of practice).

Examples of evidence

- Screenshots of texts, DMs, emails, or posts.
 - Photos of injuries or unsafe conditions (when safe and allowed).
 - Written notes made soon after an incident with date and time.
 - Copies of any reports already made to the club, school, or SafeSport body.
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B. Writing Down Your Story

Key teaching points

- Writing helps make your story clearer and prevents details from being lost or changed over time.
- Use short sentences. Avoid guessing about motives—stick to what you observed and what you felt.

Simple written template

1. **Basic facts**
 - “On [date] at [time], during [practice / meet / trip] at [location], [person] did/said: [short description].”
 2. **Pattern (if any)**
 - “This has happened [number] times since [month/year].”
 3. **Impact**
 - “This made me feel / caused: [scared, unsafe, pressured, pain, trouble sleeping, dread of practice, etc.].”
 4. **Witnesses**
 - “Others who saw or heard this: [names, or ‘not sure’].”
 5. **What I’m asking for**
 - “I am asking for: [investigation, change in behavior, different coach/group, safety plan, communication with parents, etc.].”
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C. How to Share Your Claim So Adults Can Act

Key teaching points

- Different adults play different roles: some **listen and support**, some **investigate**, some **enforce rules**.
- The more organized your information, the easier it is for them to move quickly.

Steps for swimmers

1. **Choose your first listener**
 - A parent/guardian or other trusted adult who will take you seriously.
2. **Share your written notes and any evidence**
 - Show them your timeline, screenshots, or written description instead of trying to remember everything on the spot.



3. **Ask for a clear next step**
 - Example: “Can you help me report this to the club / school / SafeSport?”
4. **Stay involved**
 - Ask to be updated on what has been done and what will happen next.

Steps for parents/caregivers

1. **Thank the swimmer for telling you** and avoid blaming questions.
2. **Review and organize the information** together. Clarify missing basic details if needed.
3. **Submit the concern in writing** to the appropriate place (club, school, SafeSport system, or authorities), attaching or describing evidence.
4. **Keep your own record** of emails sent, responses received, and any meetings held.
5. **Follow up** if you don't receive a response within a reasonable timeframe; escalate to higher levels if safety concerns remain.

D. Communicating Clearly With Systems

Key teaching points

- Systems (clubs, schools, SafeSport bodies) respond best to clear, specific reports.
- Emotional language is understandable, but it helps to **pair feelings with facts**.

Sample email / report starter

- Subject line: “Safety concern regarding [coach/team/setting] – [brief label]”
- Opening:
 - “I am reporting a concern about [person/setting]. I want to ensure athletes are safe and supported.”
- Facts (use your template):
 - “On [date] at [time] ...”
 - “This has occurred [number] times since...”
 - “This has affected my child/me by...”
- Request:
 - “I am asking for: [investigation, safety plan, change of group, written response, etc.]”
- Safety note:
 - “Please confirm how athlete safety will be protected while this is being reviewed.”



E. When You Don't Feel Heard

Key teaching points

- Not being believed or taken seriously the first time does **not** mean your experience is invalid.
- You are allowed to **try again with someone else** or move up the ladder of reporting.

Options if your claim feels ignored:

- Bring your written record to a **different adult or office** (another administrator, SafeSport contact, school official, or child protection line).
- Add an update to your report:
 - “This was first reported on [date] to [person/office]. I have not yet received a response. I am now escalating this concern because safety issues continue.”
- Ask a trusted adult to **advocate with you**, not just for you, so you are included in the process.

Making a claim heard is not about being perfect; it is about being **as clear and persistent as you safely can**. Facts, dates, and evidence help adults act, but your discomfort and safety concerns already matter. Speaking up with organized information is an important step toward protecting yourself and other swimmers.