



**What is real consent?**



# Clear vs. Unspoken Boundaries

- Some boundaries are personal.  
Comfort with hugs, teasing, or certain locker-room behaviors can vary based on swimmer, family, culture, and past experience. It is okay for swimmers to have different comfort levels.
- Other boundaries must be universal.  
On every team, no matter the culture, there should be clear lines:
  - No sexualized comments about bodies or swimsuits.
  - No secret one-on-one meetings or car rides.
  - No pressure to accept touch or “go along with it.”
  - No punishment, eye-rolling, or loss of opportunities for saying no.
- Unspoken norms leave some swimmers least protected.  
When the “rules” are just “how we do things here,” newer, younger, or marginalized swimmers are most likely to misunderstand expectations or be pushed past their comfort. That is why teams must say their safety rules out loud, write them down, and repeat them often.

# What Is a “Normal” Boundary in Swimming?



## Clear, optional touch.

Explained, visible,  
and you can say no.

## Respected privacy.

No photos, no body  
comments, changing  
options allowed.

## Appropriate communication.

Team channels only,  
no secret or  
late-night DMs even  
for “emergencies”.



## Body/sexual comments.

“Jokes” or remarks  
about bodies or  
development.

## Isolation or secrecy.

Pressure to be alone  
or keep things  
hidden.

## Unclear touch.

Not coaching-related,  
hidden, or on private  
areas.



# Rules to Be Put in Place

Sample swim-team rules:

- ★ Explained and optional contact
- ★ Observable, interruptible one-on-one time
- ★ No photos or videos in locker rooms or showers.
- ★ The team states consequences for violations ahead of time and actually follows them.
- ★ Safe communication channels
- ★ Clear reporting pathways
- ★ Every swimmer and parent receives simple, written information about how to raise a concern, who to talk to, and what steps will follow.



# What Is Real Consent?

**Consent is specific.**

**Consent must be free of pressure.**

**Power differences matter.**

**Silence is not consent.**

**Consent can be withdrawn.**