

Ashton Central Swimming Club



Affiliated Club

Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children is of paramount importance to all volunteers involved in the running of Ashton Central Swimming Club. We believe that the children have the right to protection, regardless of their age, gender, race, culture or disability.

In our club we respect children. The atmosphere is one that encourages all children to do their best.

Ashton Central Swimming Club believe that the welfare of the children is everyone's responsibility involved in the swimming club, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. i.e club officials, committee, coaches, teachers, assistant teachers, poolside helpers, parents, and the children themselves. This is both a moral and arguably a legal obligation.

1. Policy Statement

Ashton Central Swimming Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in swimming club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. We will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in swimming club through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by the ASA. A child is defined as under S18, The Children Act, (1989).

2. Aims and objectives of the policy

Ashton Central Swimming Club 'Child Protection Policy' ensures that all volunteers involved with Ashton Central Swimming Club are clear about the actions necessary with regard to child protection issues.

The child protection procedures within the club stems from the following principles:

- to provide children with appropriate safety and protection whilst swimming;
- to raise awareness and reporting of possible cases of abuse;
- to ensure effective communication between all volunteers;
- to clarify procedure for reporting issues of possible child abuse;
- to allow all volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

3. What is Child Abuse?

It's generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse – Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

- *Physical Abuse*
Physical Abuse is just what the term implies – hurting or injuring a child for example,

by hitting or shaking them. Physical abuse may occur if a child is forced to train beyond their capabilities. Bullying is likely to come into this category.

- **Sexual Abuse**
Sexual abuse occurs when a child knowingly or unknowingly takes part in something, which meets the sexual needs of the other, person or persons involved – it could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse.
- **Emotional Abuse**
Emotional Abuse occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed or, perhaps even worse, ignored. Conversely, it can occur if a child is over protected. It is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents and coaches over what a child can achieve.

4. **Procedures**

- There is a named person who is the nominated Child Protection Officer.
- If there is a suspicion that the child is a victim of abuse then this is reported immediately to the child protection officer.
- Any action in dealing with the suspected abuse should be in line with the ASA guidelines.
- All parties involved should handle the investigation with sensitivity, with the interest of the child paramount.
- All child protection issues are strictly confidential.

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with our judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including in a swimming environment. Our volunteers have regular contact with young people and can be an important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

If a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the swimming environment, swimming can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must ensure the child receives the required support.

5. **Good Practice Guidelines for our volunteers**

All volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within swimming:

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations)
- Treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity.

- Always putting the welfare of each individual child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with swimmers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Making swimming fun, enjoyable and promoting fairness.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the teachers education programmes. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills and qualifications, including child protection courses.
- Involving parents for the responsibility of their children e.g in the changing rooms, and staying at the sessions.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken to galas, a male and female escort should accompany them.
- Ensuring that at galas or residential events, club volunteers should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model, this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol or using abusive language in the company of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent for photography (see photograph policy)
- Have insurance cover

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Avoid taking the child in your car when you are alone.

6. Guidelines for Use of Photographic Equipment

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage children. Ashton Central Swimming Club have a specific policy which covers this area.

7. Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers

Ashton Central Swimming Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

- All volunteers complete an application form.

- Disclosure and Barring Service will be carried out.
- All volunteers will be former swimmers, parents or/and known to the officers of the committee prior to commencement of the role.

8. Responding to Allegations

It is not the responsibility of any volunteer working in Ashton Central Swimming Club, to take lone responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the child protection officer.

Ashton Central Swimming Club officers assure volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his/her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Action if there are concerns

The following action should be taken if there are concerns.

Poor Practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child Protection Officer along with the Committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the club officers who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club Child Protection Officer will discuss with the ASA, if necessary, which may result in a referral to the social services department.
- The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible.
- If the Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the officers of the club, who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Protection Office
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.

- The Swimming Regional Development Manager and Swimming Child Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). *

* Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

9. **Internal Enquiries**

- The club Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further enquiries.

10. **Support to Deal with the Aftermath**

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of Helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association of Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189,

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

11. **Action if Bullying is suspected**

The same procedure should be followed as set out in the Section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected.

12. **Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying**

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell anyone else.
- Keep records of what is said (see appendix, for guidance)
- Report any concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Action Towards the Bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Communicate outcome, on a needs to know basis.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

13. Conclusion

All of our teachers / coaches are trained in how to deal with these issues and are fully conversant with good practice in relation to these matters.

To this end Ashton Central Swimming Club acknowledge their Duty of Care towards all our members and are committed to practice which protects children from harm.

All staff and volunteers have been checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service. We prioritise the sharing of information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, volunteers and outside agencies who need to know.

Staff and volunteers are required to accept and recognise their responsibility to develop awareness of the issues that cause children harm. Training in this area is provided and promoted.

Any incidents/complaints will be recorded in line with ASA policy. This will be undertaken in accordance with the ASA guidance on confidentiality and information sharing.

Appendix

A Quick Guide to Procedures

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about either a parent or carer (e.g. outside the immediate swimming environment).

Remember:

- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Ensure the Club Child Protection Officer follows up with social services.
- The Club Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Swimming Child Protection Officer.

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within swimming.

- If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with the child protection lead or committee officers, you should contact Social Services direct. (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000)

What to do if there are concerns

Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- Name of child
 - Age of child and date of birth
 - Home address and telephone number
 - Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
 - What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
 - Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
 - A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Behavioural signs indirect signs?
 - Witnesses to the incidents.
 - The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and/if any injuries occurred.
 - Have the parents been contacted?
 - If so what has been said?
 - Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
 - If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
 - Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Please remember**, it's not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused but we are asking you to act on your concerns. Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but don't delay in passing on the information.
- If you are a member, or the parent/carer or friend of a member, of the swimming club you should:

Tell the **Club Child Protection Officer**, their **coach / teacher**, or at an event the **referee** - unless, of course, you suspect them of being involved.

OR

Ring **Swimline on 0808 100 4001**

SwimLine is the ASA'S own Helpline where you can talk to someone who understands both swimming and the requirements of child protection.

SwimLine Facts

SwimLine calls are free and do not appear on itemised bills unless the call is made from a mobile phone.

SwimLine does not use the 1471 code or any other call return or call display facilities.

if you leave a message they aim to ring back during the next working day. If you phone over the weekend they will aim to contact you on Monday

OR

**YOU CAN CALL THE FREE 24 HOUR NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE
DIRECT ON 0808 800 5000**

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