



Bethnal Green Swimming Club - Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

It is essential that children and young people participating in swimming are able to do so in a safe and secure environment. Bethnal Green Swimming Club recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the health and welfare of children and young people under its care by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm; and from neglect and bullying.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)

Policy Aims

- All children/young people have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.
- Bethnal Green Swimming Club aims to promote and demonstrate best practice in the area of Child Protection.
- Bethnal Green Swimming Club aims to promote ethics and high standards throughout swimming and will respond to any allegations or suspicions of abuse appropriately. There are disciplinary and appeals procedures in place to deal with incidences of poor practice.
- It is the responsibility of child protection professionals to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel 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 within swimming :-

- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). This good practice is as much benefit to the adult as to the young person.
- Promoting fair play and making swimming more fun and enjoyable.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with swimmers (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Teachers/Coaches/Volunteers should be excellent role models.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed as it is sometimes difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurances in sport.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empower children to share in the decision making process.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible e.g. being responsible for their children in the changing areas. If it is necessary for changing rooms to be supervised, always ensure that parents, teachers, coaches or volunteers work in pairs. Adult:Child ratios should be in accordance with the latest guidelines and medical/contact information should be readily available.
- Ensuring that at galas or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the development needs and capacity of the young people – avoiding pushing them against their will.
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials/volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Think about the use of premises. Do not expect children/young people to have to walk along dark unsupervised paths or corridors for access to amenities.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone with authority from within the club or the child's parents. For example, if a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital or if 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 young people on car journeys, however short.
- Avoid excessive e-mailing, phoning or texting without parental knowledge. The preferred form of communication will be via the parents.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:-

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind.
- Share a room with a child or invite/allow children to stay with you at your home.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children/young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child/young person to tears as a form of control.
- Do things of a personal nature for young people that they are able to do for themselves.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded by Coaches, Teachers and Volunteers

If any of the following should occur, they **must** be reported immediately to another colleague and the incident **must** be recorded. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed.

- If you accidentally hurt a child/young person.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a swimmer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. Bethnal Green Swimming Club will be vigilant and any concerns will be reported to the Club Welfare Officer. For home events, a log of all photography will be kept. Anyone wishing to take photographs should register their intention at the administration desk prior to the start of the event.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, swimmers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such film footage. Consent should be obtained.

Tours and Away Galas

Where children have to be transported by car, minibus or coach, arrange as far as possible to have more than one adult passenger in the vehicle. Children should be seated in the back seats of the vehicle with their seatbelt securely fastened. Travel in a private vehicle with only one adult should be avoided wherever possible. If this is unavoidable, it must be with the full knowledge of the Club and the young person's parents.

The Club should travel with a full address list and contact telephone numbers for all the young people who are travelling. Permission should also be obtained from the parent/carer of each child. A list of any medical conditions/allergies should also be at hand for the relevant personnel.

Changing areas should be checked out prior to the young people entering and if supervision is required this should be in the presence of two adults. Any bad behaviour or bad language should be challenged as this could be harmful to the children/young people.

For residential trips, adults should always respect the privacy of the young people but reserve the right to enter the young persons room in exceptional circumstances. For example, to take necessary action to prevent the misuse of alcohol or to prevent minors gaining access to adult video/film channels.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteers

Bethnal Green 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. While undertaking pre-selection checks the following will be included :-

- All staff/volunteers will complete an application form which will elicit information about an applicants past and a self-disclosure about any previous criminal record(s).
- Consent will be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Evidence of identity (passport or photo driving license)
- Job descriptions will be supplied clarifying job requirements and responsibilities.
- Requests will be made for any qualifications to be substantiated.
- All employees will receive an induction during which first aid rooms and emergency exits will be pointed out. Child Protection procedures will be explained and any training needs identified. The employee will be given a copy of the Club's Equity Policy, Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Bethnal Green Swimming Club in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Bethnal Green Swimming Club has an appointed Child Welfare Officer who will always be informed of any suspicions or allegations. Bethnal Green Swimming Club will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation.

- A disciplinary investigation.
- A Child Protection investigation.
- A criminal investigation.

Actions if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice:

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

Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Welfare 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 Welfare Officer may refer the allegation to the Social Services department who may involve the police.
- The parents/carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club Child Welfare Officer will also notify the ASA National Child Welfare Officer.
- If the Club Child Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Club Chairperson, who will refer it to the County and National Child Welfare Officers.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Welfare Officer.
- The parents/carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.

- Social Services/Police
- The ASA Child Welfare Officer.
- The alleged abuser (seek Social Services advice about who should contact the alleged abuser)

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

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

Irrespective of the findings of any further enquiries by Social Services or the Police, the Club Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This could prove to be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Club will reach a decision based upon the available information. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

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 aid the healing process.

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

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the club will follow the same procedures as detailed above. This is because other children, either within or outside of sport, may still be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

Assurances

Bethnal Green Swimming Club will :-

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns.
- Create an open environment.
- 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 no one else.
- Appoint a Club Child Welfare Officer. The officers name and contact details will be on the club's notice board and on the website.

Useful Child Protection Contacts

Club Welfare Officer

Mrs Sue Cronin
Tel : 07757 258566

Childline

Tel : 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

National Centre
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH

Tel : 020 7825 2500
Fax : 020 7825 2763
www.nspcc.org

Child Protection in Sport Unit

NSPCC National Training Centre
3 Gilmour Close
Beaumont Leys
Leicester
LE4 1EZ

Tel : 0116 234 7228
Fax : 0116 234 0464
www.sportprotects.org.uk

Amateur Swimming Association

Legal Affairs Department
Harold Fern House
Derby Square
Loughborough
LE11 5AL

Tel : 01509 221350
Swimline : 0808 100 4001

The Club has fully incorporated the A.S.A. guidelines on child protection into this policy. A copy of the ASA Procedures and Guidelines “Wave Power” can be obtained from the Club’s Welfare Officer or is available to view on the club’s notice board. It can also be downloaded from the ASA website www.britishswimming.org/vsite/vcontent/page/custom/0,8510,5157-183135-200353-43376-271714-custom-item,00.html