



Broomfield Park Swimming Club

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

At Broomfield Park, we believe that all children have the right to enjoy and develop their swimming in a friendly, safe and secure environment. The children can develop their skills, self-esteem and the ability to be a team player as well as the opportunities to achieve success and to reach their potential through good coaching and teaching skills. BPSC follows Swim England Wavepower guidelines and procedures and these form an integral part of our activities and culture within the club.

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Government document “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018” are clear that safeguarding children is the responsibility of all, including those who are employed or volunteer with children in whatever capacity. It is the organisations’ responsibility, through safe recruitment practice, to ensure that those who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to do so in our sports. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an important, **but not sole**, part of safe recruitment.

The key principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) are:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: for services to be effective each practitioner and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility

Everyone who works with children has a

- Responsibility for keeping them safe; this includes teachers, coaches and all who are employed or volunteer to work with children in the sport sector.
- No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Any practitioner with concerns about a child’s welfare should make a referral to local authority Children’s Social Care. Practitioners should always follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the response.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) sets out the key roles for individual organisations to deliver local arrangements for safeguarding. It is essential these arrangements are strongly led and promoted at a local level.

A child-centred approach

Effective safeguarding systems are child-centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children.

Children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them.
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years old.

BPSC takes the issue of safeguarding the children seriously and any allegations of abuse or concerns will be dealt with quickly and appropriately. This will also include how to recognise abuse, how staff will respond to a disclosure, how they initially deal with it and whom to contact. We link with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (as and when necessary) and the statutory government guidance on 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'.

At all times the children's safety and welfare is the overriding consideration.

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. A child can be harmed by someone who:-

- Inflicts harm
- Fails to act to prevent harm.

A child could be abused by:-

- A family member.
- By a person within an institution or community setting.
- By a person known to them or by a stranger
- An adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In swimming an example of physical abuse may be the imposed use of performance enhancing drugs or persistent training which is beyond the capacity of the individual leading to physical harm.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. This may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Within swimming an example of emotional abuse may be when a coach continuously criticises a swimmer, uses sarcasm and name calling or generally belittles the child. Parents can emotionally abuse a swimmer by having too high expectations and placing unrealistic pressure on the child with negative constant feedback.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.
- They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in viewing of or the production of sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sex abusers can come from any professional, racial or religious background, and can be male or female. They are not always adults; children and young people can also behave in a sexually abusive way. Usually the abuser is a family member, or someone known to the child such as a family friend. Some individuals will target a sport that allows access to children specifically to commit acts of sexual abuse.

Abusers may act alone or as part of an organised group. After the abuse they will put the child under great pressure not to tell anyone about it. They will go to great lengths to get close to children and win their trust. For example, by choosing employment that brings them into contact with children or by pretending to be children in Internet chat rooms run for children and young people.

Sexual abuse has been identified within swimming. Coaches and other club officers are in a position to form trusting relationships with swimmers and sexual abuse is most often based on abuse of that trust by an apparently trusted adult.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care providers).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect in swimming could be coach or official failing to ensure the safety of a young person, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk or injury and often highlights failure in duty of care.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated deliberate actions by one or more people that causes hurt to an individual or group and where it is difficult for the bullied person(s) to prevent or deal with the bully's actions.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people to the extent that it affects their health and development. In the extreme it causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

The anti-bullying charity Kidscape defines bullying as a child encountering bullying attacks that includes:

- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.
- Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- Emotional: Excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridicule, humiliation.

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person.
- A young person and young person.
- A parent and own child.
- In all cases it is not acceptable within swimming.

The competitive nature of sport can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. Examples of bullying in swimming could be:

- A parent who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.
- A young player who intimidates inappropriately.
- An older player who intimidates inappropriately.
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Harassment

Harassment is an act that is unwanted by the recipient. It may be the provision of items or unwanted actions from another person but by definition it is the unwanted nature of the action or items that distinguishes the nature of the act to be harassment. It is for any given individual to determine for themselves what is acceptable to them and what they regard as offensive. Harassment can be deemed to be criminal offence in some circumstances and can lead to the use of a restraining order or criminal prosecution. Harassment can take many forms; some examples being suggestive sexual remarks, racist or religious insults or jokes, verbal abuse or foul language, exclusion and unwelcome attention. The impact of harassment on the individual can be profound. Harassment can lead to the child feeling unhappy demoralized or undervalued as a person. Harassment is often a constant ongoing type of abuse where the individual causes extreme distress by the repeated action, usual verbally.

Swim England is committed to prevent and deal with harassment incidents in the sport.

Children do not find it easy to disclose their concerns and some find it harder than others, possibly children from ethnic minority groups and children with disabilities.

Abuse is not always easy to identify. Children and young people can be bruised in everyday life by falling off bikes and playing with friends. In adolescence children can be moody and unpredictable in their behaviour. Children can react to external circumstances by a change in behaviour such as bereavement or parental divorce or separation. However, some signs may alert you to a view that a child may be being abused.

Some indicators are:

- The child or young person discloses a concern and describes what maybe an abusive act.
- Another person raises concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Unexplained or concerning injuries such as burns, cuts and bruises situated in areas of the child's body which are not normally prone to injury through for example play activity.
- Physical injury where the explanation given is inconsistent.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour such as a child becoming withdrawn, quiet, aggressive or verbally violent.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or behaving in a sexualised manner.
- Eating disorders i.e. a child is overeating or showing a loss of appetite.
- Excessive weight loss or weight gain for no obvious reason.
- Physical appearance becomes unkempt.
- The child or young person is withdrawn and has isolated themselves from the group and seems unable to make friends.
- The child or young person is prevented from socialising with other children.
- The child or young person displays a distrust of adults.

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration or becoming withdrawn, clingy or depressed.

Indicators of abuse

- A drop-in performance levels.
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing, for example, on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.
- A high turnover of club members.

Swim England does not expect the adults involved in the club to decide a child has been abused but it is the responsibility of all adults to act upon their concerns.

Staff Safeguarding Training

- All coaching & teaching staff and the welfare officer must have Safeguarding & Child Protection Training which is regularly updated.
- Both children and staff are able to discuss issues and raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices in confidence.
- Children will express themselves both verbally and non-verbally.
- Staff who work with them are in a position to observe or receive information or disclosures about abuse. Our staff will respond sensitively and carefully to what the children are saying and how they behave.
- **Although it is not the responsibility off the staff to decide if a child is being abused they have a duty of care to act on any concerns.**

Reporting concerns

All incidences will be reported to the Welfare Officer or a committee member. Information will be recorded at all times. Confidentiality will be maintained and, on a need to know basis only.

- The child's welfare and safety will be the main consideration when making any decisions.
- Swim England policy and procedures will be followed especially when dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers.
- The club's welfare officer offers advice, support and guidance to all club members on safeguarding issues. They will ensure that the procedures are followed and regularly monitored, reviewed and updated where necessary.
- Parents and carers have the main responsibility for safeguarding and promoting their child's welfare and the club recognises the importance of working in partnership with them to ensure this.
- A complaints system is in place to deal with any issues raised by parents and carers.

Safe recruitment

- The club recognises safe recruitment practices are an essential part of creating a safe environment for children.
- We will ensure that all staff working in the club are suitable and do not pose any kind of risk to the children.

- The club will carry out extensive checks on applicants for all positions, including voluntary and support roles.
- No staff member or volunteer will be allowed to take up posts until all checks have been satisfactorily completed.
- The club will ensure that all Enhanced DBS checks carried out on staff are renewed after 3 years of the original DBS disclosure.
- All job advertisements and application forms will clearly state that the role is a safeguarding role and that applicants will be expected to agree to undergo DBS and other checks as part of safe recruitment practice. The club will use a checklist to ensure all safe recruitment practices are carried out for every applicant applying for posts and records kept.
- Verify the applicant's identity and immigration status from their passport, including the sight of passports and any relevant Home Office documents.
- Check the applicant's qualifications and registration status; make extensive enquiries of at least 2 referees to include previous and recent employers.

Staff Induction and training

The club will ensure that all staff are fully trained and are made aware of the club's safeguarding policy and procedures are fully aware of their role in implementing them.

- The club expects staff and volunteers to follow the club's code of conduct by setting a good example through their own conduct and behaviour. Its aims are to protect them from the risk of allegations being made against them by ensuring that they, and the club, maintain high standards of professionalism.
- The committee will ensure that each member of staff, including volunteers, signs a code of conduct agreement on appointment that sets out club's expectations with regard to standards of professional behaviour and that all staff receive copies of relevant policies.
- Swim England procedures on Safe recruitment are followed when recruiting to posts.

Health & Safety

- The club follows Swim England and venues guidelines on safety. Risk assessments are in place for the safety of the children whilst swimming.
- Staff should be aware of and follow the Health & Safety procedures, laws and rules about what to do in an emergency concerning an incident or accident to a swimmer.

Parent/ Carers

BPSC provides opportunities for parents and carers to discuss any concerns with relevant staff.

- The club will make parents aware of the club's role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child.
- Consult with and involve parents and carers in the development of policies to ensure their views are taken into account. The club recognises its duty to work in partnership with other professionals and agencies.
- The club's policies are available on the club's website or on request.
- The club has safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Swim England Wavepower guidelines will be followed at all times.

Disclosures

If a Child discloses to a member of staff that they are being abused, the member of staff will;

- calmly listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief and accept what the child is saying, allowing the child to talk freely, reassuring the child, but not making any promises they may not be able to keep, nor promise confidentiality, as a referral may have to be made.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault and that they were right to tell someone.
- Staff will not ask direct questions but allow the child to tell their own version and will not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what will happen next and who has to be told.
- Record what was said or seen and pass this on to the Welfare Officer or a committee member.
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive adequate training to enable them to carry these out.
- Any incidents, disclosures or signs of neglect or abuse should be fully recorded with dates, times and locations including what action was taken.
- Parents should also be made aware of the club's duty to share information.

Physical Intervention and Restraint by Staff.

- The club's coaches and teaching staff will only use physical contact and restraint if it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, or for the possible use of teaching development in line with the Swim England guidelines.
- Parent /carers are informed beforehand about the possible use of physical contact whilst teaching development techniques.
- Physical contact should take place in the open and in full view of others.
- Coaches should ask the child first and explain the nature and reason for the physical contact.
- Physical contact may happen on occasions where a child may need comforting or reassurance, or if celebrating a success or an achievement.
- The child should be asked first and have explained the nature and reason for the physical contact.
- Staff should always ensure that what is seen (and what is seen by others present) is normal and natural and never act in a way that can be misinterpreted or thought of as a sexual behaviour. Contact should be avoided with the buttocks, genitals and breasts.

Allegations against staff.

In the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the club will follow the Swim England guidelines.

The Club has high standards and good practices in the Safeguarding and Welfare of the children. It works in partnership with parent /carers and Swim England to maintain these for the enjoyment of all its members.

Please read the following for full Swim England Guidelines

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/about-swim-england/safeguarding/>