

ANNEX I

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We can all help to prevent children being abused.

Foreword

Retford Swimming Club believes that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in swimming - administrator, club official, coach, parent, friend, children themselves, everyone - can help. Abuse can occur anywhere there are children - at home, at school, in the park, at the club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone in the Club has a part to play in looking after the children with whom we are working. This is both a moral and arguably a legal obligation. The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has the care of children should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare."

These child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

- the child's welfare is the first consideration
- all children, regardless of age, any disability they have, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse.

The ASA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a child is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.

What is Child Abuse?

It's generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse :

Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

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| Physical Abuse | Physical Abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child, for example, by hitting or shaking them. It might also occur if a child is forced to train beyond his/her 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, videoing, photography etc. |
| 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 also occur if a child is over-protected. It is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents and coaches over what a child can achieve. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse and it can be a feature of bullying. |
| Neglect | Neglect usually means failing to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm. |

Some Indications of Possible Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not always easy, even for experts. The examples listed below are not a complete list and they are only indicators, not confirmation

- the child says that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring
- the child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- the child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes quiet and withdrawn, or alternatively becomes aggressive.
- the child appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom she or he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends
- he or she becomes increasingly withdrawn or neglected-looking in appearance or is dressed inappropriately, is uncared for in appearance or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason
- the child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.

Bear in mind that physically disabled children and children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

This list is not complete, there are many other indicators – if you have concerns discuss them with the Welfare Officer (our Head Coach) or another Committee member or seek professional advice.

If you have concerns about the welfare of a child ...

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've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information.

If you are a member, or the parent/carer or friend of a member of the club you should:

- tell a club officer such as the Welfare Officer, the club secretary, chairperson, coach or any committee member (names and contact details are on the Club notice board), 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. If you need urgent advice you have the option to transfer to the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

If you are a club officer or referee you can:

- talk to the child's parents/carers about the concerns if you think there may be an obvious explanation such as a bereavement or pressure from their studies/exams.

- ring **SwimLine** on **0808 100 4001**
- Contact local Social Services Department (Retford Social Service – 01777 716161) and ask to speak to the duty social worker or, in an emergency, the Police.

If you're working with swimmers away from home, at a training camp, perhaps, or a national/regional competition - tell the team manager or the chief coach.

Again please remember to make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information. Keep a copy of your note in a place where you are sure it is safe and confidential.

Ideally you should make a note of the following information about the child – full name, date of birth, address and phone number, names of parents/carers and any brothers or sisters (who may be known by another name) – don't worry if you cannot get all the details just get what you can and refer the information and your concerns.

NB You should also inform the Club Committee (any member) and write to the ASA Legal Department to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. Address the letter to:

ASA Legal Affairs Dept., Harold Fern House,
Derby Square, Loughborough LE11 5AL

If, however, despite the action you've taken, you feel that the situation hasn't changed, or that nothing has been done please contact SwimLine on the 0808 100 4001 number and talk to them about your concerns.

If a child tells you that he or she is being abused

Stay calm

Don't promise to keep it to yourself

Listen to what the child says and, please, take it seriously.

Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you - don't ask the child about explicit details.

Make a detailed note of what the child has told you but, as advised in the previous section, please don't delay referring your concerns.

What the Club will do to help prevent Child Abuse

We will try to avoid situations where teacher/coach/club official and child are alone. Occasionally there may be no alternative - for example, a child may fall ill and have to be taken home. One to one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Further guidance on this issue is contained in the Code of Ethics.

We will ascertain the child's and the parent's/carers views about manual support for children who need this kind of help, particularly when they are in the water.

If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, we will make sure we have another adult accompanying us. We will get the child's consent if at all

possible and certainly get consent from the parent/carer. We will let the child know what we are doing and why.

Nominated club officials will be responsible for children in changing rooms.

Teachers/coaches/club officials will work in pairs if classes or groups of children have to be supervised in the changing room.

We will ensure that mixed teams are always accompanied by male and female teachers/coaches/club officials.

We will not allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which we have responsibility.

In competitions and galas, we will look out for people who don't appear to be relatives or friends of children who are swimming but, nevertheless, seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them. Any such incidents will be reported to the to the organisers or the pool management immediately.

When organising a swim meet we will arrange an accreditation system for parents/relatives and friends and bona fide press photographers