

DORKING SWIMMING CLUB.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.

This document was produced in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989; and in line with the A.S.A's "Wave Power- Child Welfare in Swimming" and the N.S.P.C.C's "Time to Listen." The term child/ children refers throughout to all young people under 18years.

We, at Dorking Swimming Club, have a responsibility to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children and young people. In short, we have a duty of care towards them. The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and everyone in swimming- committee member, coach, official, parent, friend, children themselves – can help. Moreover everyone at Dorking Swimming Club needs to feel that any concerns will be listened to and dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. We therefore have a club welfare officer with lead responsibility for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children.

CLUB WELFARE OFFICER.

The role of club welfare officer is a formal role within the club's management committee. Whilst the welfare officer does not need to be a child protection expert, ideally he/ she should have a background in working with children. DSC is responsible for ensuring that the welfare officer is provided with appropriate training to fulfil their role and responsibilities. These responsibilities include

KNOWLEDGE OF:

1. Legislation/ government guidance
2. The role of Police, Social Services, NSPCC and have appropriate contact details.
3. Reporting procedures and understand the need for confidentiality
4. Behaviour that is harmful to children
5. 5 .Dorking Swimming Club's policies on health and safety, equity, anti- bullying.

SKILLS OF:

1. Administration/ maintenance of relevant records – suspected abuse, poor practice, storing CRB information.
2. Having a child – focused approach.
3. Communicating to all involved at the club and to statutory agencies.
4. Promoting policy, procedures and resources.
5. Providing information/ training to those working with children.

6. Supporting children/ families where concerns about abuse arise.

TASKS TO:

- 1. Be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and children when welfare issues are identified.**
- 2. Be the first point of contact with the National Lead Child Protection Officer (A.S.A.)**
- 3. Assist the club with its Child Protection Plan.**
- 4. Implement DSC's reporting and recording procedures.**
- 5. Maintain contact details for relevant agencies.**
- 6. Sit on the DSC committee**
- 7. Promote / direct child protection training.**
- 8. Promote confidentiality and anti – discriminatory practice.**

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ABUSE?

Recognizing abuse is NOT easy and it is NOT the club's responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if the child is at risk. It is, however, our responsibility to act if we have a concern.

It is generally acknowledged that there are 4 main types of abuse:

1. PHYSICAL

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or causing physical harm or deliberate ill health to a child.

In a swimming context, physical abuse might occur if a child is forced to train beyond his/ her capabilities, or the intensity of training disregards a child's specific special needs/ disability. It might also include where drugs are used to enhance performance or delay puberty.

2. EMOTIONAL

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.

Examples of emotional abuse in swimming could include constant criticism, name calling, and sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently. Racially and sexually abusive remarks also constitute emotional abuse.

3. SEXUAL

Sexual abuse occurs when a child knowingly takes part in something which meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved- it could range from sexually aggressive comments to full intercourse.

In swimming, coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young swimmers could also lead to abusive situations developing. It could also involve inappropriate photography/ videoing for the sexual gratification of the viewer.

4. NEGLECT

Neglect usually means failure to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failure to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm.

In a swimming context, it may also be when an athlete's personal/ intimate requirements are ignored, particularly if they have some form of special need.

As stated previously, it is not the club's role to decide if abuse is occurring. These concerns must be reported through our set procedures to the statutory agencies to investigate. However, Dorking Swimming Club does decide whether their own staff or volunteers' behaviour constitutes poor practice and should be dealt with internally OR whether it is potentially/ actually abuse and requires referral out to statutory agencies (Police or Social services.)

SOME INDICATORS.

Recognizing child abuse is not always easy– even for the experts. The examples listed below are not a complete list and they are only indicators – not confirmation:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, bites or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.**
- The child says that he or she 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 or which has not been adequately treated.
- The child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly; and he/she becomes quiet and withdrawn, or alternatively becomes aggressive.
- Refusal to remove clothing for normal activities or keeping covered up in warm weather.
- The child appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom she/ he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends.
- He/she becomes increasingly neglected- looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.
- Pain or itching, bruising or bleeding in or near the genital area.
- 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 are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have difficulties in communicating what is happening to them. Dependency on others for primary need such as feeding, clothing and intimate care make a young person feel powerless to report abusive treatment. A fear of retribution for "telling" can be a powerful "silencer"; difficulty in identifying abusive situations or behaviour may allow it to continue.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

If you are a member/ parent/ friend/ carer of Dorking Swimming Club and have concerns about the welfare of a child:

- **Make notes about your concerns and keep them factual**
- **Pass the information to a DSC officer – primarily the Welfare Officer; any committee member; coach; team manager UNLESS you suspect them of being involved**

OR

- Ring A.S.A's Swim Line – 0808 100 4001 OR NSPCC's. Child Protection Line – 0808 800 500

If you are a club officer e.g. welfare officer and have concerns :

- Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard, include nature of suspicion or allegation; description of any visible injury and / or observations on behaviour / emotional state; athlete's account of what has happened; dates/ times/ names etc- avoid opinion and hearsay; any action taken, including contact with statutory agencies.
- Talk to child's parents about concerns IF you think there is an obvious explanation.
- Ring ASA's Swim Line – 0808 100 4001
- If deemed urgent, contact Social Services or the Police.

REMEMBER TO :

- . STAY CALM
- . LISTEN TO THE CHILD AND TAKE IT SERIOUSLY
- . MAKE DETAILED, FACTUAL NOTES
- . MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY
- . CONSULT SOMEONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Sue Mitchell
Child Welfare – Jan06