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Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport

Aqua Swimming complies with the Swim England Code of Ethics & Child Welfare in Swimming Procedures and guidelines.

National Standards have been developed by the NSPCC that aim to promote best practice so that a safe environment for children and young people is achieved.

The principles behind these standards are:

- 1. Children and young people (under the age of 18) have a right to enjoy sport, free from all forms of abuse and exploitation.**
- 2. All children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm.**
- 3. Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.**
- 4. Sporting organisations have a duty of care to children and young people who take part in sport.**

To this end Aqua Swimming acknowledge their Duty of Care towards all its members and are committed to practices which protect children from harm:

- All staff and volunteers have been checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).**
- Staff and volunteers in this organisation are required to accept and recognise their responsibility to develop awareness of the issues that cause children harm. Training in this area is promoted and provided.**
- We prioritise the sharing of information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.**
- We acknowledge our responsibility towards sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately. Any incidents/complaints will be recorded in line with ASA policy. This will be undertaken in accordance with ASA guidance on confidentiality and information sharing.**

Code of conduct for Teachers & Coaches – Key Principles

- **Rights – Teachers and Coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport.**
- **Relationships – Teachers/Coaches must develop a relationship with swimmers (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.**
- **Responsibilities: personal standards – Teachers/Coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.**
- **Responsibilities: professional standards – to maximise benefits and minimise the risks to athletes, Teachers/ Coaches must attain a high level of competence through qualifications and a commitment to ongoing training that ensures safe and correct practice.**

Forms of abuse

- Physical**
- Hurting a child eg hitting, shaking, biting, squeezing or burning etc
 - Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
 - Attempt to suffocate or drown children

Sexual abuse – Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- All forms of sexual contact and fondling
- Sexually suggestive remarks
- Showing children sexually explicit material in books, photographs, videos or taking pictures for sexually explicit purposes

Sports situations which involve physical contact (eg supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people

Emotional Abuse – Is given when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly ridiculed or, ignored. Conversely, it can occur if a child is over-protected. Bullying, racially and sexually abusive remarks, being shouted at and being taunted can also be included in this category. Emotional abuse in sport may also include situations where parents, teachers or coaches subject children to constant criticism or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations. Advice on bullying can be obtained from the ASA Child Welfare in Swimming, procedures and guidelines document or by contacting Kidscape on 0207 730 3300.

Neglect – Usually means failing to meet children’s basic needs such as warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to protect them from harm – allowing children to run around the poolside is an example of this. Indications of neglect are: Unexplained or suspicious injuries; information from the child or someone connected to the child; a child has an injury for which the explanation appears inconsistent with the injury; a child’s behaviour changes – possibly becoming withdrawn or aggressive; refusal to remove clothing for normal activities; a child appearing not to trust adults and/or does not seem to make friends easily; rapid weight gain or loss, pain or itching; bruising or bleeding in the genital area or a child showing inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.

Neglect in a sports situation might also occur if a teacher/coach fails to ensure children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

If you suspect abuse

Pass on your comments immediately to your line manager.

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

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter them. Let the child dictate the pace
- Reassure them that you are glad that they told you
- Don’t promise to keep it to yourself
- Explain that they will be safe and who you have to tell and why
- Listen to what the child says and take it seriously
- Don’t ask the child explicit details
- Make notes after the conversation eg date,time,place and context and pass them on to your line manager
- **DO NOT INVESTIGATE,MAKE A JUDGEMENT OR ASK FOR DETAIL OR PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY**
- **REMEMBER – TEACHERS/COACHES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO INVESTIGATE**

Good Practice when working with children

- Do not make any inappropriate physical contact with a swimmer before, during or after a swimming lesson unless it is part of a recognised swimming skill, where a child needs assistance or a child is in danger or where an Instructor is performing a rescue. There are occasions where it is appropriate to have physical contact but only in ways appropriate to a Teacher/Coaches professional role. Physical contact is made with swimmers in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Permission must be sought from a swimmer or parent to make physical contact e.g. placing a swimmer’s arm in the correct entry position on backstroke.

Teachers/Coaches must always explain their actions and why it is necessary to make physical contact. The best practice is to follow the general culture of 'limited touch' where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. DO NOT PLACE YOURSELF IN A SITUATION WHERE A FORM OF PHYSICAL CONTACT CAN BE MISINTERPRETED BY OTHERS INCLUDING THE INDIVIDUAL YOU ARE TEACHING/COACHING.

- **Never be alone with a child.**
- **No mobile phones, cameras or any other image recording devices should be used during the course of a swimming lesson period. This includes the checking, sending and receiving of text or telephone messages. Any image recording device or a mobile phone must be kept out of sight during the swimming lesson period as even the visibility of such a device by a third party could lead to a misunderstanding in how that device is being used.**
- **If parents are unavailable and Teachers/Coaches are forced to undertake something of a personal nature ensure that there is another adult present**
- **Always ensure parents care for their children in changing areas. In this respect, Fathers/male carers accompanying young female swimmers must use the male changing area and Mothers/female carers accompanying young male swimmers must use the female changing area.**
- **Don't allow physically rough or sexually pro-active games or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone.**
- **Be aware of anyone who is not connected with swimmers in our care (eg photography or videoing of our swimmers is prohibited using an image recording device unless first registered with the swimming school).**
- **Pay attention to any aspect of a child's character or physical appearance which could cause them or their families to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.**

- **Should any swimmer or parent/carer or other person wish to raise any issue relating to child welfare they can do this by contacting the Aqua Swimming office on 01732 455800.**

Other contacts available:

**Swimline ASA/NSPCC
Child Protection Helpline 0808 100 4001**

Kent Social Services 03000 41 11 11

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Aqua Swimming Ltd