



## **Child Protection Policy**

CABSC believes that all children have the right to be safe from harm, be well treated and to have fun when participating in club activities.

This club works on the following principles:

- the child's welfare is the first consideration.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender and racial origin have a right to be protected from abuse.
- all suspicions, concerns or allegations of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

### **The Role of the Designated Person**

The club has a dedicated person, the Child Welfare Officer, on the committee as one of the club's elected officers.. The duties associated with this role are set out below but do not, in any way, reduce the responsibility of each member of the club to be aware of and alert to signs of abuse amongst its members.

The role of the designated person is to:

- **ensure full and objective record keeping;**
- **liaise with Social Services when necessary;**
- **support appropriate awareness training for adult club members.**

In order to carry out their function adult club members should have appropriate support and training and will need to know the following:

- **how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral;**
- **the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them;**
- **the requirements of record keeping.**

Details of the designated person will be available via the website and notice boards. The designated person will ensure that:

- **all adult members understand the importance of reporting concerns or suspicions of abuse to the designated person;**
- **when the designated person is not available adult members are aware that they can ring the ASA's own helpline 'Swimline' on 0808 100 4001;**
- **all adult members are aware of the signs of abuse and the procedures which must be followed for referral.**

### **The Identification of Abuse**

Through their regular close contact with individual children, teachers, coaches and club officials are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. All adult members are provided with a list of indicators of abuse (Appendix A). Such signs can do no more than give rise to suspicion – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred.

The designated person will ensure that all adult members are aware of these signs of abuse. Where indicators give rise to concern then adult members may have the opportunity to seek information from the child concerned with tact and sympathy. It should be remembered that members are not expected to conduct an investigation but simply establish whether there are grounds for concern.

### **Confidentiality**

If a child confides in an adult member and requests that the information is kept secret, the member should tell the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's own sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be discussed only with people who need to know about it and that they will treat the matter confidentially.

In all cases where abuse is suspected or alleged, adult members must immediately share this concern with the designated person.

In cases where the allegation or suspicion of child abuse involves the designated person the member should share the concerns with the Social Services Department or with 'Swimline'.

### **Allegations Involving Adult Club Members**

Where an allegation is made against an adult club member the designated person will give urgent consideration as to whether there is sufficient substance in the

allegation to warrant an investigation. As part of this initial consideration the designated person will consult 'Swimline' and the Social Services Department.

### **Conduct of Adult Club Members – Avoiding Allegations of Abuse**

It is rare for children to make false allegations of abuse. Where an allegation is made it will be investigated. Nevertheless, CABSC is concerned to avoid false or malicious allegations against adult club members and recommends that all members follow the guidelines issued by the ASA. (Appendix B)

### **Record Keeping**

Sound record keeping is an essential feature of child protection work. The club will keep manual records of dates, events and actions taken in cases of suspected or actual child abuse. These records will be held by the designated person and only accessed on a 'need to know' basis.

### **Parental Involvement**

The club is committed to working with parents to build an understanding of the club's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all its child members. Parents will be made aware of the club's child protection policy through 'Newsplash', the website and via the notice boards.

### **Helping Children Access Outside Help**

The club will clearly display the following telephone numbers that children can access:

- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0800 800 500
- Childline 0800 1111

## **Appendix A**

The following information is taken from the booklet entitled *Child Protection in Swimming – Procedures and Guidelines*.

What is Child Abuse?

It is generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse – **Physical, Sexual, Emotional** and **Neglect**.

### **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 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.

### **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**

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.

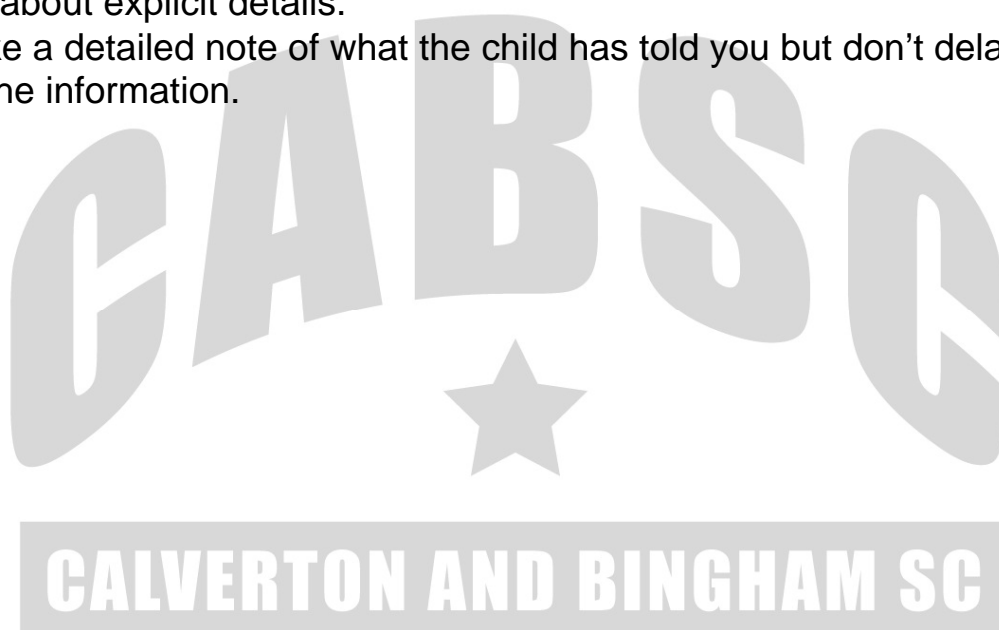
- the child says that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring.
- the child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- the child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes quiet and 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 able to make friends.

- he or she becomes increasingly neglected looking 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.

**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 about explicit details.
- Make a detailed note of what the child has told you but don't delay passing on the information.



## **Appendix B**

The following guidance is published by the ASA and is taken from *Child Protection in Swimming – Procedures and Guidelines*.

### **Good Practise Which Can Help Prevent Child Abuse:**

Avoid situations where teacher/coach/ club official and child are alone. The ASA acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative – for example, a child may fall ill and have to be taken home. We would stress, however, that one to one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Further guidance on this issue is contained in the *ASA Code of Ethics*.

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

If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the child's consent if at all possible and certainly get consent from the parent/carer. Let the child know what you are doing and why.

Ask parents/carers and/or nominated club officials to be responsible for children in changing rooms.

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

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

Don't allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility

In competitions and galas, 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. Report these incidents to the organisers or the pool management immediately.

If you are organising a swim meet arrange an accreditation system for parents/relatives and friends and bona fide press photographers – see *Guidance on Photography and Video-recording*.