

DAWLISH SWIMMING AND LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to Devon ASA & Western ASA.

President Norman Storey

Founded 1865

Safeguarding Children- Policy and Procedures

Policy statement

Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association recognises it has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved with Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable will be taken into account. Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association through adherence to the Safeguarding Children guidelines adopted by Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association (Wave Power).

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of the Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association Safeguarding Children Policy is to promote good practice and to respond appropriately and effectively to reports of concerns regarding child welfare. We aim to:

- Provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in our care
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific Safeguarding Children issues

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with swimmers (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they are always accompanied by a male and female member of staff; that adult:child ratios are in accordance with latest guidelines; that medical and contact information is readily available.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

DAWLISH SWIMMING AND LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to Devon ASA & Western ASA.

President Norman Storey

Founded 1865

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Direct e-mail or phone/text contact with swimmers, without parental knowledge

Practices never sanctioned;

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Sharing of a room with a child or inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Failing to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Doing things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

Incidents that must be reported/recorded by Coaches, Teachers and Volunteers

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Club Child Welfare Officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a player.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a swimmer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a swimmer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks will therefore include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references will be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undergo an interview and receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Safeguarding Children procedures will be explained and training needs identified.
- They should be given copies of the Club's Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Safeguarding Children policy.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.

DAWLISH SWIMMING AND LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to Devon ASA & Western ASA.

President Norman Storey

Founded 1865

- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely effectively with children.

Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association requires:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and Safeguarding Children awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and Safeguarding Children.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. The club will be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer. A log will be kept of photography at home events. Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers will be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films will be stored safely.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the Club Welfare Officer or the appropriate authorities. Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A Safeguarding Children investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child Welfare Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the National Amateur Swimming Association Child Welfare Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Welfare Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club Child Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club Child Welfare Officer will also notify the ASA National Child Welfare Officer.
- If the Club Child Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to Club Chairperson, who will refer it to the County and National Child Welfare Officers.

DAWLISH SWIMMING AND LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to Devon ASA & Western ASA.

President Norman Storey

Founded 1865

Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Safeguarding Children Helpline on 0800 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Welfare Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The ASA Child Welfare Officer.

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Dawlish Swimming & Life Saving Association Child Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Club will reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration will be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.