

Broomfield Park Swimming Club

Safeguarding Policy

(as updated by Wavepower 2024)

Building a safer culture

Everyone at BPSC is dedicated to making our sport and activities accessible, inclusive and safe for people of all ages and backgrounds.

All those who work or volunteer directly with children and adults must ensure that:

- Members are treated with dignity and respect;
- Good practice is promoted, in order to reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring;
- They continually reflect upon their own coaching, supervisory style, philosophy and practices to ensure the safety and wellbeing of members at all times, and encourage others to do the same;
- They know and understand Swim England's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures contained in Wavepower;
- They always work appropriately and openly with children and adults in the club;
- They are an excellent role model, which includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children;
- They always put the wellbeing, health and safety of a member before all other considerations, including the development of performance;
- They build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers members, including children and adults, to share in the decision-making process; and
- They refer and address safeguarding concerns appropriately.

In addition, coaches and teachers must:

- Keep their technical skills and qualifications up to date;
- Complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with Barred List check upon commencing a new post and update that check at least once every three years;
- Complete the Swim England Safeguarding course before commencement of the role and attend a refresher course after three years;
- Have open and regular communication with parents/guardians of child
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for a member's age, maturity, experience and ability;
- Promote honesty, teamwork and a good sporting environment;
- Follow Swim England guidance on coaching children and adults;
- Follow the guidance from their awarding body relating to coaching/teaching children and adults; and
- Have respect for, and encourage, members having a life outside of aquatics, and account for such where necessary.

BPSC coaches, teachers, officials and helpers must not:

- Take children or adults at risk to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone. This includes changing room cubicles;
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- Ever use physical force on a child or adult, for example hitting or slapping a Member;

- Share overnight accommodation with a child or adult at risk;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to children or adults at risk;
- Reduce a child or adult at risk to tears as a form of control;
- Use physical exercise or any form of humiliation as a punishment to a member, for example making a member perform sit ups or press ups on poolside in front of their peers;
- Allow members to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged;
- Allow allegations made by a member to go unrecorded, or not acted upon;
- Abuse their position of power or trust with children or adults;
- Resort to bullying tactics or verbal abuse;
- Cause a child or adult at risk to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual;
- Spend excessive amounts of time with one member to the detriment of the squad/team;
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves;
- Engage in a sexual, including online or non-contact in nature, relationship with a child aged 17 or under; and
- Give a lift to, or otherwise transport, an individual child (unless they are a family member) when unaccompanied.

Safeguarding Children

At BPSC, we believe that all children have the right to enjoy and develop their swimming in a friendly, safe and secure environment. Children can develop their skills, self-esteem and the ability to be a team player as well as the opportunities to achieve success and to reach their potential through good coaching and teaching skills. BPSC has a duty of care to safeguard children from harm (see BPSC Duty of Care). BPSC follows Swim England Wavepower guidelines and procedures and these form an integral part of our activities and culture within the club.

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the Government document “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023” are clear that safeguarding children is the responsibility of all, including those who are employed or volunteer with children in whatever capacity.

It is the clubs’ responsibility, through safer recruitment practice, to ensure that those who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to do so. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an important, **but not sole**, part of safer recruitment. It is the club’s responsibility to report safeguarding concerns to Swim England.

The key principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) are:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: for services to be effective each practitioner and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach is essential.

Safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility

Everyone who works with children has a

- Responsibility for keeping them safe; this includes teachers, coaches and all who are employed or volunteer to work with children in the sport sector.

- No single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Effective safeguarding requires clear local arrangements for collaboration between practitioners and agencies.

A child-centred approach

Effective safeguarding systems are child-centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children.

In 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023', it states that children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them.
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

Definitions of Abuse

Everyone involved in sport has a responsibility to be able to recognise and respond to signs and indicators of abuse and malpractice. In particular, each Welfare Officer should be aware of the definitions of abuse and must ensure individuals who hold a position of trust within the club are familiar with this information.

What is abuse and maltreatment of children?

All incidents of abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.

Abuse is:-

- Any action by another person that causes significant harm to a child
- When someone fails to prevent harm to a child

Who could abuse a child:-

- A member of the child's family, a stranger, an acquaintance, or an institution
- A fellow member or a coach/teacher
- An adult or a child
- Peer on peer abuse
- Anyone else

Effect of abuse

- Abuse that is allowed to continue can be extremely damaging and can, if not responded to appropriately, cause problems for the person into adulthood.
- Present and future relationships can be affected as can trust in others.
- In some cases, abused children have become involved in drugs, alcohol abuse, criminality, suicide and, in extreme cases, they may go on to abuse other children.

Types of Abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt. This can cause injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and broken bones. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent/guardian, carer or other adult fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

An example of physical abuse may be the imposed use of performance enhancing drugs or persistent training, which is beyond the capacity of the individual leading to physical harm.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. Emotional abuse is persistent and, over time, it severely damages a child's emotional health and development.

It may include:

- making children feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate;
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children – for example, interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; and
- bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

In a sporting context, emotional abuse could include, but is not limited to, a coach who continuously criticises, uses sarcasm and/or name calling or who generally belittles the child. Parents/guardians can emotionally abuse a child by having excessively high expectations which places unrealistic pressure on the child, or by constantly giving the child negative feedback.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can include, but is not limited to, forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

There are two different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not;
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus;
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity; and
- making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities. It can happen online or in person. It includes:

- encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts;
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others;
- showing pornography to a child;
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images (this can include taking images of a child when they are getting changed in the changing rooms);
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images;
- meeting a child following face-to-face or online sexual grooming, with the intent of abusing them;
- sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation);
- persuading or forcing a child to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves. This is sometimes referred to as 'sexting';
- persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone; and
- having sexual conversations with a child by text or online.

Abusers may threaten to send sexually explicit images, video or copies of sexual conversations to the child's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the abuse has stopped.

Neglect

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs usually resulting in serious damage to their health and development.

Neglect may involve failure to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- protect a child from physical and/or emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including leaving them with unsuitable carers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- make sure the child receives a suitable education;
- meet or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

An example of neglect could be that a coach or officer fails to ensure the safety of a child by exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk or injury. Neglect often highlights a failure to fulfil a duty of care.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated deliberate actions by one or more people that causes hurt to an individual or group and where it is difficult for the bullied person(s) to prevent or deal with the bully's actions. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people to the extent that it affects their health and development. In the extreme it causes them significant harm (including self-harm). Children who suffer from bullying may often bully others in turn.

Bullying can take a variety of forms, and often multiple forms simultaneously:

- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- **Emotional:** Excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation., spreading rumours
- **Cyber:** the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
- **Racist:** bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic and transphobic:** bullying based on sexuality or gender identity.
- **Disablist:** bullying children who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Sexual:** unwelcome sexual advances, comments that intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Discriminative:** bullying based on any perceived weakness or difference. This could be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. It could also be factors surrounding the way someone looks or the clothes they wear, their family and social situation, hobbies and interests.

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person.
- A young person and young person.
- A parent and own child.

The competitive nature of sport can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying.

Examples of bullying in swimming could be:

- A parent who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.
- A member who intimidates inappropriately, and
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Harassment

Harassment is a criminal offence, and is when someone repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed or threatened.

Harassment may include:

- bullying;
- cyber stalking (using the internet to harass someone);
- antisocial behaviour;
- sending abusive text messages;
- sending unwanted gifts; and

- unwanted phone calls, letters, emails or visits.

Sexual harassment is also unlawful, as a form of discrimination, under the Equality Act 2010. The Act says it's sexual harassment if the unwanted behaviour:

- violates your dignity; or
- creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (this includes the digital environment, online).

Some examples of sexual harassment could include:

- sexual comments, jokes or gestures;
- staring or leering at your body;
- using derogatory names such as 'slut' or 'whore';
- unwanted sexual communications, such as emails, texts or direct messages;
- sharing sexual photos or videos;
- groping and touching;
- someone exposing themselves; and
- pressuring you to do sexual things or offering you something in exchange for sex.

Some of these are also forms of sexual or indecent assault. Harassment should be reported to the Police, and referred to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team by the Welfare Officer using the referral procedure.

Grooming

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) define grooming as "when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked".

It is a criminal offence to cause or incite a child under 16 years old to engage in sexual activity. This can occur where a communication with a child causes or incites some kind of sexual activity by the child e.g. naked or semi-naked posing.

It is also a crime for a person aged 18 or over to communicate with a child under 16 years old (who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 years old or over), if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to obtain from the child a communication which is sexual.

Children can be groomed face to face or online, by a stranger or by someone they know.

Groomers can identify as any gender and could be any age. They will hide their true intentions and may spend months or years gaining a child's trust and, in some cases, the trust of the child's family to allow them to be left alone with a child. Those who work with children may use similar tactics to gain the trust of the child and their colleagues.

Reporting concerns

If any member of the club has a safeguarding concern, they should contact the Welfare Officer or a committee member. Information will be recorded at all times. Confidentiality will be maintained and, on a need to know basis only.

- The child's welfare and safety will be the main consideration when making any decisions.
- Swim England policy and procedures will be followed. See [Wavepower](#) 2024 section 2.3.

- The club's welfare officer offers advice, support and guidance to all club members on safeguarding issues. They will ensure that the procedures are followed and regularly monitored, reviewed and updated where necessary.
- Parents and carers have the main responsibility for safeguarding and promoting their child's welfare and the club recognises the importance of working in partnership with them to ensure this.
- A complaints system is in place to deal with any issues raised by parents and carers.

Adult Safeguarding

BPSC is committed to safeguarding adults in line with national legislation and relevant guidance. and follows Swim England's policy on safeguarding and protecting all adults in our sports.

BPSC believes that all our members have the right to stay safe and have fun. Amongst other things, sport develops physical skills, self-esteem and the ability to be a team player, as well as providing an opportunity to achieve individual success. We will safeguard adults by endeavouring to ensure that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

BPSC is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults. This requires the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and a necessity to report safeguarding concerns. This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

BPSC is committed to implementing best safeguarding practices and to upholding the rights of all adults to live free from harm and abuse, including exploitation and neglect.

Safeguarding of adults in England is covered by various pieces of legislation, including:

- Human Rights Act 1988
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulation

The principles underpinning adult safeguarding are:

- empowerment – people should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions with informed consent;
- prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs where possible;
- proportionality – the least intrusive response that is appropriate to the risk presented should be taken;
- protection – support and representation should be given to those in the greatest need;
- partnership – local solutions should be provided by services working within their own communities. Such communities have a key role to play in prevention, detection and reporting; and
- accountability – safeguarding should be delivered with accountability and transparency.

An Adult at Risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

All three requirements must be met in order to be considered an adult at risk. The Welfare Officer will follow [Wavepower](#) 2024 guidance (section 2.5) where an adult may be considered to be at risk.

Some examples of abuse within sport could include:

- harassment of a member because of their (perceived) disability or other protected characteristics;
- failing to meet the needs of the member, for example, training without a necessary break;
- a coach intentionally striking an athlete;
- one elite member controlling another athlete with threats of withdrawal from their partnership;
- an official sending unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a member with learning disabilities; or
- a member threatening another member with physical harm and persistently blaming them for poor performance.