

Broomfield Park Swimming Club

Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing allows individuals to raise genuine concerns about any potential incident of poor practice, wrongdoing, illegal or unethical conduct by individuals without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

This policy applies to all BPSC members.

Children are vulnerable to abuse and all adults who work in sports organisations, whether paid or unpaid, member or non- member, must look to safeguard their welfare. Swim England believes it is necessary to develop a culture in all organisations and counties, regionally and nationally, where concerned individuals can raise concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

BPSC is committed to:

1. Developing a culture that is safe.
2. Encouraging a culture of openness.
3. Protecting all members.
4. Upholding the reputation of the organisation.
5. Maintaining our sports' and the public's confidence.

"Whistleblower"

The term "whistleblower" is commonly used to describe a person who discloses concerns about wrongdoing, illegal or unethical conduct. Within Swim England such disclosures could include but not be limited to:

- Criminal acts e.g. indecent images of children.
- Incidents of child abuse within our sports.
- Bullying.
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct or discrimination.
- Concerns regarding health and safety e.g. encouraging a child to train against medical advice.
- Disclosure of confidential information about a child or other member.
- Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy e.g. a child not being given the same opportunity as another child due to their gender.
- Witnessing or being told about poor practice or a failure to safeguard children.

Reasons for whistleblowing

Every member, member's parent(s)/guardian(s), employee and volunteer in BPSC has a responsibility to raise concerns about potential poor practice and abuse/ unacceptable behaviour in order to:

- Prevent the problem increasing.
- Protect or reduce the risk to others.
- Avoid becoming a party to the concern by lack of appropriate action.

Making a disclosure

You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling that it is none of your business or that it is only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, your employer or to Swim England. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

BPSC takes any form of misconduct seriously and this policy enables any individual with genuine concerns to raise them as soon as possible in the right way. We encourage all individuals, where appropriate, to raise the matter as a concern, if genuine, rather than wait for proof.

All children have a right to be protected. It is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted and who are least able to act or defend themselves or disclose what is happening. They need you and others like you to protect their wellbeing and safeguard them from harm or potential harm. Everyone involved in our sport has a responsibility to raise concerns appropriately to individuals who can act upon them whether that is the Welfare Officer, the Swim England Child Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies.

BPSC acknowledge that “blowing the whistle” on a colleague or friend will be difficult but it is important you do so rather than allow a child to become or remain at risk. Once the concern has been raised, the Welfare Officer, the Swim England Child Safeguarding Team and/or the statutory agencies will take action in the appropriate manner. Please contact the club Welfare Officer at welfare.bpsc@gmail.com if you wish to report a concern.

Why is it difficult to whistleblow?

You may feel worried that:

- You will be starting a chain of events you have no control over.
- To do so will be disruptive to the organisation, the young person(s) and/or yourself.
- You may have got it wrong and the concern will prove to be unfounded.
- You will not be listened to or believed.

At each stage, concerns are managed by professionals, with a view to independently assess the information, and act in the best interests of any children that may be involved. Concerns are taken seriously, and if proved unfounded, any action taken is designed not to disrupt children and families unnecessarily.

Whistleblower Protection and Support

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support people who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. We encourage you to raise a matter as a concern rather than waiting for proof.

You must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuinely held concern. Detrimental treatment includes but is not limited to disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern.

If you believe you are being subjected to detrimental treatment as a result of raising your concern, or that the swimming environment has become intolerable, you should discuss the matter with the Swim England Legal Department at legal@swimming.org.

If you feel unable to raise a concern within the club

If you feel unable to raise a concern with the Welfare Officer or another committee member, you should raise the concern by email to legal@swimming.org or by post to Swim England Legal Department, Pavilion 3, SportPark, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, LE11 3QF.

Upon raising a Whistleblowing Concern you will receive a written confirmation of receipt, usually within 48 hours (if your concern was made by email and during normal working hours). If you raised concerns by telephone, you should usually receive a call back within 48 hours.

Where an anonymous disclosure is made, it may be investigated depending on the nature of the concern, the seriousness of the issues raised, their credibility and the likelihood of Swim England being able to confirm the allegations by attributable sources.

Procedures set out in the Swim England Whistleblowing Policy will then be followed.

If you are told not to raise or pursue a concern by any individual, please inform the Swim England Legal Department.