

Leatherhead Swimming Club

Safeguarding Protocol and Due Process

1. Overview

Our club is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all swimmers. Safeguarding is our priority, and we adhere to **Swim England's Wavepower Safeguarding Policy**. This document outlines the roles, responsibilities, and processes to follow in the event of a welfare concern, ensuring that all actions align with best practices and legal requirements.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Welfare Officer:

- **Lead Role:** The Welfare Officer is the designated person responsible for safeguarding within the club.
- **Initial Assessment:** When a concern arises, the Welfare Officer should lead the initial assessment to determine its severity and decide on the next steps.
- **Confidentiality:** The Welfare Officer must ensure that all information is kept confidential, and that proper documentation is maintained throughout the process.
- **Training and Experience:** Welfare Officers are specially trained in safeguarding and are the point of contact for all welfare concerns.

Coaches:

- **Supportive Role:** Coaches should maintain a safe and supportive environment for swimmers but must not assess or resolve safeguarding concerns independently.
- **Immediate Referral:** If a swimmer approaches a coach with a concern, the coach should listen empathetically but **immediately refer** the matter to the Welfare Officer.
- **Confidentiality:** Coaches should maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing the matter with other individuals unless directed by the Welfare Officer.

3. Process for Handling Welfare Concerns

Step 1: Initial Assessment

Welfare Officer's Role:

- When a concern arises, the Welfare Officer must assess the situation and determine the nature and severity of the concern. This may include talking to the swimmer, the coach, or any other relevant parties.
- If the Welfare Officer believes that a child may be at risk, they should take immediate action as outlined in the safeguarding policy.

Coaches' Role:

- If the concern is brought to the coach or teacher's attention, they should listen attentively, ensuring the swimmer feels heard and supported. Swim Academy Teachers should inform their line manager (Head Swim Teacher or Head Coach) as soon as possible.
- **Do not attempt to resolve the issue** or make an assessment—**refer** the concern immediately to the Welfare Officer.

Step 2: Informal Resolution (Minor Concerns)**Welfare Officer's Role:**

- For minor issues, the Welfare Officer may try to resolve the concern **locally**, such as mediating a conversation or offering support to both the swimmer and coach. All actions must be documented.
- If the concern can be resolved informally, ensure that any necessary follow-up actions are in place to prevent further issues.

Step 3: Formal Reporting (Serious Concerns)**Welfare Officer's Role:**

- If the concern cannot be resolved informally or if it involves **serious allegations** (such as abuse), the Welfare Officer must **escalate** the concern according to Swim England's safeguarding procedures.
- This may include reporting to **statutory authorities** (e.g., the police, social services) or Swim England's safeguarding team, depending on the nature of the concern.
- The Welfare Officer must ensure that all actions taken are documented, and appropriate follow-up is carried out.

Step 4: Coordination with Other Agencies**Welfare Officer's Role:**

- If the concern is already being handled by other parties (e.g., school, external agencies), the Welfare Officer should ensure communication and coordination to avoid duplication and to ensure the safety of the swimmer.
- The Welfare Officer must ensure that information is shared appropriately and securely with any relevant external agencies while maintaining confidentiality.

4. Coaches' Role in Safeguarding**Coaches should always:**

- Create a safe, positive, and respectful environment for all swimmers.
- Be vigilant for signs of distress or discomfort among swimmers.
- **Report concerns immediately** to the Welfare Officer, ensuring the matter is handled by the right person.

5. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- **All safeguarding concerns must be handled confidentially.** Only those who need to be informed (e.g., the Welfare Officer, relevant authorities) should be made aware of the situation.
- The Welfare Officer must document every step of the process, including conversations, decisions made, and actions taken. This documentation should be stored securely.

6. Training and Awareness

- All club members, including coaches, must complete mandatory **safeguarding training** as per Swim England guidelines.
- **Welfare Officers** must regularly update their safeguarding training and maintain valid certifications.

7. Handling Disclosure

If a swimmer discloses a concern to a coach or Welfare Officer:

- **Listen carefully** and reassure the swimmer that their concerns are taken seriously.
- **Do not probe** or ask detailed questions; simply gather enough information to pass on to the Welfare Officer.
- **Report the disclosure immediately** to the Welfare Officer, who will take further steps.

8. Contact Information

- Welfare Officer's Contact Information: [Insert details]
- For emergencies or concerns requiring immediate attention: [Insert local safeguarding helplines]

Summary of the Process

1. **Coaches:** Support swimmers, listen, and **immediately refer** all concerns to the **Welfare Officer**.
2. **Welfare Officer:** Conduct the **initial assessment**, handle minor concerns, escalate serious concerns, and maintain confidentiality.
3. **Communication with external agencies:** The Welfare Officer will work with the appropriate agencies when necessary.

Contact:

Welfare Officer; leatherheadswim.welfare@gmail.com