



South Croydon Swimming Club: Child Welfare and Safeguarding policy

Based on Swim England's safeguarding policies and procedures, as set out in [Wavepower 2024](#).

1 Objective

South Croydon Swimming Club (SCSC) is committed to a club environment in which all children participating in its activities have a safe and positive experience. A child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

2 Safeguarding Policy

SCSC will:

- adopt and implement [Swim England's Wavepower 2024](#) (Wavepower) policy in full.
- recognise that all children participating in SCSC activities (regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ability or disability, political persuasion or sexual orientation) have a right to enjoy their involvement in aquatics in a safe environment and be protected from harm.
- ensure that all individuals who interact with children in SCSC, whether paid or voluntary, will provide a positive, safe and enjoyable experience for children.
- appoint a Welfare Officer(s) with the necessary skills and training (as outlined by Swim England) who will take the lead in dealing with all child safeguarding matters raised within the club.
- ensure that the Welfare Officer's name and contact details are known to all connected to the club, whether members, parents/ guardians or workforce.
- ensure that the Welfare Officer(s) is available to discuss issues of concern on matters of safeguarding and deal with such concerns appropriately and in line with Wavepower.
- ensure that all individuals who work with children in SCSC have undertaken the appropriate training, have the relevant DBS checks, and adhere to the required practices for safeguarding children as outlined in Wavepower
- ensure that all individuals who will be working with children in SCSC have been recruited in accordance with the Swim England Safe Recruitment Policy.



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- ensure that all individuals who work with children in the organisation have the appropriate training, code of conduct and good practice to follow in line with the guidance in Wavepower.
- provide all members of the club and their parents/ guardians with the opportunity to raise concerns in a safe and confidential manner if they have a concern about their child's welfare.
- ensure that all child safeguarding matters, whether they be concerns about child welfare or protection, are dealt with appropriately in accordance with the guidance for reporting and action in Wavepower.
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained appropriately and in line with the best interests of the child.
- Ensure that all papers relating to child safeguarding matters are held in a safe and secure manner.

2.1 Building a safer culture

Everyone at Swim England and SCSC is dedicated to making our sports and activities accessible, inclusive and safe for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We recognise we must continuously strive to improve in order to foster a positive culture and deliver for the people who are the lifeblood of our sports.

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 Organisation.
- 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.



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- 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; *SCSC requests that teachers and coaches sign up to the annual DBS Update Service rather than renewing 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 Members;
- 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;
- have respect for, and encourage, Members having a life outside of aquatics, and account for such where necessary.

Swim England 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;



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- 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.

2.2 Safeguarding children

Key Principles

Safeguarding children in our organisation is an integral part of our activities. It seeks to create a culture that provides a safe and happy environment in which our children can learn to swim and develop to a level appropriate for their ability. The aquatic sports should be enjoyable and fun, including the competitive aspect at whatever level undertaken, giving each individual a sense of achievement and satisfaction from taking part.

Swim England is committed to ensuring that all children who participate in our activities are able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be safeguarded from harm.

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 each sports organisations' responsibility:

- through safe 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 and well known, but not sole, part of safe recruitment;
- to report and safeguarding concerns to Swim England.



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Swim England acknowledges, and requires Organisations to acknowledge, that they have a duty of care to safeguard children from harm. Organisations and their Members must follow the policies and procedures in Wavepower to safeguard children from harm and act appropriately if a child is identified as being at risk of harm.

The key principles of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' are that:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility 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.



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- **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.

Duty of Care

The Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their function and any services they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Organisations have a duty of care to their members.

Paid and volunteer staff have a duty to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to the local authority Children's Social Care, Police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other agencies if necessary. Swim England is the national governing body for swimming, para-swimming, diving, high diving, artistic swimming, water polo and open water swimming, and as such receives funding from Sport England.

As a funded NGB we meet the standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport.

Each Organisation has a duty of care towards its members and must adopt Wavepower as a condition of its affiliation. All Swim England Members must comply with the Swim England Handbook and Wavepower.

To meet its safeguarding duty of care Swim England Organisations must:

- Follow the policies and procedures in Wavepower in full and use it as required.
- Promote and raise awareness of Wavepower to all of their members.
- Ensure all of their members are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns about a child or adult's safety or welfare.
- Promote a culture of listening to children and adults at risk.

Anyone involved in our sports can contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, or their County or Regional Welfare Officer for advice or guidance on Safeguarding concerns. If these teams or contacts are unavailable for any reason, or failure to act immediately may place a child or adults at risk of harm, then immediate contact should be made with Police, Children's Social Care, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, Adult Social Care, or other agencies as appropriate.



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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 Organisation 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.



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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

Also referred to as psychological abuse, it 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 noncontact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child.



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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;



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- 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 defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online." It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, in extreme cases, 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:

- Verbal: name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.
- Physical: any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing. Intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions.
- Emotional: excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and 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



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way someone looks or the clothes they wear, their family and social situation, hobbies and interests.

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and child.
- Children (peer on peer).
- A parent/guardian and their own child. The competitive nature of sport can create an environment which provides opportunities for bullying.

Examples of bullying in our sports could be:

- a parent/guardian who pushes their child too hard; • a coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy;
- a member who intimidates others inappropriately; and
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying in our sports could include a child being ostracised by others in their lane, squad or age group, refusing to talk to them and/or encouraging others to treat them with contempt.

Harassment

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

The National Website for Policing says that:

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. It's harassment if the unwanted behaviour has happened more than once.

Sexual harassment is also unlawful, as a form of discrimination, under the Equality Act 2010.



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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 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



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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.

Images on mobile phones

Risks

Some people have tried, and succeeded in, taking images (video and still photographs) of children in the process of changing, in changing villages or under/over changing cubicles. Some people, only known to each other through the sport have shared these indecent images with others. 'Indecent' is not defined in legislation but can include an image of a child in a state of undress in the changing room.

Swim England and SCSC has a zero-tolerance policy towards the use of mobile phones and other digital devices in changing rooms during Swim England regulated activity.

It is a criminal offence to take, make, distribute (send), upload and/or possess any indecent image of a child (including those taken/possessed by other under 18-year-olds). It is also an offence to request a child to take, make, distribute or upload such an image, or encourage another to commit an offence.

- 'Making' includes opening, accessing, downloading and storing online content.

Reporting a concern about a child at risk of harm

All Members should be aware of how to report any concerns which they are aware of.

Swim England and SCSC is committed to ensuring that any child member who attends a Swim England Organisation, event or activity will be safeguarded from harm. Protection and safeguarding of all of our members is paramount and should be based on prevention and best practice.

However, we recognise that not all risks can be removed, and safeguarding concerns will continue to be raised both within, and outside of, any Organisation.

The following three stages of action must be taken for anyone who may have a concern or is made aware of a concern about a child member's wellbeing:

Stage 1 – React to the concern, disclosure, suspicion or allegation in a timely and appropriate manner.

Stage 2 – Record the relevant information.

Stage 3 – Report the information to the appropriate person(s) and/or Organisation(s), subject to the above consent conditions being met.



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If you are experiencing, at risk of, or have experienced harm, or you are concerned that a child Member is experiencing, at risk of, or has experienced harm, please contact the clubs Welfare officer.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times when a concern has been raised and is being investigated.

Organisations must only tell individuals who need to know and can help in managing the concerns. If the concern relates to a child, and their parents/guardians are not implicated in the concern, ensure they are made aware at the earliest opportunity.

If breached, confidentiality can put people at risk of further harm either by further inappropriate action of an individual(s) involved or other individuals who hear about the concern through rumours. Ultimately, any investigation may be impeded by misinformation or rumours.

Date of revision and record of amendments:

Date of amendments	Section Heading	Page Number	Paragraph Number / Notes



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