



## **Thame Swimming Club Safeguarding Policy**

Thame Swimming club (affiliated with Swim England) believes that all swimmers and adults involved with the swimming club have the right to stay safe and have fun.

Thame Swimming Club adheres to the principles of safeguarding children and adults as per Swim England Safeguarding Policy (Wavepower January 2024 edition).

### **Policy aim and relationship to other documents:**

**This policy extracts some important key points from Wavepower to help our volunteers retain them, refresh them in between formal courses, and relate them to their work for TSC. This document is a summary of key points highlighted in Wave Power (January 2024) and must be used in conjunction with the Swim England Child Safeguarding Policy and guidance set out in that document.**

**Wavepower provides the detail which you will need to address any actual situations arising and this policy does not replace training. In this policy we outline more detail about adult than child safeguarding: this is because the requirement for adult safeguarding is newer and many people are less familiar with the concept.**

<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/>

Please note that everyone working or volunteering for the club needs to understand the principles of both child and adult safeguarding as these could apply to at-risk adult swimmers and non-swimmers you encounter in your role; additionally, those directly involved with swimmers must complete the Swim England safeguarding training and keep this up to date. It is clear in all government legislation (Children Act 1989/2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023) that safeguarding children is the **responsibility of everyone**, including those who are employed or volunteer with children in whatever capacity.

Thame Swimming Club Welfare Officer should be notified of all safeguarding and welfare concerns relating to a swimmer of Thame Swimming Club. The Welfare Officer will speak to the Head coach/ other coaching staff and committee members, as appropriate, and escalate concerns further to Swim England or other statutory services as required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Thame Swimming Club swimmers and members. The swimmer's parents will be kept updated of all actions taken, where the swimmer is under 18. Should you have a pressing concern and should there be a delay in being able to contact the Welfare Officer, you must seek advice directly from Swim England or if needed from social services.

**In the event that there is a risk of immediate harm, do not delay by contacting the Welfare Officer or Swim England if any delay would impact the immediate safe management of the situation – depending on the urgency, use 999 to contact the police (for example if a young person ran off saying they intended to harm themselves, or if an individual was behaving in a threatening manner) or directly contact **social services** (for example, if a young person was at training stating they did not feel safe to go home with their parent and they were shortly due to be collected).**



## **What is meant by safeguarding?**

Safeguarding means protecting a person's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Safeguarding children, young people and adults is a collective responsibility. Those most in need of protection include:

- Children and young people
- Adults at risk, such as people with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities or mental ill-health or neurodiversity where this impacts vulnerability to harm, for example where such challenges mean that someone finds it difficult to judge others' intentions towards them or critically evaluate information that they are given by others they are likely to be at increased risk of harm from others.

## **Key principles - Child safeguarding**

- Swim England is committed to ensuring that all children who take part in our activities can have fun and participate in an environment that keeps them safe from harm.
- The welfare of the child is, and must always be, paramount.
- It is every child's right to be protected from abuse irrespective of their age, gender, faith or religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, background, economic position, disability or level of ability.
- Allegations of abuse or concerns regarding children will be treated seriously and will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Swim England recognises the responsibilities of the statutory agencies and is committed to complying with safeguarding partners and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Confidentiality will be maintained unless in situations where a child's safety and welfare is compromised. A child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration when making decisions on whether or not to share information about them.
- Swim England will provide training and education to all adults involved in our sports to be aware of and understand what best practice is and how to manage any child welfare and safeguarding concerns they identify or are informed of.
- Parents/guardians, children and all participants involved in our sports can access advice and guidance on child welfare matters from the Child Safeguarding Team, Swim England and NSPCC helpline or from the statutory agencies.
- All Swim England organisations must adopt Wavepower and ensure that when they receive new information that relevant policies are updated as appropriate.

Please view the flowchart at the end of this policy for a summary of actions in child safeguarding.

## **Key principles - Adult safeguarding**

- Swim England 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.

The principles underpinning adult safeguarding are:

1. **empowerment** – people should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions with informed consent;
2. **prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs where possible;
3. **proportionality** – the least intrusive response that is appropriate to the risk presented should be taken;
4. **protection** – support and representation should be given to those in the greatest need;
5. **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
6. **accountability** – safeguarding should be delivered with accountability and transparency

### **Who is an Adult at Risk?**

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

- a. has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- b. is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- c. 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.

### **Responding to a direct disclosure from an adult:**

An adult Member may confide to a member of staff, coach, volunteer, or another Member that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the aquatics sports. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case and need to act or seek advice on these concerns.

If an adult directly discloses to you that they are being harmed or abused, or you are a Welfare Officer who receives information which gives a cause for concern, you should:



- treat the disclosure seriously;
- listen carefully to what is said, allowing the discloser to continue at their own pace;
- keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify or clarify what the person is telling you and do not ask leading questions;
- reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information;
- ask them what they would like to happen next;
- explain what you would like to do next in response to the concern;
- **explain that you will have to share the information with the Welfare Officer and the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;**
- ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside of Swim England (for example with police or social services)
- make an arrangement as to how you or the Club Welfare Officer can contact them safely;
- help them to contact other organisations for advice and support if appropriate.
- **record** in writing what was said, using the adult's own words, as soon as possible, along with any actions taken or proposed.
- act swiftly to **report** and carry out any required actions.
- do not tell anyone else about the concern who has no need to be made aware of it.

The adult's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. The Mental Capacity Act is relevant when supporting adults who have specific difficulties impacting their capacity to understand, weigh, retain and communicate decisions; in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views. We can only make decisions for other adults in their best interests as a last resort where they cannot make the decision for themselves at the time it is needed. **However, you must always still discuss a disclosure or concern with the Welfare Officer for advice, even if you believe the adult has capacity to make decisions about how to manage their situation. All concerns** must be shared with the Welfare Officer for advice in the first instance, and escalated to Swim England. You will need to **explain to the adult that you must seek advice** from the Welfare Officer and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

In summary, it is not your role to decide whether a concern or incident amounts to abuse, or whether a person is an Adult at Risk. It is your role to refer that concern, via the Welfare Officer or directly yourself if they are not available, to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team so they can make that decision.

- if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out as a result, you must not contact the adult Member before talking to your Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team
- you must not confront the person thought to be causing the harm.
- In cases where a person is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.

### **Reporting a concern about an adult at risk of harm**

When made aware of concerns about an adult Member, a Welfare Officer must share such



concerns with Swim England where **any** of the following consent conditions apply:

1. the adult Member has consented to the information being shared;
2. the adult Member is believed to lack the mental capacity to decide on the next steps themselves (if in doubt, please refer to the Safeguarding and Welfare Team);
3. the adult Member or someone else is at risk of harm; or
4. where a concern has been reported to an external body (such as the Police in an emergency), this must be reported as soon as practically possible.

Anyone with a concern relating to Members in aquatics can contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice and guidance on 01509 640700 (Option 1 for Swim England and then Option 3 for Safeguarding) or at [safeguarding@swimming.org](mailto:safeguarding@swimming.org). The Safeguarding and Welfare Team will be able to provide advice even if you are not making a referral or are unsure whether to do so.

The online referral forms for both children and adults are available at:

[swimming.org/swimengland/how-raise-concern-complaint](https://swimming.org/swimengland/how-raise-concern-complaint)

**Useful Contact details – Note these can change – always verify them if you have any difficulty getting through immediately.**

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The online referral forms for both children and adults are available at:

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#### **Thames Swimming Club Welfare Officer**

Helen Burton

Jacqueline Markis

[welfare@thameswimmingclub.co.uk](mailto:welfare@thameswimmingclub.co.uk)

#### **Oxfordshire Childrens Social Care:**

Oxfordshire MASH (Multi-agency safeguarding hub) **0345 0507666**

Office hours ( 8.30-5pm Monday- Thursday, 8.30-4pm Friday)

Outside office hours: Emergency Duty Team **0800 833 408**

#### **Buckinghamshire Children Social care (First Response/ MASH)**



First Response Team on **01296 383962** between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

If you need an urgent response outside of these hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0800 999 7677.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline direct on 0808 800 5000. The helpline is open for 24 hours each day and calls are free of charge.

### Adult safeguarding contacts:

Oxfordshire Social Services referral form:

<https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/raisingconcernprofessional> or 0345 050 7666

Buckinghamshire Social Services:

If you have concerns about an adult you can call the Safeguarding Adults Team

During Office Hours:

9am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday or 9am – 5pm on Friday

Tel: 0800 137 915

Emergency Out of Hours Tel: 0800 999 7677

E-mail

[ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

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