



**EAST GRINSTEAD SWIMMING CLUB**  
Affiliated to S.E.R.A.S.A.      Founded 1912

## Child Protection Policy

East Grinstead Swimming Club is wholly committed to the promotion of racial equality, equal opportunities for all regardless of gender, age or physical ability.

Our mission is to challenge discrimination, champion equality and act as a catalyst for change.

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### 1. Introduction.

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/ or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/ unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Staff and volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

This policy document is a “live” document and will be subject to bi-annual reassessment. This is a minimum review date and where circumstances arise or policy changes are required they must be made as soon as practicable.

### 2. Policy statement.

East Grinstead Swimming Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in swimming with East Grinstead Swimming Club from harm whilst engaged in any activity within the club. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

East Grinstead Swimming Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in swimming with East Grinstead Swimming Club through adherence to the following Child Protection guidelines adopted by East Grinstead Swimming Club.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

## **2.1 How will we achieve this?**

By;

- Providing parent, children, staff and volunteers with information about East Grinstead Swimming Club, what it does and what you can expect from the club.
- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Providing clear procedures enabling parents and children to voice their concerns and to lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.

## **2.2 Policy Aims.**

This document will be supplied to all staff and volunteers of East Grinstead Swimming Club. The aims of the policy are as follows:

The aim of The East Grinstead Swimming Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of East Grinstead Swimming Club;
- Ensuring that children are listened to and generate a sense of belonging and kept safe from harm;
- Supporting and encouraging parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children;
- Allowing all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## **2.3 Objectives.**

Specific objectives outline how this policy intends to achieve the aforementioned stated aims:

- Raise the level of awareness of child abuse with staff and volunteers and the many forms in which child abuse can take and their manifestations.
- Raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from.
- Ensure that all staff recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child.
- Promote the general welfare, health and full development of children during all activities promoted by East Grinstead Swimming Club.
- Develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

## **3. Child Abuse.**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### **3.1 Recognising Abuse.**

East Grinstead Swimming Club recognises that its staff and volunteers are not experts in the recognition of child abuse. It is of paramount importance to remember that it is not our responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place, but it is our duty to report to the appropriate authority(s) or agency (ies) where we have concerns or any allegation that is made, in order to protect the child (ren).

Indications that child abuse is taking place include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Any injury for which the injury seem inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of a child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour over time, e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
- Is distrustful of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating and loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Become increasingly dirty or unkempt.

### **3.2 Main forms of Abuse.**

#### **Neglect.**

This is where adults fail to meet the child's basic needs such as food or warm clothing, fail or refuse to give children love, affection and attention. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

Neglect in a sporting or activity based context could include a staff member failing to ensure children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury.

#### **Physical Abuse.**

Adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs or poison. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category.

In sports or activity based situations, physical abuse might occur when the nature or intensity of a particular activity exceeds the capacity of the child's immature or growing body.

#### **Sexual Abuse.**

Adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse girls and boys. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures and images) is also a form of sexual abuse.

Sports or activities, which involve physical contact with children, could potentially create situations where abuse may go unnoticed. The power of a member of staff over young people, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations arising.

## **Emotional Abuse.**

Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur where there is constant overprotection (which prevents children from socialising), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport or activities may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

### **3.3 Effects of Abuse.**

Abuse in all or any of its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if untreated, may follow any individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child themselves in the future.

There have been a number of studies which suggest that children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be doubly powerless.

## **4. Good practice in Child Abuse Issues**

All children have the right to live their lives to maximise their potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy a wide range of sports and other organised activities, and to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Unfortunately, abuse does happen.

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to prevent abuse occurring and to protect themselves from false allegations.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

### **4.1 Good practice - preventing allegations arising.**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encouraging open communication with no secrets.
- Treating all young people/ disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/ physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents, guardians or carers are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered and respected.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents, guardians or carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, guardians, carers, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.

- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing "parental consent" in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/ or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given. This will be completed in the ASA Accident Book that is poolside at all club sessions.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

#### 4.2 Practices to be avoided.

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents, guardians or carer. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent, guardian or carer fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event.

#### 4.3 Practices never to be sanctioned.

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

#### 4.4 Incidents that must be reported/ recorded.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a swimmer.
- If he/ she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a swimmer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a swimmer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

#### **4.5 Use of photographic/ filming equipment at sporting events.**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sports people in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, swimmers and their parents, guardians or carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

Securing “parental consent” in writing will assist in creating a culture of openness and confidence in such coaching aids.

Any person wishing to use photographic/ filming equipment MUST sign the ASA Registration Book that is on poolside at all East Grinstead Swimming Club training sessions and at all galas and events organised by Easy Grinstead Swimming Club. Furthermore, all such persons MUST also comply with the policy of Mid Sussex District Council in relation to the use of photographic/ filming equipment.

#### **4.6 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers**

East Grinstead Swimming Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers and staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record. (The ASA purple form).
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

#### **4.7 Interview and Induction.**

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

#### **4.8 Training.**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Staff and volunteers must be made aware that child abuse can and does occur and that colleagues, who are members of staff and volunteers within our organisation, could perpetrate it.
- It must be stressed that the majority of abusers are not the monsters that most picture them to be, but are ordinary men and women, more commonly men, and, at the extreme are clever, manipulative, powerful and plausible.
- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.

- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Staff and volunteers need to understand the processes within the club by which they can report suspected abuse. They must respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person. Children can find it very difficult to talk about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously and have their concerns acted on.
- Work safely effectively with children.
- All staff and volunteers within the club must know that the Child Protection and Welfare Officer is the Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) for all issues of suspected abuse.

#### 4.9 Supervision.

In general, staff and volunteers work most effectively when there is a clearly defined supervisory structure that ensures that they are positively supported, managed and developed. Anyone in a supervisory role must be sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act upon them at an early stage, and offer support to those who report it.

It is the responsibility of anyone in a supervisory role to monitor good practice. This can be done in a number of ways.

- Observation of coaching practice.
- Annual appraisals of coaches and teachers.
- Provide feedback on performance against work programmes.
- Gather feedback from the parents and children, where appropriate.

#### 4.10 East Grinstead Swimming Club requires that:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection. This can be carried out by completing the NSPCC Educare “Keeping Children Safe in Sport” distance learning package. 01926-436219.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from Sports Coach UK, the NSPCC, and the Sport Council.
- Child Protection be a standing agenda item for all full Committee Meetings and for all Teachers Meetings.

## 5 Policy and Procedure

### 5.1 Procedure for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in East Grinstead Swimming Club, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that the appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action.

**“Remember, it is not your job to judge, but to report”.**

There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with parents, guardians or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents, guardians or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems to be withdrawn, he or she may have experienced a family bereavement.

However, there are circumstances in which a child may be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g., where a parent, guardian or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible. At this point it is critical that the staff and volunteers know that the SPOC is the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer (unless this person is involved in your suspicions, whereby another trusted member of staff, preferably more senior in position within the club should be approached).

Once the incident or allegation has been reported it is the responsibility of the person receiving the complaint to inform the relevant Social Services Department without delay.

East Grinstead Swimming Club will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

## **5.2 Action if there are concerns**

### **5.2.1 Concerns about poor practice.**

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant A.S.A. Child Protection and Welfare Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

### **5.2.2 Concerns about suspected abuse.**

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the relevant Social Services Department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if it is out-of-hours.
- The parents, guardians or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer should notify the A.S.A. Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion or allegation, the report must be made to an appropriate senior club official or in his/her absence the A.S.A. Child Protection and Welfare Officer who will refer the allegation to the relevant Social Services Department.

### 5.2.3 Dealing with Allegations from children.

Children who are being abused will only tell people that they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to and taking them seriously what a child is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them. It is useful to think in advance how you might respond to the situation. The following are brief guidelines and are by no means a definitive list:

- Stay calm and do not rush into actions which may be inappropriate.
- Confirm you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing.
- Reassure the child and stress that he/ she is not to blame.
- Listening to and believing what the child says. Show that you are taking what is being said seriously.
- Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere alone on your own with the child.
- **BE HONEST and DO NOT MAKE PROMISES THAT YOU CANNOT KEEP.** Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- Ensure that you are quite clear about what the child says so that you can pass it on to child protection professionals. Keep questions to a minimum and avoid closed questions (i.e. ones that are answered by a single “yes” or “no”). Use open questions to encourage the child to use their own words. The Law is very strict and a child abuse case can be dismissed if it appears that the child has been led or that words have been suggested.
- Record exactly what the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format, as soon as possible after the incident. Separate the facts from your opinion. It is very important to include the following;
  - The child’s name, address and date of birth and the nature of the allegation.
  - A detailed description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
  - Your observations (e.g. a description of the child’s behaviour and their physical and emotional state).
  - Exactly what the child said to you and what you said. Records the child’s account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
  - Any action that you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and any resulting action, including any contact with parents, guardians, carers, other staff members and social services).
  - Sign and date what you have recorded, provide a copy where necessary (e.g. to supervisor or equivalent).
  - Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures.
- Do not take sole responsibility - consult someone else (e.g. a senior colleague or someone you can trust) as soon as possible, so that you can begin to protect the child and gain some support for yourself in what could be a difficult situation.

**NB** In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with such cases or suspicions relating to child abuse. If you are unsure whether what you have seen or heard may require action speak to someone about this.

**The NSPCC provide a 24 hour helpline on 0800 800 500.**

You will be able to discuss your concerns with a member of trained staff at the NSPCC or you can contact your local Social Services Department.

#### 5.2.4 Dealing with Allegations about staff.

Should an individual member of staff or a volunteer become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of child abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed;

- Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child and, therefore, report it.
- Make a written record of any details of which you are aware, as apart of your report.
- Report the allegation to the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer or a senior member of the club, giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details. Try not to cloud your report with your opinions or judgements. In a case where the allegation involves the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer or senior member of the club then you must report it to another senior member of the club whom you can trust.
- Do not judge or investigate. By reporting an allegation quickly any necessary investigations and/ or judgements can be made by trained professionals, i.e. social services or police.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary) as any breaches could be damaging to both the child and any investigation which may follow. Refer to section 5.3 Confidentiality.
- Any requests for information from members of the public (including parents) or the media should be directed to a designated member of the club and should be given the “no comment” response, as outlined in section 5.7 Dealing with the media.
- If the organisation becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse taking place it is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that the following procedures are followed.
  - Obtain full, clear details of the allegation, including any written report available from the member of staff or volunteer reporting the allegation.
  - Report the matter to the police and social services immediately. Referrals telephoned should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name and designation of the member of staff or police officer to whom concerns were passed, together with the date and time of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.
  - Where judged appropriate, the member of staff or volunteer should be suspended pending the outcome of any investigation. This can, and should, be done in consultation with the police and social services.

**NB** It should be made clear to the staff member or volunteer that any suspension is made irrespective of any belief of guilt, but as a standard measure put in place to protect all parties involved, including the child, the club and the member of staff or volunteer. The immediate aim of any suspension is to eliminate the possibility of the alleged perpetrator gaining access to children.

### 5.3 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Protection Officer.
- The parents, guardians or carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/ police.
- The A.S.A. Child Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

### 5.4 Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The East Grinstead Swimming Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the East Grinstead Swimming Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the East Grinstead Swimming Club Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

### 5.5 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from;  
The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ,  
Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189,  
E-mail: [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk), Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

### 5.6 Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

## **5.7 Dealing with the media.**

It is important that the club has an identified member who is responsible for dealing with enquiries, which are likely to be made, should an incident of child abuse arise.

Mid-Sussex District Council Public Relations Department have Samantha Bouzan on 01444-477240 who can be contacted for further guidance.

All staff and volunteers must be aware that the media are very quick to respond to hints of an allegation such as child abuse and will often make extreme attempts to obtain information. Therefore, it is important that all staff and volunteers be alert to any media approaches and ensure that all media enquiries are directed to the appropriate person.

Once the official member of staff is contacted they may either give an agreed statement (negotiated within the club in consultation with the ASA Legal Department 01509-210012 and or the Child Protection Department of Sussex Police on 0845 60 70 999) or simply meet any enquiries from whatever source with the “no comment” response.

## **6 Bullying**

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

### **6.1 Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:**

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

### **6.2 Action towards the bully (ies):**

- Talk with the bully (ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully (ies) compensates the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

#### **6.2.1 Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer):**

- Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
- See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need.
- If the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

- Social Services and the Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer will decide how to involve the parents, guardians or carers.
- The Club Child Protection and Welfare Officer should also report the incident to the East Grinstead Swimming Club Committee. The Committee should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role in East Grinstead Swimming Club and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.
- See 4 below regarding information needed for social services.

### **7 Evidence - Information required for social services or the police about suspected abuse.**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

### **8 Provenance of East Grinstead Swimming Club Child Protection Policy**

<b>Policy authors name and job title:-</b> Ian Douglas Bond	<b>Date of assessment:-</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2008	<b>Next assessment due:-</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
<b>Child Protection and Welfare Officer:-</b>  <b>Name:-</b> Liz Stovell	<b>Signed by Child Protection and Welfare Officer:-</b>	<b>Date supplied to centre:-</b>

## References.

- The Shadow of Abuse. Simon Hart [Swimming Times](#) November 2002
- Is Your Coaching Sound? [National Coaching Foundation](#).
- Keeping Children Safe in Sport. Distance learning packages. [NSPCC EduCare](#)
- [ASA](#) Child Protection in Swimming - Procedures and Guidelines.
- [ASA](#) Code of Ethics.
- Mid Sussex District Council Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedures.
- Sport Safe Away - A Guide to Good Planning. [Sport England](#).