

CHILD WELFARE IN SWIMMING

Procedures and guidelines



AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Child Welfare in Swimming

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Information sheet for Clubs

Club Welfare Officer

Name:

Tel:

District Welfare Officer

Name:

Tel:

Local Authority Services

Social Services Department

Tel:

Out Of Hours Contact Number

Tel:

Police Child Protection Team

Tel:

National Body

Amateur Swimming Association

Legal Affairs Department

Harold Fern House

Derby Square

Loughborough

LE11 5AL

Telephone: 01509 221350

Swimline: 0808 100 4001

Other Services

Child Protection In Sport Unit

Tel: 0116 234 7278

Email: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Child Protection Line

Tel: 0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Kidscape

Tel: 020 730 3300



AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Foreword

In the ASA we believe that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in swimming - administrator, club official, coach, parent, friend, children themselves, everyone - can help.

Abuse can occur anywhere there are children - at home, at school, in the park, at the club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are, simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone in the ASA has a part to play in looking after the children with whom they are working. The Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOH 1999) highlight the shared responsibility of organisations to promote children's wellbeing and safeguard them from harm. They stress the importance of effective information sharing, collaboration, and understanding.

As the National Governing Body of Swimming the ASA has a moral and legal obligation to both identify and appropriately deal with concerns raised regarding the well being of children involved in our sport.

These child protection procedures stem from the following principles

- The child's welfare is the first consideration.
- All children regardless of age, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity and any disability have a right to enjoy sport free from all forms of abuse or sexual exploitation.
- The ASA and associated clubs have responsibilities for the welfare of children and young people who take part in our sport.
- The ASA has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality in all cases involving child protection in line with the current legislation.
- The ASA will not tolerate, within its associated clubs, poor practice in dealing with child welfare.

We know that if the procedures are to help to protect children, everyone involved in swimming needs to see and discuss them. We are, therefore asking club secretaries and welfare officers to make sure that they are widely distributed and discussed at club executive and general meetings.

Finally, please remember the ASA will support anyone who, in good faith reports his or her concerns that a child is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.

The ASA policy on child welfare is mandatory and all affiliated clubs must appoint a Club Welfare Officer to oversee the procedure is followed appropriately at all times.

A child is defined as any young person under the age of 18.



What is Child Abuse?

It's generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse - **Physical, Sexual, Emotional** and **Neglect**.

PHYSICAL ABUSE may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm or deliberate ill health to a child. It might also occur if a child is forced to train beyond his/her capabilities.

SEXUAL ABUSE involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects their development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or where inappropriate expectations are put upon them. In a sporting context this may include severe parental or coaching pressure to succeed. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse and it can be a feature of bullying.

NEGLECT is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide shelter, food, clothing, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs. In a sporting context it could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm.

IN ADDITION BULLYING currently accounts for a high proportion of referrals to the ASA. A separate anti bullying policy has been written by the ASA with the assistance of KIDSCAPE. The guidance in this document should be followed in any case where bullying has been reported or observed within the club setting.

Child Abuse in Swimming

Swimming plays a major part in the lives of many children and families and for most the experience is a positive one that provides them with many opportunities to have fun, keep fit and even participate at national and international competitions. However, sadly we know from experience that a small minority of individuals who wish to harm children will access them through our sport.

In 2002, the ASA and NSPCC jointly published the report "In at the Deep End", which analysed child welfare cases that had been referred to the ASA between 1997 and 2001. The study identified that having a policy and procedure was an essential part of child protection in our sport. All clubs were supplied with a copy of the report and any club member can access it from their club welfare officer.

Many types of abuse and poor practice have been observed and reported in the swimming environment. It is often committed by a person well known and trusted to the child in the swimming club. It can also be committed by another young person.

Sibling and peer abuse has been recognised as an ongoing aspect of child protection in swimming and should be recognised and addressed. Other concerns have involved the use of racist language and racist taunts which should not be tolerated in clubs, nor should bullying by children or adults. The ASA will be publishing an anti bullying policy, which all clubs should adopt if they do not already have an acceptable policy on bullying.

All adults involved in swimming have a responsibility to report concerns of a child abuse nature appropriately and to act in a manner at all times that keeps children safe from harm.

Children with Specific Needs

Some disabled children may require specialised care and clubs who work with children with physical and learning problems should ensure that:

- The guidelines of Disability Sport England "Protecting Disabled Children and Adults in Sport and Recreation" are followed by clubs, teachers and coaches who work with children (and adults) with disabilities.
- All coaches and teachers are suitably qualified to teach/coach children with specific needs.
- The views of the child and parent/carer are always obtained prior to any activity, specifically those requiring any physical handling or of a physical nature, to gain both consent and agreement of all concerned.
- No child is discriminated against in any manner by the club or any member or from taking part in an activity, which it is safe and proper for them to undertake.

Some children will suffer with an illness but show no outward appearance of being a child with specific needs, such as those diagnosed with epilepsy or diabetes. It is essential the club co-operate with parents on their child's needs should they develop an attack at training or competition. Advice can also be sought from the ASA medical advisor if required. Such children should not be excluded or prevented from taking part in any sporting activity in which all other swimmers are entitled to take part, as this would be discriminatory. With the correct knowledge and information, and the required parental support, children with such illnesses can train and compete as any other swimmer.

Currently the ASA is developing a welfare policy specifically for both children and adults with specific needs.

Procedures

Please remember it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused, but we are asking you to act on your concerns. It is your responsibility to ensure the concerns raised are passed on appropriately.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SWIM SCHEMES

If the child is part of a school group or on a local authority play scheme you are involved with follow the guidelines laid down by your employer.

CLUBS AND SWIM SCHEMES AFFILIATED TO THE ASA

Every ASA registered swimming club should have a club welfare officer. This person will have the knowledge of ASA policy and procedure to advise anyone with a child welfare concern. They should always be involved in any concern raised within the club unless they are in some way implicated in the concern.

As a member, official or parent involved in an ASA affiliated club you should follow the guidelines as outlined below:

- If the child or young person is in immediate danger or has been physically injured, ensure they are safe and contact the police or social services.
- If the child is not in immediate danger but you have concerns, either:
 - Discuss the concerns with your club welfare officer or a club official who will advise you on the correct procedure for referring your concern appropriately.
 - Or
 - Ring the Swimline number 0800 100 4001 displayed on your notice board. The club welfare officer will be able to inform you on how to refer your concerns to gain appropriate advice and action.
- Make a note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information. As soon as possible complete the ASA referral form found on page 10 of this document.

NB You or the club welfare officer/ official should, in every case send a completed referral form to the ASA Legal Department to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. Address the letter to:

ASA Legal Affairs Dept.,
Harold Fern House,
Derby Square,
Loughborough LE11 5AL

PLEASE REMEMBER - it's not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused but we are asking you to act on your concerns.

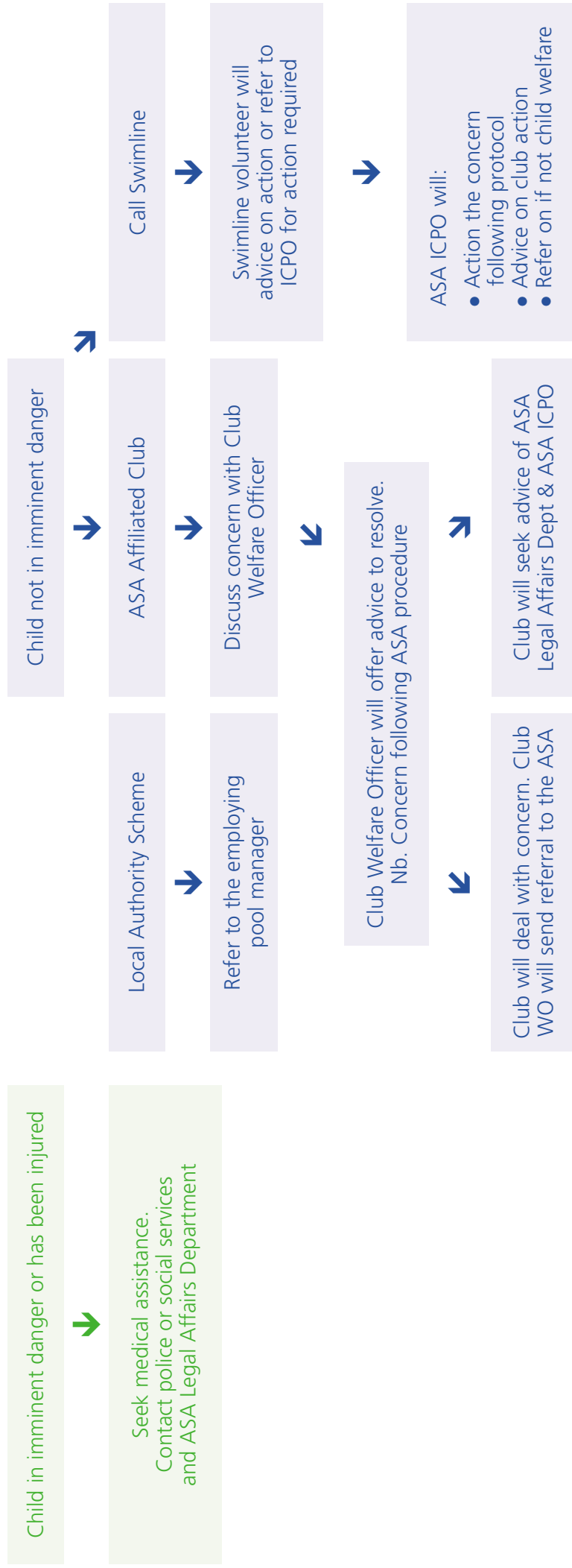
- When a concern is referred to the ASA and further action is required you will receive a copy of the ASA protocol document. This outlines what possible actions will be taken and what further contact will be made with the referrer. This document is located in the appendix section of this guide.

Guidance

Action to take if a child tells you that he or she is being abused:

- Stay calm
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself
- Listen to what the child says and, please, take it seriously
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you - don't ask the child about explicit details
- Make a detailed note of what the child is telling you but as advised in the previous section, please don't delay passing on the information

Procedure Flow Chart - REFERRAL



RECORD OF INCIDENT

1. All clubs should have an Incident Book where incidents, including those of a child welfare nature should be recorded. The book should be held by a nominated member of the club, and be kept in a secure and confidential manner. It should be available at all club sessions.
2. The club welfare officer or another officer of the club should complete the ASA referral form whenever a child welfare issue is raised and send it to the Legal Affairs Department of the ASA.

Referral Form

NAME OF PERSON COMPLAINED OF: _____

Male/Female	
Club	
Club Address - (N.B - this may be the Honorary Secretary's home address)	

ASA Referral Form

NAME OF REFERRER: _____

Male/Female	
Club	
Position in club	
Home Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email Address	

NAME OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN CONCERNED: _____

Male/Female	
Any disability/Specific needs	
Ethnic origin	
Club	
Position in club	
Age/DOB	
Home Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	

NAME OF PERSON COMPLAINED OF: _____

Male/Female	
Club	
Club Address	
(N.B - this may be the Honorary Secretary's home address)	
Position in club	
Age/DOB	
Ethnic origin	
Home Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email Address	

CATEGORY OF REFERRAL*:
 PHYSICAL
 SEXUAL
 VERBAL
 NEGLECT
 BULLYING
 OTHER

DATE OF INCIDENT REFERRED:

ACTION TAKEN BY THE REFERRER _____

POLICE INFORMED *YES / NO

SSD INFORMED *YES / NO

PARENTS/CARERS INFORMED *YES / NO/ Aware

**Delete as appropriate.*



DETAILS OF COMPLAINT MADE:

DETAILS OF ACTION TAKEN:

HAVE YOU CONTACTED SWIMLINE BEFORE
If "YES" please give brief details with dates

*YES / NO

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

ACTION RECOMMENDED/TAKEN

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

ASA Investigations

The ASA has developed a protocol for all child protection investigations. This protocol has been developed over many years with the knowledge gained from the many cases dealt with to date.

PROTOCOLS FOR CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS

This document is to act as a guide for all members of the ASA with regard to the Protocols that have been put into place for the conduct of investigations. If there are any queries that you may have with regard to the content of these Protocols then please do not hesitate to contact the ASA Department of Legal Affairs - Telephone (01509) 264668 or via e-mail to legal@swimming.org

1. Any concerns of a child protection nature with regard to any individual involved in the sport of swimming must be referred to the ASA Department of Legal Affairs through any of the following initial contact communication channels; Swimline message, telephone call, letter or E-mail. The concern or query will then be noted and referred to the ASA Independent Child Protection Officer, ("ICPO"), for her initial assessment. The ICPO will report her views and any recommended course of action direct to the Department of Legal Affairs, and a decision will be taken as to how the matter will proceed. This procedure will normally be completed within 3 working days of receiving the initial information.

The ICPO may at her discretion decide to hold an early case conference meeting with such of the affected persons as the ICPO believes appropriate in the circumstances of the case. Regard will be given to the nature and seriousness of the allegations made.

2. Depending on the circumstances, the matter could then proceed in one or more of the following ways:

- (i) if the matter is being handled correctly by the club, organisation or affiliated body then advice may be given to proceed, but to keep the Legal Department updated as to progress.
- (ii) a decision may be made to refer matters to a relevant agency, either the Police or Social Services.
- (iii) a decision may be made to appoint an independent investigator to conduct an independent fact finding investigation.
- (iv) A decision to make a complaint under the ASA Judicial Laws.

3. All members who refer matters of a Child Protection nature must be aware that in certain circumstances the ASA's powers to take action may be compromised and the ASA would bring the following points to members attention:

- (i) In any circumstances giving cause for concern, there must be early communication to the Legal Department via any of the channels mentioned above.
- (ii) the ASA can not, normally, play any role in any Child Protection concerns involving the parent/child relationship. Such matters would be immediately referred where necessary to a relevant agency. Any action recommended to the ASA by the statutory body regarding the person's role in swimming would be acted upon. This may require direct action by the ASA or the relevant club.
- (iii) failure to communicate to the Department of Legal Affairs at the earliest possible stage MAY INHIBIT THE ABILITY OF THE ASA AND RELEVANT AGENCIES TO ACT. In addition, it could render the club or individual subject to disciplinary or other action by the ASA.

4. If the decision is made to appoint an investigator, then it would be standard practice for the investigator to make contact with the initial referrer/ complainant normally within 3 - 5 working days of initial contact with the Department of Legal Affairs. Preliminary contact will be made by telephone to confirm the appointment of an investigator and to make arrangements to meet with the referrer/complainant. The meeting and it's content will be reported back to the Department of Legal Affairs and the ICPO, and a strategy would be initiated. The likely course of action is as follows:

- (i) Serious allegations of abuse would immediately be referred by the Department to the Police and/or Social Services. If the police and/or Social Services are unable or unwilling to act the matter will be referred back to the ICPO/Department of Legal Affairs. A decision may then be made to instigate a full ASA investigation.
- (ii) Less serious allegations which the sport is competent to handle may be made the subject of a full investigation by the ASA independent investigator.

5. Dependent on the particular circumstances and without prejudicing the investigation the subject of the inquiry will, at the earliest appropriate opportunity, be informed of the complaint. The Subject will be given an indication of the nature of the complaint and possible outcomes from the investigation. If he so desires, the subject may provide a written response to the independent investigator, at this stage.

6. Both the complainant/referrer and subject would be offered a "friend" to assist them in explaining procedures and lead them through the normal practice of an investigation.

7. During the investigation process there will be regular communication, and as appropriate, meetings between the Department of Legal Affairs, ICPO and the investigator to discuss the progress of the investigation.

The investigator will send to the Department of Legal Affairs weekly reports detailing the action taken and a schedule for the following week. This will enable the Department of Legal Affairs to keep up to date as to the progress of the investigation.

8. The complainant/referrer and subject of the complaint will be updated periodically on the progress of the investigation. The initial update will normally be in writing, within 6 weeks of initial notification. Thereafter, not less than monthly intervals by either telephone contact or letter.

9. The highest possible standards of investigation will be used during the inquiry.

10. Before the subject of the complaint is interviewed by the investigator, a precis of facts and any matters of concern will be supplied to the individual. This will be an outline of the matters that will be put to them. They will not include statements, nor will they detail any questions that will be asked. The meeting may be tape recorded, if appropriate. (See paragraph 11 below)

11. The ASA reserves the right to record any interview conducted under its Child Protection Procedures. In any such case the interviewee will be provided with a copy of the tape recording.

12. After the investigator has met the subject of the complaint, a report will be supplied to the Legal Department, ICPO and the Independent Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Commissioner, in cases where an investigation has been called for by the Commissioner and/or the Chief Executive for their information. A meeting will be held to decide the best course of action. There are a number of possible outcomes, these include:

(i) Evidence of poor practice which indicates a lack of competence then the matter may be referred to our Education department with a view to guidance being given with regard to correct methods.

(ii) Where issues arise regarding the ethical aspects of behaviour then this would be in the first instance be dealt with as an educational issue with guidance and support to be given to the individual to encourage them to modify their behaviour in line with accepted practice.

(iii) Should this guidance be refused or whether there is clear subsequent indications that malpractice is continuing or taking place then this would result in a formal complaint being brought by the Association under the Judicial system.

(iv) The ASA will consider the actions of any member club or affiliate body and whether its internal management should be looked into and further support or guidance provided. However the Association reserves the right to give consideration as to whether the club and its officers should be made the subject of a formal complaint.

(v) A complaint under the ASA Judicial system.

(vi) The imposition of a suspension under the ASA Child Protection Laws.

13. At the conclusion of an investigation the subject of the complaint will normally be provided with a copy of any written report and be given the opportunity to comment on matters of accuracy and will be made aware that any such report (or a summary thereof) may be made available to such individuals and organisations as considered appropriate in all circumstances of the case. In any event the ASA may advise in writing an individual or appropriate organisation of the outcome of the investigation and any proposed action.

14. Any action to be taken will be dependent upon the particular circumstance of the case but may include any of the following:

(i) The bringing of a complaint under the ASA Judicial Laws.

(ii) The issue of a formal warning as to future conduct.

(iii) A requirement upon any person to undertake a period of training or re-training and to submit to monitoring and ongoing review.

15. It is important to note that at any stage during the course of an investigation, matters may be referred to a relevant agency (ie police or social services) which may result in the ASA investigation concluding or being temporarily placed on hold pending action by the police and/or Social Services.

Andy Gray
Head of Legal Affairs

Barbara Barrett
ASA Independent Child Protection Officer



The Role of the Independent Child Protection Officer for the ASA

The ASA has contracted support on a half time basis from an independent child protection officer (ICPO) to advise and deal with cases of a child protection nature.

All Welfare Officers can discuss issues of concern with the ICPO who will offer advice on how to deal with issues of child welfare. In certain situations the ICPO will become directly involved with the club and persons concerned.

The ICPO has a group of Swimline volunteers available to offer advice to all club members, officials and parents. All Swimline volunteers are experienced in dealing with issues of child welfare. When deemed appropriate by the ICPO and the Legal Affairs Department a Swimline volunteer can be used to act as a mediator in club disputes of a child welfare nature.

THE ROLE OF THE ASA WELFARE OFFICERS

The ASA has established a structure of welfare officers as follows. The role of each welfare officer is administrative to ensure proper procedures are followed in cases involving child welfare.

- 2 District welfare Officers in each ASA district
- 1 County welfare officer in each County
- 1 club welfare officer in each ASA club.

CLUB WELFARE OFFICER

- To have an understanding of child protection, and how best practice and the use of the criminal record bureau checks can help prevent child abuse. To assist the Amateur Swimming Association to safeguard children and young people in swimming and to implement the ASA child protection plan at club level.

- To do this by working to the ASA policy document and by consultation with the legal affairs department and the Independent child protection officer of the ASA.
- To ensure all persons who have significant contact with children in the club complete a CRB check when they join the club or when requested to if they are existing club personnel.
- To have details of the following contact numbers:
 - Swimline
 - The ASA Legal Affairs Department
 - The Local Social Services Department
 - The Local Child Protection Police Department
 - N.B. Child Protection Police and SSD have an out of hour's service
 - To have an understanding of the role of the police and social services in child protection and how to make referrals as necessary through the ASA Legal Affairs Department or directly in an emergency
- To ensure all club swimmers, parents, officials, teachers and coaches are aware of the child protection policy and procedure of the Club and the ASA and make available copies of relevant club and ASA documents.
- To be available to advise any person in the club who has a concern of a child protection nature of the appropriate procedure to follow to refer the concern appropriately. To maintain appropriate records of all concerns raised.
- To promote best practice within the club at all times and question issues arising from poor practice and ensure the club committee deals with them appropriately. If necessary refer concerns of poor practice to the ASA legal affairs department
- To promote and raise awareness of child protection training available and to ensure all persons undertake appropriate Child Protection training according to their role.

- To sit on the club management committee and ensure the issue of child welfare in the club is raised, monitored and reviewed appropriately. To advise the committee on actions required when child welfare issues are referred.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times by all members of the club committee over issues of a child protection nature.
- To promote anti-discriminatory practice within the swimming club.
- To have an awareness of equity issues and the ASA equity policy.
- To ensure Swimline notices are displayed at club training venues.
- To refer all concerns of a child protection nature to the ASA Legal Affairs Department for action/information.
- To ensure club policies and practices are reviewed every 3 years and revised appropriately.

COUNTY WELFARE OFFICER

- To have an understanding of child protection, and how best practice and the use of the criminal record bureau checks can help prevent child abuse. To have a working knowledge of the child protection policy and procedures of the Amateur Swimming Association and how to refer concerns appropriately as outlined in the procedure document.
- To have an understanding of the role of the police and social services in child protection and how to make referrals if necessary through the legal affairs department or directly in an emergency
- To have an awareness of equity issues and the ASA Equity policy.

- To promote anti-discriminatory practice within swimming clubs in the County and the County ASA.
- To support and advise the club welfare officer to refer a child protection concern appropriately.
- To become directly involved, or nominate another suitable member of the County in advising or supporting a club in matters of a child protection nature upon the express request of the Legal Affairs Department.
- To arrange annual meetings with club welfare officers for the purposes of sharing information and training, with the support of Swimline volunteers
- To disseminate information on child protection from the ASA to all club Welfare Officers.
- To refer all concerns of a child protection nature to the ASA.
- To assist clubs in their review of policies and practices as requested or nominate a person able to do so.
- To assist the ICPO by helping to inform on local resources.

DISTRICT WELFARE OFFICER

- To have an understanding of child protection and best practice to prevent child abuse. To have a working knowledge of the child protection policy and procedures of the Amateur Swimming Association and how to refer concerns appropriately as outlined in the procedure document.
- To have an understanding of child protection, and how best practice and the use of the criminal record bureau checks can help prevent child abuse. To have an understanding of the role of the police and social services in child protection and how to make referrals as necessary through the Legal Affairs Department or directly in an emergency.
- To have an awareness of equity issues and the ASA equity policy.
- To promote anti-discriminatory practice within the Counties and the District ASA.
- To support and advise the County Welfare Officer to ensure all concerns of a child protection nature as referred appropriately.
- To become directly involved in advising or supporting a county or club in a matter of a child protection nature upon the express request of the Legal Affairs Department.
- The District Welfare Officer will be linked to a Swimline volunteer to provide advice when required.

Equity

The ASA takes its responsibility to protect all children irrespective of their race, creed or specific needs. To ensure this it is essential that club policy reflects the ASA Equity policy outlined below,

All ASA clubs are required to take measures to ensure all the needs of children and young people to be protected from abuse are addressed by the club as follows:

- The club policy makes it clear all children have equal rights to protection.
- The club gives guidance on child protection through policy, procedure and where applicable training, to spot the signs of potential abuse recognising the needs of all groups in society.
- The club has a code of conduct that expects all members and adults concerned with the club to treat children with dignity, fairness, sensitivity and respect.
- The club has a code of conduct that makes it clear discrimination, offensive or violent behaviour is not acceptable and that complaints will be acted upon.
- That the club complaint procedure is open in nature, available in writing to all who request it and observe the following key principles:
 - o All parties are fairly treated
 - o The complainant has the opportunity to present their case
 - o The accused has the opportunity to respond or call.



PREVENTION

CLUB GUIDANCE

To minimise the risk of a child being abused, the club should:

- Follow ASA policy and guidelines on recruitment and ensure all personnel who have significant contact with children and young people undertake a CRB check (See Role of Club Welfare Officer and Appendix A). In the interim period all existing club members who have significant contact with children and young people are required, in addition, to complete the ASA self declaration (Purple) form.
- Publicise that the welfare officer is the appropriate person to whom concerns of a child protection nature should be raised, or in his or her absence a member of the club committee. The welfare officer will be able to give you the information on how to appropriately refer on the concern or will take responsibility for referring the concern on him or herself.
- Have a clear policy on taking children away for events based on the procedures laid down in "Safe sport away".
- Have a written club policy outlining the direct responsibilities for running and providing activities and operating standards to ensure children and young people are adequately supervised by adequately trained persons at all times.
- Have a clear written policy on Bullying.

GOOD PRACTICE

The club should have a code of good practice outlining what is acceptable behaviour and how to promote good practice. In addition it should also have a complaints policy which is available to all parents and club members and which outlines the disciplinary policy of the club and an anti bullying policy. To comply with the above those involved in the running of the club should:

- Ensure all members comply with the ASA code of ethics.
- Acknowledge they have a duty of care for swimmers until they leave the club venue or event with an appropriate adult. If a carer or parent persistently fails in their duty of care towards their child by failure to collect that child at the appropriate time the club should refer the matter appropriately.
- Avoid one to one situations with a swimmer except in an unavoidable emergency.
- Provide guidelines to all coaches, teachers, officials and helpers who have significant contact with children on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour towards children and young people at all times.
- Encourage all personnel involved with children directly in the club to undertake suitable training.
- Provide guidance of the expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children.
- Lay down disciplinary measures that are non-violent and do not involve humiliation of children and young persons. The disciplinary policy of the club should comply with the guidelines prepared by the ASA Judiciary to assist clubs in administering discipline within their own rules to ensure compliance with principles of natural justice.

- Promote a culture that ensures all children are listened to and respected as individuals.
- Ensure that mixed teams are appropriately accompanied by male and female coaches/teachers/officials.
- Not allow bullying, humiliating behaviour, racist or sexist comments within the club.
- Not allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility.
- If you are a coach or teacher follow the guidelines of your professional organisation. Never invite swimmers to your home for the day or overnight as in all circumstances your professional position must be maintained.
- Ascertain the child's and the parent's/carers views about manual support for children who need this kind of help, particularly when they are in the water.
- Make sure you have another adult accompanying you. If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, Get the child's consent if at all possible and certainly get consent from the parent/carers. Let the child know what you are doing and why.
- Ask parents/carers and/or nominated club officials to be responsible for children in changing rooms.
- Get teachers/coaches/club officials to work in pairs if classes or groups of children have to be supervised in the changing room.

RECRUITMENT

When recruiting club coaches and teachers whether paid or unpaid the following guidelines should be followed at all times.

- Anyone has the potential to abuse children, male/female, young/old.
- A potential abuser will choose to work where he has access to children.
- An employer who asks the right questions and does the right checks to prevent abuse will put off a potential abuser from pursuing the application.
- The same procedure in recruitment needs to be consistent whether the person is paid or unpaid, full or part time.
- A potential abuser will not appear "different" and may be the most helpful and kind person in the group. To be particularly helpful, kind and friendly is part of the process by which the abuser becomes a trusted and respected member of the group. This is known as the "grooming process".
- He/she may spend several months or years getting the trust of those around him to enable abuse to take place. In the case of sport some people will train within a club as a teacher or coach after having made themselves "invaluable" to the club committee, parents and swimmers.

ADVERTISING POSITIONS

When advertising for all staff to work directly with children you should:

- Note in the advert that you have a Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure all checks possible are made in advance of employment.

APPLICATION FORMS AND INTERVIEWS

Application forms and the subsequent interview should be designed to elicit information required to ascertain the persons suitability to work with children and should include the following:

- Past careers whether with children or not. (Any gaps in employment should be questioned at the interview.)
- Any criminal record – specify that all offences against children need to be disclosed fully and will disqualify them from the position of a coach within swimming.
- Whether the applicant has ever been refused employment with children and young people in the past.
- Whether known in any capacity to a Social Services Department. If yes, details should be asked for and if need be dealt with further in the interview.
- The name and address of two people (not relatives) as references including the last swimming club for whom they worked in the capacity for which they are applying. At least one reference must be able to comment upon the candidate's ability to work safely with children and young people.
- If the reference from the previous club raises any concerns the Welfare Officer should advise the ASA Legal Affairs Department.
- After a position has been offered the candidate should be asked to complete a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) application form. If they have a current CRB enhanced check the Welfare Officer should contact the ASA Legal Affairs Department to seek advice on whether a new check is required.

- Additionally the interviewer should question any concerning responses on the application form or reference regarding work with children and should satisfy themselves that the candidate is able and committed to fulfilling their role in a manner that is appropriate and acceptable under the ASA child protection guidelines.
- All appointed candidates should be informed they may need to undertake some child protection training in line with ASA guidelines.

REFERENCES

You should make every effort to verify any reference received from a club that has employed your candidate with children or who supports the person as being suitable to work with children.

TRANSPORTING SWIMMERS AND AWAY TRIPS

In any swimming club event that requires transporting swimmers or staying away over night, good practice should be followed at all times.

When a club is taking children away overnight or longer for training, competition or social events they must follow the guidelines in "Safe Sport Away", a copy of which has been sent to all clubs. If this publication has been mislaid please contact the Legal Affairs department to purchase a new one.

ASA TRAINING IN CHILD PROTECTION AWARENESS

The ASA is committed to providing child protection awareness training for all club welfare officers and other staff including teachers and coaches. Details of training will be notified to the club Welfare officer.

It is expected that all persons who have significant contact with children through swimming take part in available training.

PHOTOGRAPHY, MOBILE PHONES AND WEBSITES

It has come to the attention of the ASA that persons unconnected to the sport or club have been taking photos and videos of swimmers for illicit use. All clubs must follow the ASA guidelines on photography and use of photographic material.

The issue of Mobile phones with the ability to take photos is currently being debated by sports organisations and the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). The ASA believes it is not wise to ban young people from having mobile phones as they enable young people to remain in contact with parents and in an emergency to get appropriate assistance. The ASA is recommending that sounds be added to mobiles that will be easily recognisable when a photo is being taken.

The ASA's current policy on photography with a mobile phone is covered by our current guidelines and a parent or young person wishing to take such a photo should register in the photography book.

As it is currently possible for photographs to be taken with a mobile phone unknown to the person being photographed, the ASA requires all ASA clubs to advise all its members to be vigilant in changing rooms and other areas of the pool and to report

immediately to the pool management and the club any concern arising from the photographic use of mobile phones.

It has also been identified that some clubs are using "web sites" as a means of making their club known. The ASA has specific guidelines on use of swimmers' names and details on web sites and these policies must be followed at all times.

In competitions and galas, look out for people who don't appear to be relatives or friends of children who are swimming but, nevertheless, seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them. Report these incidents to the organisers or the pool management immediately.

If you're organising a swim meet arrange an accreditation system for parents/relatives and friends and bonafide press photographers

AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC/FILMING EQUIPMENT AT COMPETITIONS

Professional photographers/ filming / video operators wishing to record the event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. Ideally they should request this at least 5 working days before the event.

Students or amateur photographers / film / video operators wishing to record the event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their student or club registration card and a letter from their club / educational establishment outlining their motive for attending the event.

All other spectators wishing to use photographic / film / video equipment with a telescopic or zoom lens should register their intent with the promoter of the event.

Accreditation procedure: a system should be established whereby a record is made of the individual's name and address and club. Professionals are required to register prior to the event and their identification details also recorded. Ideally identification details should be checked with the issuing authority prior to the event. On registering, promoters of events should consider issuing an identification label on the day, which can serve to highlight those who have accreditation. Where regular events occur, the identifying label should be changed to prevent unofficial replication.

Public Information: the specific details concerning photographic / video and filming equipment registration should, where possible, be published prominently in event programmes and announced over the public address system prior to the start of the event. The recommended wording is:
In line with the recommendation in the ASA Child Protection Policy, the promoters of this event require that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with staff at the spectator entry desk before carrying out any such photography.

AT ALL TIMES CLUBS MUST ADHERE TO ASA LAW

with particular reference to:

- The code of ethics.
- The Guidance on child protection procedure.
- The guidance on CRB checks for all club coaches, teachers, helpers and officials.

AND ALL CLUBS SHOULD

- Ensure a swimline notice is on display and this file is available when requested.

ASA SWIMLINE

Who is the ASA SwimLine for?

This service is provided for anyone involved in swimming, including children and young people who believe that the welfare of a child is at risk. This could be neglect or abuse, bullying or fear of someone, or anything that is worrying you and you don't know who to discuss this with.

Who will take the calls and what happens?

When you ring you will hear a message. This will explain that if you wish to speak to someone urgently - or it would not be convenient or safe for someone to call you back - you can press a number to transfer you straight to the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline. This will be answered by trained and experienced counsellors who will advise you and will act to protect children. If there is no problem with someone calling back and you wish to speak to someone who understands swimming, you will need to leave your telephone number and a time convenient for one of our Swimline volunteers to ring. These people are members of swimming clubs who work in child welfare as a profession and have volunteered to help this ASA programme. If there is an issue which causes concern the ASA will act to protect the child.

Other things you should know

SwimLine calls are free and do not appear on itemised bills unless the call is made from a mobile phone. SwimLine does not use the 1471 code or any other call return or call display facilities. If you leave a message we aim to ring back during the next working day. If you phone over the weekend we will aim to contact you on Monday.

You can call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline direct on 0808 800 5000. This line is open for 24 hours each day and calls are free of charge. If you have a Textphone you can call the NSPCC Textphone on 0800 056 0566

Comments and suggestions on how we can improve this service are welcome.

Head of Legal Affairs
Amateur Swimming Association
Harold Fern House,
Derby Square,
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LE11 5AL

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR SWIMMING CLUBS

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can swim in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all swimmers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING club*. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer or any committee member.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding goggles/floats, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Swimmers who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

A club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All committee members, coaches and teachers, swimmers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All committee members, teaching and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All swimmers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Swimmers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or swimming equipment damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)

- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the committee or ring Swimline
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the ASA for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/is not appropriate a small panel (Made up from Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has, in their view, taken place the swimmer should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied swimmer can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both swimmers should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying swimmers under 18

1. The ASA should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a teacher or coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure.

Prevention:

- The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part.
- All swimmers and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
- The club welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively

This policy is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE.

KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. **KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300.**

The ASA has information from Kidscape, which is available to clubs on request.



Code of Ethics - April 2000

The Code of Ethics was written with specific reference to Teachers and Coaches. However, most aspects of this Code are also applicable to other people involved in the sport. Therefore all Members of the ASA, should be aware that this Code also applies to them. Please see the accompanying Note for Guidance which does not form part of this Code but which are intended to assist Members in its interpretation.

The ASA and ISTC acknowledge that a large part of this Code of Ethics has been derived from the code produced by the industry Lead Body for Sport and Recreation. The Code published below will remain operational unless and until notice of any changes and amendments is given by the ASA.

The British Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association (BSCTA) endorses this Code of Ethics.

Teaching/Coaching and Instructing

Even though the NVQ standards focus on and describe work functions, they are based on a number of accepted assumptions and values which underpin good practice in teaching/coaching and instructing. The British Institute of Sports Coaches has articulated these into a **Code of Ethics** much of which has been incorporated into the following Code of Ethics for Swimming Teachers/Coaches. Throughout the following Code the expression 'Teacher/Coach' whether used in the singular or plural shall include all teacher/coaches, assistants and other helpers whose activities are connected with the disciplines regulated by the Amateur Swimming Association (the ASA) and all members of the Institute of Swimming Teachers and Coaches (ISTC). Where the context of the code admits the expressions Teacher/Coach and Sports coach this may also include Officials and others involved in the sport of swimming in any capacity.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics (referred to throughout the remainder of the document as the Code) is to establish and maintain standards for Teachers/Coaches and to inform and protect members of the public using their services. Ethical standards comprise such values as integrity, responsibility, competence and confidentiality. Individuals who are members of the ASA/ISTC are deemed to have assented to the Code and as such recognise and adhere to the principles and responsibilities embodied in it.

The Code creates a framework within which Teachers/Coaches when engaged in sports coaching - in the fullest sense of the expression - should always work. The Code has been written as a series of guidelines rather than a set of instructions. However violations of the Code may result in complaints being made to a District Judicial Tribunal (DJT) and, under the ASA Judicial Laws in which case the relevant Tribunal in determining whether a conduct complained of has brought the sport into disrepute or amounts to a violation of the ASA Laws will consider the Code's provisions (and the accompanying Note for Guidance) when assessing the guilt of individuals against whom complaints have been made and/or the appropriate sanctions to apply.

THE CODE

Issues of responsibility

Teaching/Coaching is a deliberately undertaken responsibility, and sports Teacher/Coaches are responsible for the observation of the principles embodied in the Code of Ethics.

Humanity

Teacher/Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. Specifically, Teacher/Coaches must treat everyone equally within the context of their activity, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, disability or political persuasion.

Relationships

The good Teacher/Coach will be concerned primarily with the well being, health and future of the individual performer and only secondary with the optimisation of performance.

A key element in a teacher/coach relationship is the development of independence. Performers must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training, in competition, and in their social life. Teacher/Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their performers. This is particularly important when the coach and performer are of opposite sex and/or when the performer is a young person. The Teacher/Coach must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the performer, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety.

The relationship between coach and performer relies heavily on mutual trust and respect. In detail this means that the performer should be aware of the Teachers'/Coaches' qualifications and experience and must be given the opportunity to consent to or decline proposals for training and performance.

Commitment

Teachers/Coaches should clarify in advance with performers and/or employer the number of sessions, fees (if any) and method of payment. They should also explore with performers and/or employers the expectation of the outcome of teaching/coaching.

Teachers/Coaches have a responsibility to declare to their performers and/or employer and other current teaching/coaching commitments. Teachers/Coaches should also find out if any prospective client is currently receiving guidance from another Teacher/Coach. If so, that Teacher/Coach should be contacted to discuss the situation.

Teachers/Coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their performers and their obligation to their Governing Body or other organisation employing them must make explicit the nature of conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

Co-operation

Teachers/Coaches should communicate and co-operate with other sports and allied professions in the best interest of their performers. An Example of such contact would be the seeking of educational and career advice/counselling for young performers whose training impinges upon the performance of their studies.

Teachers/Coaches must communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their performers' medical and psychological problems.

Advertising

Advertising by sports Teacher/Coaches in respect of qualifications and/or services shall be accurate and professionally restrained.

Teachers/Coaches shall not display any affiliation with an organisation in a manner that falsely implies sponsorship or accreditation by that organisation.

Integrity

Teachers/Coaches should refrain from public criticism of fellow Teachers/Coaches. Differences of opinion should be dealt with on a personal basis and more-serious disputes should be referred to the Governing Body (ASA) or to the ISTC.

Teachers/Coaches must not encourage performers to violate the rules of their sport, and should actively seek to discourage such action. Furthermore, Teachers/Coaches should encourage performers to obey the spirit of such rules.

Teachers/Coaches must not compromise their performers by advocating measures which could be deemed to constitute seeking to gain an unfair advantage. Above all Teachers/Coaches must never advocate the use of prescribed drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.

Teachers/Coaches must treat opponents and officials with due respect both in victory and defeat and should encourage their performer to act in a similar manner.

Teachers/Coaches must accept responsibility for the conduct of their performers insofar as they will undertake to discourage inappropriate behaviour.

Confidentiality

Teachers/Coaches inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about performers in the course of a working relationship. Teacher/Coach and performer must reach agreement as to what is regarded as confidential information, i.e. no divulging to a third party without the express approval of the performer.

Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information, to persons who can be judged to have a 'right to know', relating to performers when relevant to the following:

- evaluation of the performer within the sport for competitive selection purposes and recommendations concerning performers for professional purposes;
- pursuit of disciplinary action involving performers within the sport;
- pursuit of disciplinary action by the ASA and/or ISTC involving fellow coaches in alleged breaches of this Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Abuse of Privilege

The Teacher/Coach is privileged, on occasion to have contact with performers and to travel and reside with performer in the course of teaching/coaching and competitive practice. Consequently, a Teacher/Coach must not attempt to exert undue influence over the performer in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.



Personal Standards

The Teacher/Coach must consistently display high personal standards and project a favourable image of their sport and of teaching/coaching - to performers, other Teachers/Coaches, officials, spectators, the media and the general public.

Personal appearance is a matter of individual taste but the sports Teacher/Coach has an obligation to project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency.

The Teacher/Coach should never smoke when teaching/coaching.

Teachers/Coaches should not drink alcohol so soon before teaching/coaching that their judgement may be impaired and the smell will still be on their breath when working with performers.

Safety

Teachers/Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the performers with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control.

All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe working environment.

The work done and the manner in which it is done should be in keeping with regular and approved practice within that sport.

The activity being undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the performers.

Performers should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.

Issues of Competence

Teachers/Coaches shall confine themselves to practice in those fields of sport in which they have been trained/educated, and which are recognised by the ASA and ISTC as being valid. Valid areas of expertise are those directly concerned with sports coaching. Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through both formal Teacher/Coach education courses and by experience at a level of competence acceptable for independent teaching/coaching practice.

Teachers/Coaches must be able to recognise and accept when to refer performers to other agencies. It is the responsibility of the Teacher/Coach as far as possible, to verify the competence and integrity of the person to whom they refer as performer.

Teachers/Coaches should regularly seek ways of increasing their professional development and self awareness.

Teachers/Coaches should welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues and be able to account for performers, employers, Governing Bodies and colleagues for their actions.

Teachers/Coaches have a responsibility to themselves and their performers to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities, and to know when their personal resources are so depleted as to make it necessary for them to seek help and/or withdraw from teaching/coaching whether temporarily or permanently.

Violations of this Code

An alleged breach of this Code shall be grounds for making a complaint under ASA Law. This is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with the actions of behaviour of clubs, bodies, organisations or individuals or with alleged unfair practice in connection with the sport and will be dealt with by a Judicial Tribunal.

The procedures for making a complaint are set out in the ASA Judicial Laws which are reproduced in the current edition of Laws of the Sport and the ASA Handbook. Any complaint relating to matter contained in this Code may be referred by the Independent Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Commissioner to be dealt with under other ASA procedures such as the ASA Protocols for Child Protection investigations. The terms of reference shall be set by the ASA. Dependent upon the outcome of the investigation such procedures the Commissioner may direct that the matter may not proceed as a complaint under the ASA judicial system. In such a situation the Commissioner may authorise such other action for instance the offering of guidance of education support or the issue of a warning as to future conduct, as may be appropriate in the circumstances. Thereafter dependant upon the outcome of such other action the Head of Legal Affairs may refer the matter back to the Commissioner for reconsideration as to whether the matter may proceed as a complaint.

Where the Commissioner decides to allow a complaint to proceed under the ASA Judicial Laws and Rules and where such complaint involves an allegation of serious misconduct liable to bring the sport into disrepute the Commissioner shall refer the complaint to the ASA to be prosecuted by a Disciplinary Officer.

Team Staff Appointments Policy

The policy of the Amateur Swimming Association and Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain is as follows:

Where one athlete aged below eighteen years of age is travelling they must be accompanied by one member of staff and parental consent obtained with regard to the identity of the staff member.

Where there are two or more athletes travelling they must be a minimum of two members of staff accompanying the athletes. Where the group of athletes are of mixed sex, there must be staff members of each sex.

NOTE FOR GUIDANCE

Under the ASA/ISTC Code of Ethics Honorary officials are entitled to expect the same respect and dignity of treatment as that to which employees are entitled. It follows from this that if an official is not performing satisfactorily in their role the official is entitled to be told, to be given an opportunity to respond to the criticism and the opportunity to improve.

Further, the Club may wish to consider establishing a mentoring system with senior figure(s) in the Club (possibly a Past President) offering guidance and support to officials and also encouraging the development of new talent to ensure successions within the Club's administration.

Conduct of Meetings

In particular any member wishing to make any direct overt-criticism of an official or other member of the club in a general meeting must advise the Chairman in good time to enable the Chairman to advise such person in advance of the meeting in order that he is able to prepare himself for such criticism.

Furthermore, as a separate obligation on the chairman of the meeting when an official or member is the subject of criticism the chairman must specifically afford such person the opportunity to respond to include if requested consideration of an adjournment to enable the person to collect their thoughts.

Any failure to follow these principles may give rise to a complaint to a DJT the ASA Judicial system under the ASA/ISTC Code of Ethics. It is not intended that the Code should be used to stifle democratic debate but ethical considerations and indeed common sense decency dictates that advance warning should be given to anyone who is to be the subject of criticism in a general meeting.

Bullying

The damage caused by bullying is frequently underestimated and can and does cause considerable distress and harm to children. It is important that all settings in which children are provided with services or activities promote a policy which is not tolerant of bullying. No swimmer will be able to reach their full potential if they feel they are the victims of bullying, by an adult or one of their peers. Tackling bullying must be the responsibility of everyone in the club.

Guidelines and strategies to support an anti-bullying policy

The changes of bullying happening in a club can be greatly reduced if there is a general atmosphere where members are valued and cared for. The following strategies which are embodied in the ASA Code of Ethics will support a club's attempt to prevent bullying:

- Encourage an ethos of mutual respect of difference throughout the club
- Give positive encouragement and promote the value of self and others
- Raise awareness of all to the possible cause and effect of bullying
- Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and is unacceptable, but that both victims and bullies will be given the necessary support
- Enable swimmers, coaches and teachers to understand that no form of bullying be it physical, verbal or emotional will be tolerated by the club or the Association
- Enable members to feel confident that their concerns will be listened to and taken seriously
- Publicise SwimLine and the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

Any club where bullying is evident but not addressed will be considered to be breaching the ASA Code of Ethics. Clubs should ensure that any bullying which involves children should be seen in the same light as other child protection concerns and the ASA Child Protection Procedures should be implemented if a serious concern is raised.

