



## Wimborne Wagtails Swimming Club for the Disabled



# **CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY**

We recognise our duty to work with other agencies in protecting children and vulnerable people from harm and abuse. Incidences of physical and emotional abuse occur across all socio-economic groups. Protection is a matter of great importance and we should play an important role in overseeing the welfare, health and safety of our members. We need to be well prepared to carry out our responsibilities for child and vulnerable person protection. It is necessary to have clear procedures in place to address situations where the Club Committee has concerns for a child or vulnerable person's welfare, or disclosures are made by a child or vulnerable person.

In order to promote the safety and protection of children and vulnerable people in the Club and to comply with current regulations, the Club Committee will refer any concerns about the well-being of its members to Social Services.

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Safeguarding is essentially a matter of prevention

1. All children and vulnerable people have the right to be protected from abuse.
2. The interests and safety of the child and vulnerable person are of prime concern at all times. In instances where there is a conflict of interest between the child and vulnerable person and anyone in loco parentis i.e. the Club Committee during Club activities, the interest of the child and vulnerable person must be paramount. The Children's Act, 1989, Section 3(5) states that: -

'A person who does not have parental responsibility for a particular child but has care of the child, may (subject to the provisions of the Act) do what is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare'.

3. A child or vulnerable person is considered to be abused, or at risk of abuse, when his/her basic needs are not being met, through avoidable acts or omissions. This includes neglect and physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
4. Once child or vulnerable person abuse is suspected, the aim should be to minimise damage to the child or vulnerable person and promote recovery.
5. All Clubs shall appoint a Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Officer who shall be appointed as a member of the Club Committee and be made known to all Club Members.

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

#### Defining abuse

Any person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act.

The abuser may be a member of the child's family or a stranger.

The abuser may be a child or adult.

Abuse can happen anywhere, for example; within the community or a person's own home.

#### Types of abuse

**Physical Abuse** may be hitting or shaking throwing burning or scalding drowning suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

**Emotional Abuse** is persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult causing severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development. This may include grooming.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child/young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities.

**Neglect** is persistent failure to meet the child or vulnerable adult's basic physical/or physiological.

**Self-Neglect** is a persistent failure to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings.

**Bullying** may be defined as deliberate action or hurtful behaviour by one or more people over a period of time.

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES - PREVENTION**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations including never allowing a situation to arise where they are on their own with a child or vulnerable adult, which could be misinterpreted or where an opportunity for abuse could arise.

### **- Practices to be encouraged**

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

Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)

Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity

Always putting the welfare of each child, young or vulnerable adult person first

Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play

Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly.

Additional awareness and care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the person is constantly moving. Young people & vulnerable adults (and where applicable their parents/carers) should always be consulted and their agreement gained.

Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

### **- Practices never to be sanctioned**

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

Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay and tickling games

Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching

Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun

Reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control

Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adults to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, that they can do for themselves

## **WHEN TO RAISE A CONCERN**

A concern should be raised when there is reason to believe a child or vulnerable adult may have been, is, or might be the subject of harm, abuse or neglect by any other person or persons. This may include anyone self-neglecting.

Urgent actions will be taken to safeguard anyone at risk of immediate harm if any of the following concerns are apparent:

- active abuse is witnessed, or
- an active disclosure is made by an adult or third party, or
- there is suspicion or fear that something is not right or there is evidence of possible abuse or neglect.

## **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR WITNESSED**

1. In every case of suspected child or vulnerable person abuse, the Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Officer will inform Social Services, and the Police making a clear statement of:

- the known facts
- any suspicions or allegations
- whether or not there has been any contact with the child or vulnerable person's family

Out of working hours, child and vulnerable person protection referrals will be received by the Emergency Duty Service, which may also be contacted via the Police.

2. An accurate record of all that has happened must be made, stating the facts of any injury, times, explanations and actions taken.
3. The Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Officer will confirm in writing to Social Services the actions that have been taken.
4. The Club should not notify or make enquiries of anyone involved when abuse is suspected, even if the child or vulnerable person has been taken to hospital. Social Services become responsible for whatever action is taken and will advise the Club so that the Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Officer is able to respond to parents appropriately.
5. If the suspected abuse is sexual, no attempt should be made to arrange or allow medical examination until discussions have taken place with Social Services. However; when a child or vulnerable person is in need of urgent medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse, the Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Officer (CPO) should take the child or vulnerable person to the Accident and Emergency Department of the nearest hospital, having first informed Social Services.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES MADE BY CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

Under no circumstances should a child or vulnerable person be questioned if they have disclosed information, which raises concerns. When information is offered in confidence, the recipient will need to display tact and sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The CPO will need to reassure the child or vulnerable person, retain his/her trust and explain the need for action, which will involve other adults being informed. If a child or vulnerable person discloses abuse, the child or vulnerable person should not have to repeat the information to different people.

The CPO who receives information from a child or vulnerable person alleging abuse must not ask questions or proffer alternative explanations for the child or vulnerable person's concerns. The child or vulnerable person's report must be listened to carefully and recorded accurately, in the language used by the child or vulnerable person, at the earliest opportunity following its receipt. Any discussions with the child or vulnerable person should adhere to the following basic principles:

Listen to the child or vulnerable person, rather than directly question him/her.

Never stop a child or vulnerable person who is recalling significant events.

Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and personnel present, as well as what was said.

Record all subsequent disclosures/events.

1. In the event of a child or vulnerable person disclosing, information which causes concern, the CPO should discuss this with the Social Services at the earliest opportunity. All such information should be treated as confidential.
2. Written concerns or reports of disclosures should be handed to the CPO and placed in a named, sealed envelope marked 'confidential'.
3. The CPO will ensure that all information relating to Child and Vulnerable Person Protection is retained in a secure filing system. Such information will not be released to unauthorised persons.

Any concerns about child or vulnerable adult welfare should be referred to Ros Barton the Club's Safeguarding Officer.

Policy reviewed:

September 2016