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- Treasurer : Trevor Haigh
- Hon Sec : Lucy Ellis
- Membership Sec : Trevor Haigh

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## SCISSETT YOUTH ASC

Affiliated to the STA and RLSS

### Child Protection Policy

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### Child Protection Policy

#### 1. Introduction

Everyone who participates in Scissett Youth Amateur Swimming Club ("SYASC") is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. SYASC has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children/young people, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

SYASC is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children/young people from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children/young people and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children/young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of SYASC and to allow coaches and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

#### 1.1 Policy Statement

SYASC is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children/young people, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in swimming in a fun and safe environment
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children/young people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All SYASC coaches and volunteers who work with children/young people will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and children/young people is essential for the protection of children/young people



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### 1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Welfare Officer should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

## 2 Promoting good practice

### 2.1 Introduction

To provide children/young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in swimming everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct.

It is not always possible to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of participants in swimming to make judgements about whether abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/young person, as explained in section 4

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### 2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Make the experience of swimming fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- Treat all children/young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the child/young person first, before winning
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance (e.g. it is not appropriate for coaches and volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child/young person)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children/young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child/young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child/young person's consent has been given.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible e.g. when children/young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs
- Request written parental consent if coaches and/or volunteers are required to transport children/young people in their cars
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children/young people



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- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the child/young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding pushing them against their will.
- Secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs along with details of any treatment given using the KAL Health and Safety procedures

### 2.3 Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/young people away from others
- Taking children/young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking children/young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a child/young person
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children/young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in fun
- Reducing a child/young person to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child/young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that the child/young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid a certain situation e.g. transporting a child/young person in your car, the task should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the child/young person involved

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child/young person, the child/young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child/young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents/carers should also be informed of the incident.

## 3. Defining Child Abuse

### 3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment, lack of care or discrimination that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child/young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.



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There are five main types of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, discriminatory abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the child/young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a child/young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the child/young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a child/young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Children/Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### 3.2 Types of abuse

**Physical abuse:** is where a child/young person is injured deliberately e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating and/or drowning. Giving children/young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute abuse.

This category of abuse can also include where a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness or deliberately causes ill health in a child/young person they are looking after.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child/young person's immature and growing body.

**Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/young person that adversely affects their wellbeing or development. It may involve telling a child/young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children/young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a child/young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child/young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children/young people, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the child/young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

**Sexual abuse:** is the involvement of the child/young person in sexual activities which they do not want or truly understand or to which they are unable to give valid or effective consent. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children/young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.



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In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with children/young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

**Discriminatory abuse:** occurs where a child/young person is treated unfairly because something about them is different. This can include unfair or less favourable treatment due to a person's race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexuality, appearance or cultural background.

**Neglect:** is the failure to meet the child/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in damage or impairment of the child/young person's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; failing to protect from physical harm or danger; or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the child/young person safe, or exposes them to undue cold or heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

**Bullying** may come from another child/young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are four main types of bullying.

It may be (1) physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping; (2) verbal e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages; (3) emotional e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group; or (4) sexual e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the child/young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

### 3.3 Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child/young person is being abused may include one or more of the following

Signs of possible physical abuse include:

- any injury which is not fully explained or inconsistent with the account given
- unexplained bruises or welts on face, lips, mouth, body, arms, back, buttocks, thighs
- bite marks bruises in various stages of healing
- clusters of bruises forming regular patterns, reflecting the shape of an object or fingers
- unexplained burns, especially on soles of feet, palms and back; immersion burns, rope marks, electrical appliance or carpet burns
- cigarette burns or scalds
- unexplained lacerations or abrasions to mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitalia



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- avoidance of physical contact
- restriction of freedom of movement.

Signs of possible emotional abuse include:

- delayed physical or emotional development or sudden speech disorders
- compulsive nervous behaviour, e.g. Highly anxious or obsessive behaviour
- excessive deference, need for approval, attention or affection
- reluctance to have parents/carers contacted
- fear in the eyes, avoiding looking at individuals, flinching on approach
- ambivalence towards individuals
- low self-esteem
- unexplained fear or defensiveness
- threatening or aggressive behaviour.

Signs of possible sexual abuse include:

- stomach pains or discomfort when walking or sitting down
- bruising or other injuries on areas of the body normally covered – for this reason, they may only be noticed during activities such as swimming
- overtly sexual behaviour, often inappropriate to age or development
- torn or stained underwear
- pain or itching, bruises or bleeding in genital area
- significant change in sexual behaviour, language or outlook
- pregnancy in a person who lacks capacity or who is very young
- self-inflicted injury or attempted suicide.

Signs of possible discriminatory abuse include:

- harassment
- unwelcome comments or gestures
- offensive materials or graffiti
- verbal abuse or statements which are intended as insults
- threatening or obscene behaviour
- preventing contact with particular individuals
- jokes of a derogatory nature
- bullying, offensive language or violence
- excluding or treating differently.

Signs of possible neglect include:



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- poor health
- being constantly hungry or thirsty
- loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- being tired all the time
- lack of personal care; inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- dressed inappropriately for the weather, or unkempt, dirty or smelly
- untreated medical conditions
- injuries that have not been treated or have been treated inadequately
- lack of respect for privacy or dignity.

Signs of bullying include

- Behavioural change such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or competitions
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above lists are not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is not the responsibility of those involved in SYASC to decide that child abuse is occurring. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

### 3.4 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 children/young people. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the club welfare officer.

All parents and performers should be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid.

## 4. Responding to suspicions and allegations

### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in SYASC to decide whether child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make enquiries and take necessary action to protect the child/young person. This applies both to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within SYASC and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.



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### 4.2 Receiving evidence of possible abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it is happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the child/young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child/young person says or indicates that they are being abused you should:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the child/young person
- Reassure the child/young person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Listen to the child/young person, showing that you are taking them seriously
- Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child/young person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- Inform the child/young person that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child/young person this is to help stop the abuse continuing
- Safety of the child/young person is paramount. If the child/young person needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- Record all information
- Report the information to the welfare officer

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC

- telephone 0808 800 5000
- text 88858
- email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- online [nspcc.org.uk/reportconcern](http://nspcc.org.uk/reportconcern)

### 4.3 Recording information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following

- The child/young person's name, age and date of birth
- The child/young person's home address and telephone number
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents



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- The child/young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries/bruising occurred
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record detail

#### 4.4 Reporting the concern

All suspicions and allegations must be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

SYASC expects its coaches and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/young person immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the nominated club welfare officer is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

A sample incident report form can be found at Appendix 1. Where there is a complaint against a coach or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation

- Criminal – in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection – in which case the social services and possibly the police will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case SYASC will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document, SYASC are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under the Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child/young person and family (where appropriate) gathering information from other people who know the child/young person and making enquiries jointly with the police

If there is any doubt you must report the incident. It may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

Any suspicion that a child/young person has been abused by a coach or volunteer should be reported to SYASC who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child/young person in question and any other child/young person who may be at risk. This will include the following

- SYASC will refer the matter to the social services department



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- The parent/carer of the child/young person will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- The chair person of SYASC should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any disciplinary proceedings
- The club welfare officer should also notify the Swimming Teachers Association
- If the club welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation report must be made to the committee chair who will refer the matter to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children/young people in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children

#### 4.5 Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment e.g. a parent/carer

- Report your concerns to the club welfare officer
- If the club welfare officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately
- Social services and the club welfare officer will decide how to inform the parent/carer
- The club welfare officer should also report the incident to SYASC's committee. The committee should ascertain whether the person/s involved in the incident play a role in SYASC and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis.

#### 4.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be maintained 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 welfare officer
- The parent/carer of the child/young person
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- Swimming Teachers Association club welfare officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child/young person)

Seek social services' advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

#### 4.7 Internal inquiries and suspension

The SYASC welfare officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending police and social services inquiries



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Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the SYASC disciplinary committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a coach or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled; this may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases SYASC disciplinary committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/young person should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## 5. Recruiting and selecting personnel

### 5.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children/young people. This applies equally to all coaches and volunteers with the club. To take the best steps possible to prevent unsuitable people from working with children/young people, the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

### 5.2 Controlling access to children

- All coaches and volunteers should complete a Volunteer Agreement Form
- The applicant must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check. (evidence of identity will be checked as part of this process). For Poolside volunteers, the DBS must be renewed every 3 years.

### 5.3 Induction

All coaches and volunteers will be required to undertake an induction which;

- Should check that the Volunteer Agreement Form has been completed and all policies have been read and understood
- Should substantiate any qualifications
- Should check that safeguarding training has been completed
- Should clarify the requirements and responsibilities of the role Explain Child protection procedures and any training needs identified.

### 5.4 Training

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

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed 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 and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child/young person
- Work safely and effectively with children/young people

SYASC requires



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- All volunteers who have access to children/young people to undergo a DBS check and ensure this is renewed every 3 years.
- All coaches and volunteers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All coaches and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of another person towards a child/young person

### Declaration

On behalf of SYASC we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to

Name

Name

Welfare Officer

Head Coach

Date

Date