

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Introduction

LTC North East Ltd is totally committed to safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable adults. As part of this we have developed a working safeguarding policy which all members of staff must agree to adhere to.

This document covers both our legal and moral obligations towards protecting the most vulnerable members of our society and to help make our sessions safer to all who attend.

**Throughout this document a lot is mentioned of children being at risk. Please note however that wherever this is mentioned adults can also be vulnerable. This is especially true of adults who may have specific learning disabilities or be disabled in any way.**

## Background

Abuse and poor practice can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. Everyone working in swimming either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations have a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and promoting good practice.

## Principles

- The child's welfare is paramount
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously; and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

Working in partnership with children and their parents / guardians is essential for the protection of the children. LTC North East Ltd recognises the statutory responsibility of the social services department to ensure the welfare of children. We are committed to working together with the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB) and to complying with its procedures.

In this document we define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age and may be living independently does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection. It is also important to note that any in at the deep end staff who have not yet reached 18 years of age will also be covered by this policy.

## **Important Contacts**

Designated Safeguarding Officer – Claire Tomlinson 07795 566 464

Designated Safeguarding Deputy – Mike Perry 07894 444 362

### **Local Authority Services;**

City of Sunderland 0191 566 1500 (day) 0191 528 9110 (evening)

Durham County Council 03000 26 7979 (24hs/7 days)

**Police Safeguarding Team** 101 (ask for Durham Police, then ask for Safeguarding) (8am to 8pm only 7 days)

### **Other Important Contacts;**

Amateur Swimming Association  
Legal Affairs Department  
Harold Fern House  
Derby Square  
Loughborough  
LE11 5AL  
01509 221350

Swimming Teachers Association  
Child Protection Officer  
07817 640 189  
[childprotection@sta.co.uk](mailto:childprotection@sta.co.uk)

Royal Lifesaving Society  
Red Hill House  
227 London Road  
Worcester  
WR5 2JG  
0300 323 0096 (then option 2)

Swimline 0808 100 4001

Safeguarding In Sport Unit  
0116 234 7278  
[cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

NSPCC Safeguarding Line Tel: 0808 800 5000

Kidscape Tel: 020 730 3300

## Effects of Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging, that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood.

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

## The Voice of the Child (or Vulnerable Adult)

If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell someone
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who is very young, has a speech disability and / or differences in language
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Any questions used should be open ended (when did it happen? Where did it happen? What happened? Etc.)
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Make a full record of what had been said, heard and / or seen as soon as possible.

## Definition of Abuse

The NSPCC categorise the following as the types of abuse:

**Bullying and cyber bullying:** Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

**Child trafficking:** children are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for CSE, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal activity such as pickpocketing and begging.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE):** is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

**Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse. Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

**Emotional Abuse:** This 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.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM):** is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

**Grooming:** is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse.

**Harmful sexual behaviour** includes using sexually explicit words and phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence and threats and full penetrative sex with other children and adults. Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others. Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older (usually more than 2 years) or if one is pre-pubescent and the other is. Younger children, however, can abuse an older child particularly if they have power over them, for example if the older child is disabled.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development and can include failing to provide shelter, food, clothing, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs. A child can also suffer neglect if a parent/guardian does not seek medical aid or prevent injury where possible. In a sporting context it can also mean failing to ensure they are safe, or exposing them to harm.

**Online abuse:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers. Online abuse may be part of abuse that is taking place in the real world (for example bullying or grooming). Or it may be that the abuse only happens online (for example persuading children to take part in sexual activity online).

Children can feel like there is no escape from online abuse – abusers can contact them at any time of the day or night, the abuse can come into safe places like their bedrooms, and images and videos can be stored and shared with other people.

**Physical Abuse:** this 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 their 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.

### **Possible indicators that somebody may be being abused**

There are many indicators that a child may be suffering from abuse. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- Nervousness, watchfulness
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Inappropriate sexual language
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Scavenging, compulsive stealing
- Persistent fatigue
- Running away
- Inappropriate photos sent by email or phone text
- Unexplained bruising or marks, or, marks that are in places difficult to hurt (for example the back of the legs).

Further information on the signs of abuse can be found at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Good Practice in Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is as much about protecting children as it is protecting adults. It is important that staff avoid any potentially compromising circumstances or situations for allegations / misunderstandings and is an important part of working safely.

The following should help staff work as safely as possible with all children while not compromising our ability to do our job effectively.

When you assess the level of supervision needed at a particular time you should take into account the level of risk involved by considering the:

- Activity being carried out by the children
- Adult/child ratio laid down in the relevant guidance (RLSS policies / Safe Supervision book etc)
- Other activities going on at the same time
- Stage of development of the children concerned
- Constraints and opportunities offered by the setting
- Experience of the adults concerned
- Children's behaviour at the time
- Feelings and wellbeing of the adults at the time
- Appropriate staff ratios.

Where possible speak to the parents of all children before physically helping or touching any child. This can usually be done during the first week of term and is especially important with beginner and new swimmers or those with a disability. Remember, the parents and children do not know you and your own teaching methods and so what you, and other parents / children, class as a standard practice/drill your new parents may not. Older children can give their own consent over physical contact but it is important to remember you should request this before touching them and where possible keep a barrier in between you. Even when consent has been gained from parents it is still important to ask a younger child consent to touch them unless doing so puts them in danger (hitting head etc. but this should be explained to the child afterwards as to why you have done so).

Physical contact should only be used as a last resort or where doing so could prevent injury to a child (for example during diving training). Where possible try to only touch neutral areas where other people can see (shoulder blades etc.) and in front of others – never face away from the pool and touch a child as it could look very suspicious from the other side of the pool. If necessary stand with the child at a 90 degree angle to the pool so you can both be seen side on from the other side of the pool.

### **Behaviours and attitudes**

- Be aware of individual needs and personalities, and never make any belittling or discouraging remarks
- Never ignore or trivialise bullying
- Avoid inappropriate language and subject matter. Be careful not to do or say anything that could be misunderstood or could be interpreted as “innuendo”
- Be aware of the impact of behaviour and opinions of others (helpers, other volunteers/staff, parents, etc.). The opinions, prejudices, actions and comments of adults, particularly those in authority, can easily influence children
- The in at the deep end environment should allow children to feel comfortable in developing and learning at their own speed. The atmosphere within the group should contribute to the growth of every child’s self-esteem through recognition of both effort and achievement. Children should feel that they can share their feelings, fears and problems
- Avoid showing favouritism or singling individuals out in any way.

### **Photography, mobile phones and websites**

The current company policy is that mobile phones and cameras must not be used within the pool hall or changing rooms except during explicit sessions where consent is obtained before photography commences. Photography will NEVER take place in a changing room. This is for the safety of our swimmers, learners, parents and employees. We also require that employees / course tutors do not use mobile phones while in the pool hall unless in an emergency and request that should they need to, where ever possible move outside of the pool hall and changing rooms. We do, however, recognise that on occasions staff may wish to use stop watches during sessions and smartphones provide a method for this. It is preferable, however, that a stopwatch is used, however, where impractical any cameras should be covered on mobile phones and the phone pointed away from swimmers while in use.

Staff should actively monitor the use of cameras and recording devices during sessions.

Staff and customers should also be aware that due to the ever changing technological world we live in cameras can come in all sorts of devices now and although we do not list all devices here they are covered by the same rules and regulations as above.

### **Staff who are under the age of 18**

As already explained, everybody under the age of 18 is regarded as a child. This is irrespective of their social standing, job or academic ability. It is important to remember that, as a company however, we do not employ staff under the age of 18.

Where young adults are employed it is necessary for staff to use discretion in regards to normal Safeguarding procedures (not sharing phone numbers, etc.). However, staff must be aware that disclosures or concerns must be reported in the same way as any other disclosure.

### **Changing Facilities**

Recognised good practice states that children of the opposite sex to the changing room which they are using must be aged 8 or under. Any child aged 9 or older must use the correct changing room. At Castle View if they wish to use the Family Changing areas situated in between both the male and female changing rooms they must walk through the correct changing room.

In order to safeguard all adults during swimming lessons, parents of the opposite gender must not enter, under any circumstances, the changing rooms. Should you need to check upon a child in the changing rooms please speak to a member of staff.

We ask that parents be vigilant in regards to this for all our users' safety. Should you have any concerns about this please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

### **Reporting Concerns.**

In the first instance any concerns should be reported to the designated safeguarding officer whose contact details are contained earlier in this document. This should be in the first instance via phone and followed up with a detailed and accurate written report of the encounter.

Once the designated safeguarding officer has received the report they will decide how to proceed. This may involve informing the police, local social services departments, the NSPCC or continued monitoring.

It should be noted that any person can raise a concern and **LTC North East Ltd** will ensure that concerns are listened to and acted on as appropriate, taking guidance from the relevant governing bodies, safeguarding authorities and the Police.

## **Resources and Staff Training**

**LTC North East Ltd** recognises the need for staff to be aware of safeguarding issues and also that **LTC North East Ltd** has an obligation to ensure that all staff, learners and event participants are appropriately monitored.

To ensure compliance with “relevant and responsible” checks – all course tutors (and in the event of swimming teacher courses – teachers and lifeguards) need to provide a relevant and up to date record from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Course tutors will be given a link to the following documents to ensure up to date knowledge;

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education);

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/830121/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_060919.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830121/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_060919.pdf)

Working Together to Safeguard Children;

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779401/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard-Children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf)

Course tutors and assistants are required read through Chapter 1 of the first document especially as this gives helpful information to ensure knowledge remains current.

## **Acknowledgements**

This policy is based upon the ASA Wave Power policy which can be viewed and downloaded from [www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org), the STA Swimming Teaching Code of Practice which can be downloaded from [www.sta.co.uk](http://www.sta.co.uk) and the NSPCC ([www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)).

It also includes information gathered from:

St. John Ambulance’s 2007 policy for “Working Safely With Young People”

Durham LEA’s “Safeguarding Policy for Schools”

Lew’s Castle College “Safeguarding Statement”

Fairbridge’s “Safeguarding Policy” (2009)