

(Updated 14/05/18)

Introduction

At the Hippo Swim Club;

- The welfare of the children and vulnerable adults and other adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults and other adults whatever culture gender language racial origin religious beliefs and or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff working for Hippo Swim Club have a responsibility to report their concerns to their immediate superior or the appropriate designated child protection officer
- Staff are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred
- **Promoting good practice**
- Child abuse particularly sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such situations. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take
- Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children and vulnerable adults in order to harm them.
- A swimming teacher will have regular contact with children and vulnerable adults and is an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.
- When a child or vulnerable adult enrolls in swimming lessons with Hippo Swim Club having been subjected to abuse outside the environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the Childs or vulnerable adults self-esteem. In such instances Hippo Swim Club staff must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child or vulnerable adult receives the required support.

Good practice guidelines

- All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children and vulnerable adult's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets)
- Treating all children and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child and young person first, before awarding certificates or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with pupils (e.g. It is not appropriate for staff or management to have an intimate relationship with a child or vulnerable adult or to go into a locked room with them).
- Building a balanced relationship based on mutual trust with teaching staff and parents or carers to share in the decision making process.
- Making the lessons fun, enjoyable and promoting fare play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual /physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a pupil is constantly moving children and vulnerable adults and their parents/carers should always be consulted and there agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in aquatic disciplines.
- Involving parents/carers whenever possible. It is the parent/carer's responsibility for their children and vulnerable adults in the changing rooms and toilets. Staff are not permitted to leave poolside to assist.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs of children and vulnerable adults and not pushing them beyond their capabilities when testing for badges and awards. They should be achieved stress free.
- Getting permission from the parents/carers in writing to act in loco, if the need arises to administer first aid and or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs along with details of any treatment given
- Treating all children and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity.
- Building a balanced relationship based on mutual trust with teaching staff and parents or carers to share in the decision making process.
- Making the lessons fun, enjoyable and promoting fare play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual /physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a pupil is constantly moving children and vulnerable adults and their parents/carers should always be consulted and there agreement gained.

Incidents that must be reported and recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to your immediate superior or the appropriate designated person child protection officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents/carers of the child or vulnerable adult are informed.

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

The use of photographic or filming equipment at our swimming venues

There is evidence that some people have used swimming and other activities involving children to take inappropriate photographs and video footage children and vulnerable adults in vulnerable positions. All staff is instructed to be vigilant and report any such activity to your immediate superior or the appropriate designated person. **As we are a swim school and we don't have events such as swimming galas we do not allow any photography at any of our venues.**

Recruitment and training of staff

The Hippo Swim Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to harm or abuse children and vulnerable adults in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in our swim school.

- All staff who apply for a position within Hippo Swim Club shall have current DBS checks.
- To provide references from other employers
- Provide two forms of I.D. such as a passport or driving licence with a photograph
- They should have up to date qualifications.
- If they have not already done so to go on a child protection course
- Relevant personnel to go on a life-saving course

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for the Hippo Swim Club to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concern by reporting these to immediate superior or designated person child protection officer or the appropriate authorities.

The Hippo Swim Club will ensure that all staff will be fully supported and protect anyone who in good faith reports his or her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

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

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

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Actions if there are concerns

1 Concerns about poor practice

- If the allegation is clearly about poor practice the child protection officer or designated person will deal with it as misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by The Hippo Swim Club child protection officer, or the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the A S A's officer who will decide how to deal with the allegations and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2 Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by a member of staff should be reported to your immediate superior and the to the appropriate person or the child protection officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other child or vulnerable adult who may be at risk.
- The appropriate person or the child protection officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child or vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Hippo Swim Club's appropriate person the child protection officer should notify the A S A's child officer who in turn will inform the ASA's child protection officer who will deal with any media enquires.
- If Hippo Swim Club's appropriate person the child protection officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the

- appropriate manager or in his/ her absence the ASA's child protection officer who will refer the allegation to the social services

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that Confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. The parents/carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused.

- The person making the allegation.
- Social services /Police
- Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or the parents of the alleged abuser if he/she is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate and regularly updated, relevant and secure.)

Internal Enquiries and suspensions

- The Hippo Swim Club's Child protection officer (Designated person) will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children and vulnerable adult's parents/carers and members of staff may need .Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available From the British Association for counselling, 1 Regent Place Rugby CV21 2PJ Tel: 01788 550 899 Fax 01788 562 189 e-mail bac@bacp.co.uk Internet web site <http://www.bacp.co.uk>

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still working with children or vulnerable adults).

Where such an allegation is made The Hippo Swim Club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children or vulnerable adults either who attend swimming lessons with Hippo Swim Club or children or vulnerable who don't attend swimming lessons with Hippo Swim Club may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has previous criminal convictions for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children and vulnerable adults. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

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

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying within Hippo Swim Club

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children and vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge of the session or someone else in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise not to tell someone else.

- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Child protection officer (Designated person) or the managers or the directors (wherever is occurring).

Action towards the bully (ies):

- Talk with the bully (ies) explains the situation and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on a return of borrowed items and that the bully (ies) compensates the victim(s).
- Provide support for the victim's teacher.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change their behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all appropriate staff of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low-level incidents will be dealt with at the time by the teaching staff. However if the bullying is severe (e.g.) a serious assault or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the Child protection officer (Designated person) as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above
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3 Concerns outside the environment of The Hippo Swim Club (e.g.) a parent or carer

- Report your concerns to the Child protection officer (Designated person) who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible **See 4 below for information social services or the police will need**
- If Child protection officer (Designated person) Elaine Langley is not available the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact the social services or the police immediately
- The Child protection officer (Designated person) Elaine Langley should report the incident to The ASA. The ASA should ascertain whether or not the person /s involved in the incident have a position with The Hippo Swim Club and act accordingly.

- Social services and the Child protection officer (Designated person) will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentially on a **need to know** basis only.
- See 4 below regarding information needed for social services.

4 Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

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

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

Any concerns should be reported to The Hippo Swim Club's Child protection officer (Designated person) Elaine Langley 01628476109 email elaine@hipposwimclub.co.uk

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with Elaine you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child protection help line on 0800 800 5000 or Child line on 0800 1111.

