



Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

The Tadpoles Swimming Club recognises its legal 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 Clubs should play an important role in overseeing the welfare, health and safety of members. Clubs need to be well prepared to carry out their 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.

1. General Principles

- a. All children and vulnerable people have the right to be protected from abuse.
- b. 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:-
- c. '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'.
- d. 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.
- e. Once child or vulnerable person abuse is suspected, the aim should be to minimise damage to the child or vulnerable person and promote recovery.



- f. The Tadpoles Swimming Club shall appoint a Club Protection Officer (CPO), who shall be appointed as a member of the Club Committee and be made known to all Club Members.
- g. The Committee of Tadpoles Swimming Club will review this policy every three years.

2. Club Protection Officer

- a. The reason for having a Club Protection Officer is to advise, inform and consult with the Committee and members in order to progress and improve protection of children and vulnerable persons within Tadpoles Swimming Club.
- b. The person appointed to this role should be committed to progressing protection of children and vulnerable persons within Tadpoles Swimming Club in a positive manner.
- c. The Club Protection Officer will:
 - i. Monitor and report on Tadpoles Swimming Club's progress of protection of children and vulnerable persons, development and practice and make an annual report to the Committee of Tadpoles Swimming Club.
 - ii. Ensure members awareness and understanding of protection of children and vulnerable persons issues and practice within Tadpoles Swimming Club.
 - iii. Advise and consult with Tadpoles Swimming Club's Committee on protection of children and vulnerable persons to recommend and discuss courses of action.
 - iv. Know or have access to appropriate information, legislation, policy, etc. for the purposes of carrying out their role.
 - v. Identify and advise on any Tadpoles Swimming Club protection of children and vulnerable persons training needs and provision.
- d. The Tadpoles Swimming Club will encourage and pay the necessary expenses for the Club Protection Officer to attend meetings and training courses relevant to the role.



3. Responsibility

- a. The Committee of Tadpoles Swimming Club has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all members have a duty as part of their involvement with Tadpoles Swimming Club to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.
- b. Tadpoles Swimming Club Committee will bring to the attention of all members the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

4. Procedures to be followed if abuse is suspected

- a. In every case of suspected child or vulnerable person abuse, the Club Protection Officer will inform Social Services, and the Police making a clear statement of:
 - i. The known facts
 - ii. Any suspicions or allegations
 - iii. Whether or not there has been any contact with the child or vulnerable person's family or carer
- b. 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.
- c. An accurate record of all that has happened must be made, stating the facts of any injury, times, explanations and actions taken.
- d. The Club Protection Officer will confirm in writing to Social Services the actions that have been taken.
- e. 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 Club Protection Officer is able to respond to parents appropriately.
- f. 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 Club Protection Officer or a nominated deputy should take the child or vulnerable person to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department, having first informed Social Services.



5. Guidelines for dealing with disclosures children or vulnerable persons

- a. 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.
- b. Whoever 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:
 - c. Listen to the child or vulnerable person, rather than directly question him/her.
 - d. Never stop a child or vulnerable person who is recalling significant events.
 - e. Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and personnel present, as well as what was said.
 - f. Record all subsequent disclosures/events.
 - g. In the event of a child or vulnerable person disclosing, information which causes concern, the Club Protection Officer should discuss this with the Social Services at the earliest opportunity. All such information should be treated as confidential.
 - h. Written concerns or reports of disclosures should be handed to the CPO and placed in a named, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'.
 - i. 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.

6. The current Club Protection Officer is Jenny Leigh.