



Oxford and Witney Artistic Swimming Club

Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing allows individuals to raise genuine concerns about any potential incident of poor practice, wrongdoing, illegal or unethical conduct by individuals without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Concerns of this nature should be raised under the Swim England Whistleblowing Policy via the link <https://www.swimming.org/library/documents/6011/download>

This Swim England Policy applies to all individuals volunteering or participating at all levels within Swim England and the Sports, including but not limited to athletes, contractors, coaches, officials, and volunteers.

Swim England believes it is necessary to develop a culture in all organisations and counties, regionally and nationally, where concerned individuals can raise concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

Swim England is committed to:

- 1 Developing a culture that is safe.
- 2 Encouraging a culture of openness.
- 3 Protecting all members.
- 4 Upholding the reputation of the organisation.
- 5 Maintaining our sport and the public's confidence.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity.
- miscarriages of justice.
- danger to health and safety.
- damage to the environment.
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements.
- bribery.
- financial fraud or mismanagement.
- negligence.
- breach of internal policies and procedures (including our Code of Conduct).
- conduct likely to damage our reputation.
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- doping incident.
- equality incident.

Reasons for whistleblowing



Every member, member's parent(s)/guardian(s), employee and volunteer in Swim England has a responsibility to raise concerns about potential poor practice and abuse/ unacceptable behaviour in order to:

- Prevent the problem increasing.
- Protect or reduce the risk to others.
- Avoid becoming a party to the concern by lack of appropriate action.

Making a disclosure

You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling that it is none of your business or that it is only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, your employer or to Swim England. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

Swim England takes any form of misconduct seriously and this policy enables any individual with genuine concerns to raise them as soon as possible in the right way. We encourage all individuals, where appropriate, to raise the matter as a concern, if genuine, rather than wait for proof.

All children have a right to be protected. It is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted and who are least able to act or defend themselves or disclose what is happening. They need you and others like you to protect their wellbeing and safeguard them from harm or potential harm.

Everyone involved in our sports has a responsibility to raise concerns appropriately to individuals who can act upon them whether that is the Welfare Officer, the Swim England Child Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies.

Swim England acknowledge that "blowing the whistle" on a colleague or friend will be difficult but it is important you do so rather than allow a child to become or remain at risk.

Once the concern has been raised, the Welfare Officer, the Swim England Child Safeguarding Team and/or the statutory agencies will take action in the appropriate manner.

Why is it difficult to whistle blow?

You may feel worried that:

- You will be starting a chain of events you have no control over.
- To do so will be disruptive to the organisation, the young person(s) and/or yourself.
- You may have got it wrong, and the concern will prove to be unfounded.
- You will not be listened to or believed.

At each stage, concerns are managed by professionals, with a view to independently assess the information, and act in the best interests of any children that may be involved. Concerns are taken seriously, and if proved unfounded, any action taken is designed not to disrupt children and families unnecessarily. Reporting concerns will not start a process that cannot be halted, if unfounded.

Swim England assures everyone involved in our sports that they will be treated fairly, and all concerns will be properly considered.

If you act in good faith in reporting a concern and even if the suspicion is unfounded, you will be supported, and no action will be taken against you.

However, if it is proven the concern has been raised maliciously to cause harm to others, you may be liable to action under the Swim England complaints and disciplinary processes.

Referring the concern

If you are a member of a Swim England club or organisation, or the parent/guardian of a member you must refer your concern to the Welfare Officer, the County or Regional Welfare Officer, the Child Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies.

If you receive a concern from a third party regarding a member of a Swim England organisation, you should try to obtain the following information:

- Their name, address and contact details.
- The names of all the individuals involved.
- If they have evidence of the alleged concern or if not what it is that leads them to believe that abuse or poor practice is happening.
- How they became aware of the concern.

The information should then be referred to the Welfare Officer, or the County or Regional Welfare Officer if appropriate, Swim England Child Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies who will consider what action to take.

When referring the concern, do not:

- Try to deal with the concern yourself.
- Inform the person about whom the concern has been raised.
- Inform any other members or employees of the concern other than those outlined above.
- Commence your own investigation.
- Annotate or remove evidence received.
- Delay in reporting the concern.

Also, do not assume that:

- “All is well, or it would have been noted earlier.”
- “It does not matter” or “no harm will arise.”
- “I should ignore it as it’s not my responsibility.”

You will be given updates on how the enquiry is progressing if it is possible to do so.

Your welfare officer, the county or regional welfare officer and Swim England have a responsibility to protect you from harassment of any kind that results from your disclosure.

Every effort will be made to provide feedback to you on the outcome and action taken on the matter you referred, but how much detail can be reported back to you will vary according to the nature and result of the investigation. Wherever possible, Swim England will ensure you have notice while the matter is ongoing and when it has been concluded.