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# Soundwell Swimming Club Complaints Policy

## 1. Introduction

Soundwell Swimming Club is committed to safeguarding all children and young people. The club's committee members, volunteers, coaches and supporters all work very hard to build positive relationships with all the children, young people and parents associated with the club. However, it is acknowledged that there may be occasions where there are complaints by a child, young person or parent. The following policy sets out the procedure that the club follows in such cases.

This policy has been formally adopted by Soundwell Swimming Club and is consistent with, Wavepower 2016-19: Child safeguarding policy and procedures for Swim England clubs.

## 2. Welfare or Safeguarding Concern

If the nature of the complaint relates to a safeguarding concern or affects a child's welfare, please refer the issue to one of the Club Welfare Officers.

The issue will be addressed with reference made to the ASA Child Welfare Complaints Procedure within The ASA Handbook, which sets out the method for dealing with child welfare concerns when a complaint is received from a parent, carer, guardian or a child. In the first instance, concerns about a child, which may reach the level of seriousness of Child Protection or indeed pose potential harm to a child (known as a 'Referral') will be dealt with under Wavepower processes, Section 2.1 – Abuse, Duty of Care and Reporting Process <http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download>

## 3. Disputes and Complaints:

### Definitions

**Dispute:** A difference of opinion either between members or on matters concerning the running of the club.

**Complaint:** A formally expressed dissatisfaction over an item relating to activities undertaken by the club.

The club aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child or young person above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.



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## Process

The following process should be followed if any person associated with the club has a dispute or complaint regarding their treatment during any club activity.

### **Step 1. Informal Discussion**

Bring the concern to the attention of the Coach, club Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer in the first instance.

The club encourages informal discussion to be used to resolve issues where possible. The club will ask if you have tried to talk the issue through with all parties first as this provides an early opportunity for a resolution to be reached as quickly as possible. If after talking the issue through then there is still a problem the next steps should be taken.

### **Step 2. Formal Written Complaint**

If Step 1 has not resulted in a satisfactory outcome, or if a previously reported issue arises again, the issue should be put in writing (letter or e-mail) to the Club Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer using the contact details on the club website.

When raising an issue in writing, please include the following:

- The nature of the issue
- The action that was taken by the club or club representative
- The reasons why the action is disputed or Complaint raised
- The date and time of the incident
- The names of any witnesses to the incident.
- Your preferred contact details.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing and an investigation will be initiated with the intention of offering a resolution. A regular dialogue will be maintained with the complainant throughout the investigation. When a conclusion is reached, the Chairperson/Welfare Officer will provide a written record of the incident and actions taken/recommended to the complainant and for the club's information and monitoring.

### **Step 3. Formal Committee Panel/Meeting**

Should an appropriate resolution not be possible, the Club Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer will present a written note in confidence at the next committee meeting, either to the whole committee or selected sub-committee as appropriate.

The committee or independent panel (three members drawn from the club committee or club members as appropriate) will discuss the matter in confidence and offer a solution in writing to the complainant. When a conclusion is reached, the panel will provide a written record of the incident and actions taken/recommended to the complainant and for the club's information and monitoring.



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#### **Step 4. Mediation**

If after the Step 3 an agreement cannot be reached, an external mediator will be invited to support resolution.

This person will be agreed in advance as someone who is acceptable to both parties. For example, staff or volunteers within the ASA as appropriate should be invited to act as mediators. The mediator must keep an agreed record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they provide.

Where an agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to ASA or Swim England representatives as appropriate.

#### **General**

At each step a meeting between relevant parties may be necessary. At any such meeting the following criteria should be upheld:

- Swimmers should be accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Parents/carers may be accompanied by a partner or friend if required.
- Teachers/coaches may be accompanied by a friend or colleague if required.

An agreed written record of the discussion will be made for all parties present at the meeting to sign as an accurate record. A copy will be shared with the parties.

The information within this document is provided with the aim of providing overall guidance for the resolution of complaints and disputes raised internally to Soundwell Swimming Club. For additional guidance on procedures for handling of concerns and complaints, please refer to:

- The ASA Handbook  
[http://www.swimming.org/assets/uploads/GoogleView/ASA\\_Swim\\_England\\_Handbook\\_2017.pdf](http://www.swimming.org/assets/uploads/GoogleView/ASA_Swim_England_Handbook_2017.pdf)
- Wavepower 2016-19: Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Clubs  
<http://www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/>