



AQUALIFE SWIMMING LIMITED

SAFEGUARDING POLICY - 2024

This policy relates to the Safeguarding procedures put in place for activities where Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults are present, for example learners on a training course or participants in swimming lessons. This policy follows the Safety Training Awards ('STA') Code of Practice, the STA Duty of Care Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Prevent Strategy (2011).

Aqualife Swimming Limited ('Aqualife') accepts responsibility for the Safeguarding of all Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. Aqualife aim to create an environment that is safe and secure for all to disclose their issues to Aqualife staff. In doing so, Aqualife have created this policy to help identify those who are suffering or are at risk of suffering abuse, while ensuring appropriate action is taken to make sure all are kept safe. Aqualife also aims to create an organisational level ethos of openness and honesty to create and maintain an environment the prevents abuse and promotes wellbeing.

Overview:

- The principles of abuse, the types, effects and indicators of abuse
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer ('DSO') and their responsibilities
- Good Practice Guidelines relating to safeguarding vulnerable groups
- Procedures relating to reporting and responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse, including those against members of staff
- Procedures relating to recruitment, selecting staff and volunteers

This policy affects any individual working for or on behalf of Aqualife who may interact with vulnerable groups, such as Aqualife teaching staff and learners on training courses.



Principles

The welfare of all individuals, but especially those who are vulnerable, 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, responded to swiftly and appropriately. Anyone under the age of 17 years will be considered as a child.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

As part of Aqualife's safeguarding duties, it has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer ('DSO').

The current DSO is: **ANNA HODGES**

Where necessary, the DSO liaises with the following relevant external organisations:

- Local police
- Local social services, also known as the West Sussex County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub ('MASH')
- Swimming Teachers' Association ('STA'), specifically, the STA Child Protection Office
- NSPCC
- Contact details for the above external organisations are listed later in this document.

Recruitment and Management Procedures (including volunteers)

Aqualife has the following procedures in place for the recruitment and/or management of staff and volunteers to protect against and ensure all reasonable steps are taken to reduce the likelihood of abuse. All individuals affected by this policy, before commencing protected activities, must:

- Hold a valid Safeguarding Certificate, renewed every 2 years
- Read, understand and agree to this policy in writing
- Read and understand all relevant Aqualife policies and procedures,



- Read and understand the STA Code of Practice and STA Duty of Care Policy

In addition, Swimming Consultants or anyone applying for a job, must also complete the following steps:

- Complete an application form
- Provide an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Provide necessary personal details, proof of relevant qualifications, proof of public liability insurance
- Provide an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate which includes a Child Barred List check prior to commencing activities with Aqualife and have these renewed every 3 years
- If not from the UK then they must provide a relevant police check from their home country
- Provide a minimum of 2 references, including one which details working with children

For the purposes of this document, all learners on courses that interact with vulnerable groups as part of their training are considered volunteers.

All staff and volunteers must follow the above safeguarding policies, guidelines and good practices when conducting activities involving vulnerable groups.

Conducting Activities

As stated above, when interacting with vulnerable groups, swimming consultants, staff and volunteers must have read and understood a number of safeguarding policies, guidelines and good practices. These must be followed at all times.

As described in the STA Code of Practice, there are a number of good practice guidelines when conducting activities involving vulnerable groups. These have been included below for reference but are not extensive. The guidelines and/or course materials should be the first call when looking for further information.



Good practice:

- Always be publicly open when working with children.
- Where any form of manual support is required, this should be provided openly with consent from both the swimmer and the parent/guardian. The person involved should be careful as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is moving
- Where possible parents/guardians should take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms.
- Where classes have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure that teachers work in a minimum of pairs
- Encourage an open environment
- Do not take children alone in a car journey

You should not:

- Be in a position where teacher and individual swimmer are completely unobserved
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Have children stay at your home with you unsupervised
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Take still or movie photographs of children without obtaining the guardians consent in writing.

It may be sometimes necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have additional needs. These tasks should only be carried out with a full understanding and written consent of parents and of the children involved.



There is a need to be responsive to a child's reactions and if a child is fully dependent upon you, talk with them about what you are doing and give them choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing, or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact of lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and the DSO and make a brief written note of it. Parents or guardians should be informed of the incident.

Supervision & Good Practice

To protect both themselves and the learners or participants for who they are overall responsible for, ATC staff are expected to promote the following good practice when working on behalf of the ATC named above:

- Avoid unobserved one to one situations whether that be the Tutor, Assessor, IQA with a learner or a student learner with a fellow peer or participants they are teaching as part of their training
- Where any form of manual support is required, this should be provided openly and with the assent of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and consent of the parent/guardian
- Where possible provide same sex changing facilities and changing areas at different times to learners, placing responsibility of changing the child, young person or vulnerable adult on the parents/guardians

Reporting Allegations of Abuse

If a child, young person or vulnerable adults says or indicate that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving the information should:

- Keep calm and listen carefully, making detailed notes
- Tell them they are not to blame and this it was right to tell someone
- Take what the they says seriously, recognising the difficulties in interpreting what is said by a child



- Keep questions to a minimum necessary to ensuring clear and accurate understanding of what has been said, and avoid any leading questions
- Reassure them, but do not make promises of confidentiality
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible

Once the information has been obtained, the person must report the allegation or concern to the DSO, who will then follow the procedures below to report and work with the relevant external organisations as per the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' statutory guidance. It is not the responsibility of the person receiving the information to investigate.

Recording of Information

Information passed to the DSO must be as helpful as possible so they can provide a proper representation of the allegation to the relevant external organisations. The information should contain the following:

- The nature of the allegation
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's account, if he or she can give them, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any times, dates, or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay

Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers

These procedures apply to all Aqualife staff and volunteers in the event of an allegation. Because of frequent contact with young people, staff or volunteers may have allegations of abuse made against them. Aqualife recognises that allegations may have been made for a variety of reasons but are committed to taking all allegations seriously.

Anyone dealing with an allegation must remain open minded, sensitive to the individuals involved and ensure the investigation is thorough and accurate.



Receiving an Allegation

A member of staff or volunteer who receives an allegation about another member of staff or volunteer should follow the same procedures set out under “**Reporting Allegations of Abuse**” section of this policy.

Assessing an Allegation

The DSO shall make an initial assessment of the allegation. If the allegation is considered to be either criminal or indicates the individual has suffered, suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, then the matter should be reported immediately to the relevant external organisations. The DSO is not responsible for investigating the allegation.

Other potential outcomes may include:

- The allegation represents poor practice or behaviour by the member of staff or volunteer and is not criminal or a cause for harm. The matter will then be dealt with in accordance with the individual’s contract with Aqualife.
- The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not be true.

Reporting an Allegation

Once the DSO has assessed the allegation, it must then be reported to the relevant external organisations. The DSO will liaise with these agencies and any others that may become involved.

Safeguarding enquiries made by the relevant external organisations are external investigations and are not covered by this policy. Aqualife may use the outcome of external investigations from external agencies to inform our own actions. In the event of an external investigation Aqualife will delay any internal procedures whilst the external investigation is carried out to prevent any prejudice of the investigation.

The DSO will:



- Work together, open and honestly, with any relevant external organisations as set out in the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' statutory guidance
- Comply with any requests from the relevant external organisations and follow the relevant confidentiality clauses
- Inform the parents/carers of the individual making the allegation that the investigation is taking place
- Ensure that that the parents/carers of the individual making the allegation are aware of the likely process
- Inform the staff or volunteer, whom the allegation was made against, that an investigation is occurring and the processes involved
- Keep a written record of all actions being taken

Suspension of Staff or Volunteers

The member of staff or volunteer may be suspended by the Aqualife Directors during the investigation, but only using the procedures below. The suspension, by using the procedure, will be a neutral act. Staff may not be entitled to pay, depending upon their Contract for Services. Other alternatives to suspension may be considered, such as:

- Making an agreement to refrain from work
- Changing or withdrawing from specified duties
- Suspension should only occur for a good reason, for example:
 - Where there is risk to an individual
 - Where the allegations are serious enough to justify dismissal on the ground of gross misconduct
 - Where necessary for the good of the investigation

If suspension is considered, the member of staff or volunteer should be interviewed by the DSO and Aqualife Director.



During the interview, the member of staff or volunteer should be provided with as much information as possible, including the reasons for any proposed suspension, provided that doing so would not interfere with the investigation.

The purpose of the interview is not to establish the innocence or guilt of the member of staff or volunteer, but to give them the opportunity to make representations about possible suspension. The member of staff or volunteer should be given the opportunity to consider any information given to him/her at the meeting and prepare a response, although that adjournment may be brief.

If the company Directors considers that suspension is necessary, the member of staff or volunteer shall be informed of their suspension from duty by written confirmation in the form of a suspension letter. Written confirmation of the suspension, with reasons why the suspension was necessary in order for the investigation to be conducted fairly, shall be dispatched as soon as possible and ideally within one working day.

Where a member of staff or volunteer is suspended, the parents/carers of the young person making the allegation should be informed of the suspension. They should be asked to treat the information as confidential. Consideration should be given to informing the child making the allegation of the suspension.

The suspension should remain under review until all necessary investigations are complete.

Allegations Without Evidence

The following should be considered in the event that an allegation has been made with no ground to do so:

- Inform the member of staff or volunteer against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling/support.
- Inform the parents/carers of the individual that the allegation has been made and of the outcome.



- Where the allegation was made by a individual other than the alleged victim, consideration is to be given to informing the parents/carers of the outcome of the allegation.
- Once the above action has been taken, a report is to be produced, outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation. The report must also confirm that the actions above had been taken.

Records

All documents relating to an investigation will be retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if any action is taken, details retained on the member of staff or volunteer's personal and confidential file. All records shall be kept in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Responding to Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some period of time after the event. For example, by an adult who was abused as a child by an individual who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made, Aqualife will follow the procedures above and report the matter to the relevant external organisations.

Monitoring and Review

Aqualife will review this policy regularly for improvements and in line with Safety Training Awards quality assurance requirements. The next review will take place within 1 year of the document version date, or after any breach of policy.



Contact Details

Aqualife Swimming Limited

Course Tutor: Penny Watkins, Founder, Aqualife Swimming

STA Tutor & Assessor in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching, STA Level 2 Certificate in Swimming Teaching

Tel: 0796164138

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Course Tutor, IQA & Administration: Anna Hodges

Partner & Centre Administrator, Aqualife Swimming

STA Tutor, Assessor & IQA in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching, STA Level 2 Certificate in Swimming Teaching

IQA in : STA Safety Award for Teachers, Pool Emergency Responder

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Course Tutor: Camilla Golledge, Tutor

STA Tutor, Assessor and IQA in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching, STA Safety Award for Teachers

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Course Tutor: Lee Cornelius, Tutor

STA Tutor in : STA Safety Award for Teachers

STA IQA Tutor & Assessor in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching, STA Safety Award for Teachers

Contact: via Anna Hodges, Centre Administrator

IQA: Abbey Ratchford

STA IQA in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching

Contact: via Anna Hodges, Centre Administrator

STA Assessor: Timothy Long

STA Assessor in: STA Level 2 Award in Swimming Teaching

Contact: via Anna Hodges, Centre Administrator

Safety Training Awards

Address: Anchor House, Birch Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 8HZ

Tel: 01922 645097

Email: <https://www.sta.co.uk/contact-us/>

OFQUAL (England)

Contact: Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH

Tel: 0300 303 3344

Email: public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk



Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain correct and are fit for purpose. However, the policy may be reviewed and updated at any time to reflect any changes made by Safety Training Awards (STA) or the Regulatory authorities.

Policy Launch Date : November 2024

Review Due: November 2025