

## **Brisbane Sub-Aqua Club - Managing Welfare Concerns**

1. BSAC is committed to ensuring all concerns raised in respect of child safeguarding or welfare are considered and acted upon in a proper and appropriate manner.
2. BSAC accepts that the protection and safeguarding of children is paramount and should be based on prevention and best practice.
3. BSAC also accepts that all risks cannot be eliminated but through good practice, policy and procedures and a culture that allows those with concerns to raise them appropriately in the knowledge they will be dealt with properly, we can minimise those risks.
4. BSAC accepts that issues of concern will be raised from time to time. They should be dealt with in line with the following guidance. If a concern is observed, or raised with you by another person, you should:
  - a. Discuss all safeguarding and welfare concerns in the first instance with your Club Welfare Officer (CWO) unless they are implicated in the matter.
  - b. If the CWO is not available, speak to another Officer of the Club or contact BSAC Lead Officer in Child Safeguarding (LOCS).
  - c. If you consider a child is being harmed, or at risk of being harmed you can contact the Queensland Government's Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women through the Child Safety Service Centre or Regional Intake Service or Child Safety After Hours Service Centre. If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation call Triple Zero (000). Inform the CWO of the Club of action taken.
  - d. Keep written records of any poor practice, child protection and/or welfare related incidents, allegations or concerns. Record details of any actions taken and the contact details of anyone who was either involved or a witness to the incident.
  - e. When delivering activities in a school or directly under the supervision/management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply. You must inform the designated teacher or person for that school. You should also ensure that you inform your CWO.
  - f. When delivering activities in partnership with a school but in your Club or out of school hours, you must follow your Club child protection procedures and communicate any concerns to the CWO. The CWO will refer the matter to the Authorities who will take responsibility for liaising with the school.

### **Managing Concerns – the three stages**

5. BSAC are committed to ensuring children and young people taking part in Club activities are safeguarded from harm. The outline below has been developed by sport to give guidance in a situation where a child or adult discloses actual or potential abuse. That abuse may be current or non-recent, in the sport or outside of it but the actions to follow remain the same.

## **React**

6. If a concern is raised to you regarding a possible child safeguarding issue, you should STAY CALM and DO NOT SHOW DISBELIEF, UPSET OR SHOCK at what you are hearing.
7. The person disclosing the concern will be central to how you respond.

### ***If the disclosure comes from a child, you must:***

- Ensure they are safe and feel safe
- Keep an open mind
- Only ask questions to clarify what is being said. Never use leading questions or make suggestions
- Do not make assumptions or judgements about what the child is telling you
- Take the concern raised seriously
- Be honest and make clear you cannot keep a secret. You may have to pass the information on to safeguard the child disclosing or others from harm or to prevent harm that is occurring now. But reassure them you will keep them informed of any action you are to take and when you will take it.
- If possible, get another person to listen in to what is being said but only if to do so will not prevent the child disclosing what they intend to.
- Ensure you record what is said (as outlined later) as soon as you are able after the discussion.

### ***If the disclosure comes from an adult***

- Listen to what is being said and consider what action you need to take.
- Ask they write down, preferably on the BSAC referral form, all they have told you.
- Ensure they are aware of the need for confidentiality.

### ***When you should share the concern raised***

- Confidentiality must be strictly observed
- You should share the information disclosed on a strictly “need to know basis”. Ensure any person you share the information with is aware of the need to keep the matter confidential.
- If you refer the matter to the statutory agency, be guided by them as to who you should share the information with.
- If the child’s parents are not implicated in the concern they should be informed of the concern at the earliest opportunity.

- If medical treatment is required ensure that is accessed.
- Ensure the child concerned and all other children for whom you are responsible at the time are safe and supervised while you act upon the disclosure.

***But never:***

- Promise to keep a secret.
- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Take action until you have considered what action needs to be taken and shared the information appropriately.
- Act alone – share as outlined within this document as to what action is required.

**Record**

8. Your records may be required by the Child Safety Services or Police and therefore must be factual. In any report, make clear which statements are facts, which are opinions and which are your interpretations of what was said.
9. If available use The BSAC Child Safeguarding Referral Form (4.12)
10. If it is not immediately to hand, make clear notes and include the following. Some details such as address can be completed later from Club records.
  - a. Child's name, date of birth, gender, race, ethnic origin and address/phone number.
  - b. Parent/carer's details
  - c. Details of the alleged abuser
  - d. Details of the concern raised. Note clearly and factually what you were told and by whom.
  - e. Detail of any witnesses to the concern.
  - f. Dates of the incident(s)
  - g. Additional information shared with you that is hearsay – clearly note it is hearsay/second hand information and who has disclosed that to you.
  - h. Who has been informed/had the information shared with.
  - i. Details of any visible injuries and if possible do a drawing to show where they are visible.
  - j. Sign and date your report and give your role and contact details.

**Report**

11. There should never be any delay in reporting a concern and it may be appropriate to report then record the information when there is a possible immediate risk of harm or potential harm to a child. Flow charts outlining the action to take depending on whether the concern is within or outside of the sport are available

from the Buddy Guard policy. Further advice on action can be obtained from the BSAC LOCS.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

12. The government guidance document on “Information Sharing for Practitioners” outlines seven golden rules:
  - a. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
  - b. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
  - c. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
  - d. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
  - e. Consider safety and well-being. Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
  - f. Ensure that the information you share is necessary and proportionate for the purpose for which you are sharing it. It is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
  - g. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

***Remember: it is not for you to decide a child is or may be at risk of harm or abuse but it is for you to refer that information to the professional bodies that can assess risk and act as required.***

13. The information you have may seem minor but it is important to raise what you know with the relevant body as they may already hold information in respect of the child concerned that has come from other sources.
14. The decision on whether to disclose the information should be based on “proportionality”. That is the proposed disclosure is a proportionate response to the need to protect the child’s welfare. The amount of information disclosed and

the number of people to whom it is disclosed should be no more than is necessary in protecting the health and wellbeing of the child.

15. This approach should be followed whether the information being disclosed is regarding a concern within or external to the Club.
16. BSAC is committed to ensuring all children in BSAC Clubs are safe, are not put at risk of harm or disadvantaged by a failure to share information appropriately. If you are unsure on what action to take or who to share a concern with in respect of a child, contact the CWO, BSAC LOCS or contact the Australian Childhood Foundation for advice.