



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

The concept of whistle blowing is important in any organisation that is committed to maintaining appropriate levels of safeguarding and good practice. Whistle blowing allows individuals to raise issues of poor practice or misconduct by members and employees.

The ASA are committed to developing a culture that is safe and encourages all those involved in swimming to raise concerns of poor / unacceptable practice and / or breaches in safeguarding or abuse.

Children are vulnerable to abuse and all adults who work in clubs, whether paid or unpaid, members or non members must look to safeguard their welfare. The ASA believe it is necessary to develop a culture in all clubs, counties, regions and nationally where concerned individuals can raise issues about unacceptable practice and misconduct in a safe and supportive environment.

When is it necessary to whistle blow?

A member or employee may witness or be told about a situation of poor practice, a failure to safeguard or even abuse within the sport regarding an incident of abuse in which a colleague is implicated.

While you may be the first person to become aware of an issue it is not always easy to raise the concern as to do so may appear to be disloyal to your colleague(s) and you may be fearful that you will be victimised or disadvantaged as a result of taking such action. That is an understandable fear but you must remember that all children have a right to be protected and that it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted and who are least able to act or disclose for themselves.

They need you and others like you to protect their wellbeing and safeguard them from harm or potential harm. Everyone involved in swimming has a responsibility to raise concerns appropriately to individuals who can act upon them whether that is the Welfare Officer, the ASA Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies. The ASA acknowledge "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 club Welfare Officer, the ASA Safeguarding Team and/or the statutory agencies will take action as deemed appropriate.

The ASA assures all involved in swimming 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 is raised maliciously to cause harm to others you may be liable to action under the ASA complaints and disciplinary processes.

Reasons for whistle blowing

Every member and parent of members in the ASA 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.
- Prevent becoming a party to the concern by lack of appropriate action.

Why is it difficult to whistle blow?

You may feel:

- You will be starting a chain of events you have no control over.

- To do so will be disruptive to the club, the swimmers and yourself.
- What if you have got it wrong and the concern is unproven.
- You will not be listened to or believed.

Referring the concern

1. If you are a member of the ASA or the parent of a member and your concern is regarding a member of the ASA or the parent of a member, you must refer the matter to the club Welfare Officer, the County or Regional Welfare Officer, the ASA Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies.

Or

If you receive a concern regarding a member of the ASA or the parent of a member of the ASA from a third party you should try to obtain the following information.

- Their name and 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/poor practice is happening.
- How they became aware of the concern.

The information should then be referred to the Club, County or Regional Welfare Officer, the ASA Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies who will consider what action to take.

2. If you are an employee rather than a member or officer of the club you should report the concern to your line manager or you can contact Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or whistle@pcaw.co.uk.

In both point 1 and 2 do not:

- Try to deal with the concerns yourself.
- Inform the person about whom the concerns are 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 concerns.

Also do not assume:

- “All is well or it would have noted earlier”.
- “It does not matter” or “no harm will arise”.
- “Ignore it as not my responsibility”.

What happens when you have raised a concern in good faith?

- The concern you raise will be treated in confidence and will be shared only on a need to know basis.
- You will be given updates on how the enquiry is progressing if it is possible to do so.

- Your club Welfare Officer, the County or Regional Welfare Officer and the ASA have a responsibility to protect you from harassment of any kind that results from your disclosure.
- If the matter is proven / found on the balance of probabilities to have occurred then appropriate action will be taken against the individual(s) concerned.
- If the matter is unproven / unfounded on the balance of probabilities to not have occurred, providing you raised the concern in good faith, no action will be taken against you.
- Malicious allegations will be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Feedback

Every effort will be made to give you feedback 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 the ASA will ensure you have notice while the matter is ongoing and when it has been concluded.