Safeguarding Policy 2023

Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

This policy outlines the measures which the BLDSA is taking in order to protect children and vulnerable adults who may engage in our sport, as participants, organisers, helpers or spectators.

Within this policy a child is a person under the age of 18 years old.

Within this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as one who may not be able to adequately protect themselves from harm. Within the arena of open-water swimming, this may involve the following groups of people (although the list is not exhaustive):

- Adults with certain learning or physical disabilities or mental health difficulties.
- Swimmers who may become confused or disorientated as a result of the cold.
- All those who are in need of, or who are receiving, emergency first aid or medical treatment, or rescue from the water.

The BLDSA is committed to helping all persons enjoy the sport of open water swimming. With regard to children and vulnerable adults, we are fully committed to ensuring that:

- Their welfare is paramount at all times.

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All members of the association have a duty to be aware of potential issues regarding the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, and to report any concerns to the Safeguarding Officer or BLDSA committee member in their absence.

A. Prevention of Abuse & Neglect

The BLDSA aims to prevent the occurrence of abuse and neglect by:

1. Selecting a Safeguarding Officer at the AGM, who is responsible on an association-wide level for putting policies in place and ensuring they are regularly reviewed in light

of new developments, ensuring that the policies are adequately disseminated, followed and enforced, providing help and advice, as well as seeking professional advice should this be required.

The Safeguarding Officer shall review this policy at least once every 12 months (or sooner, in light of developments in Safeguarding) and make any recommendations for changes to the executive committee.

The Safeguarding Officer has overall responsibility for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults within the BLDSA, under the oversight of the committee and President.

The Safeguarding Officer should undergo training appropriate to his/her role and may occasionally draw upon the help of external bodies in order help to safely protect the vulnerable persons within the BLDSA.

2. Ensuring that the BLDSA creates an atmosphere which minimises the risk of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse or neglect. Swim Secretaries should read a Safeguarding Briefing out loud to everyone present before each event.
See Appendix 1.

This briefing emphasises that we have a responsibility to act on any concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect, and must report concerns to the Swim Secretary, Safeguarding Office or BLDSA committee member.

3. Volunteers at each event should be made aware of, read and agree to follow, our Code of Conduct.
See Appendix 2.

4. The Safeguarding Officer and First-aiders should hold a current and clear DBS check.

The Safeguarding Officer shall maintain a register of those with current and up to date DBS checks. Swim Secretaries may contact the Safeguarding Officer to clarify the status of any particular member. The results of DBS checks will be treated confidentially, with only persons requiring access to this information allowed to do so. Records will be kept of the names of people who have been cleared.

The responsibility for reading the Safeguarding Briefing, and ensuring that volunteers agree to the Code of Conduct, and that first aiders have a current and clear DBS check, lies with the Swim Secretary at each event.

5. The parents/carers of under 18 yr old swimmers should stay on site at the swimming event until their child is back in their care.

B. Managing Actual or Potential Incidents of Neglect or Abuse

Swim Secretaries (or other designated BLDSA members in the absence of the Swim Secretary) should follow an agreed procedure in how to manage and report incidents of actual or suspected neglect or abuse.

1. Swim Secretaries shall follow the BLDSA Safeguarding Incident Flowchart.
See Appendix 3.

This includes telephone numbers for reporting immediate concerns.
2. Swim Secretaries should then record the incident by completing the BDLSA Incident Reporting Form.
See Appendix 4.
This form should be forwarded to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, who will meet with members of the BLDSA leadership team within 72 hours to decide on the next most appropriate actions. The Safeguarding Officer and BLDSA leadership team will ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern.

3. Members who are accused of, or suspected of, posing any risk whatsoever to children or vulnerable adults may have their membership of the BLDSA suspended until such time as the investigation has concluded.

4. The Safeguarding Officer and BLDSA committee will conduct a review of all incidents and investigations at the end of each season They will ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely kept, in line with data protection legislation and guidance. All matters regarding the reporting of and addressing safeguarding issues will be treated confidentially, unless required to be shared with the Police or Local Safeguarding team.

5. Clubs affiliated to the BLDSA who wish to run events under BLDSA rules or insurance should comply fully with this policy. All affiliated clubs must have their own nominated officer/contact person for Safeguarding. External clubs should agree to this BLDSA Safeguarding Policy or hold their own safeguarding policy.

6. The BLDSA shall indemnify itself and the Safeguarding Officer and committee against any claims, which may be brought against them as a result of their actions, and shall provide access to legal advice should this be required.

These documents will be available on the association's website, and made available to any person who requests them.

Please note:

If you have any concerns regarding the welfare or protection of children or vulnerable adults with whom you come into contact, or concern about any safeguarding practice within the BLDSA you should, in the first instance contact the Safety Officer. In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer please contact a member of the BLDSA committee.

You are not asked to decide whether or not abuse/neglect has occurred, but simply to report any concerns you have.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Training and information on detecting abuse and neglect, as well as promoting safe practice, is available, and you are encouraged to undertake it. Please contact the Safeguarding Officer for details if you are interested.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Briefing.

Please read the following to all swimmers, spectators and volunteers at the start of each event.

“We take safeguarding very seriously.

Please remember to look out for one another, especially our younger swimmers and vulnerable adults.

If you see or become aware of the signs of bullying, abuse or neglect of any sort please alert them to me (swim secretary) as soon as possible.

To the parents or carers of under 18 year old swimmers or vulnerable adults:

You must not leave this area until your swimmer is safely back into your care. We will do all that we can to safeguard your child or adult, but please do your part by staying here.
”

Appendix 2

BLDSA Code of Conduct

1 I will treat all members of, and persons associated with, the BLDSA, with due dignity and respect.

2 I will treat everyone equally and never discriminate against another person associated with BLDSA on any grounds including that of age, sexual orientation, gender, faith, ethnic origin or nationality.

3 I will not use inappropriate or abusive language, bullying, harassment, or physical violence that could result in action being taken through the disciplinary or safeguarding policies.

4 I will always display a high standard of behaviour at all times.

5 I will report any poor behaviour by others to an appropriate official.

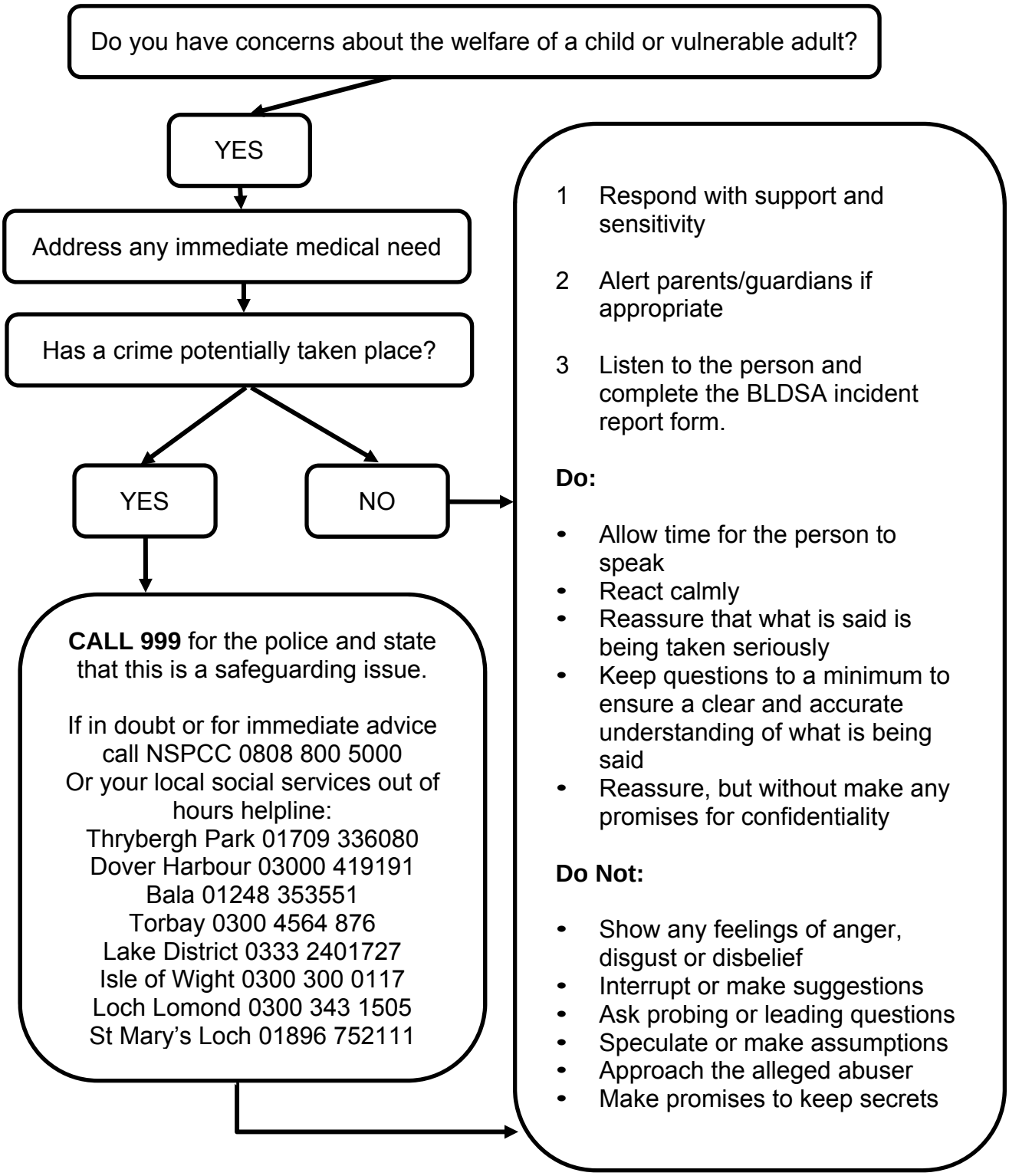
6 I will recognise and celebrate the good performance and success of fellow swimmers and members.

7 I will respect the privacy of others, especially in the use of changing facilities.

8 When dealing with persons under 18 years of age I will avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with such persons and demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility.

Appendix 3

Safeguarding Reporting Flow Chart



Appendix 4

BLDSA Incident Report Form

Incident details	
Date of incident Location of BLDSA event	Time of incident
Where did the incident occur?	
Nature/type of incident	
☐ Physical e.g. being hit or hurt	☐ Isolation e.g. being ignored or left out
☐ Sexual e.g. inappropriate touching	☐ Neglect
☐ Bullying	☐ Discrimination
☐ Verbal e.g. name-calling, taunting, threatening, spreading rumours	☐ Other (specify)
☐ Forced into actions against will	
Are there indications that the incident was motivated by any of these? Tick all that apply	
☐ General appearance/demeanour	☐ Race/ethnic origin
☐ Disability/SEN	☐ Sexual orientation
☐ Religion	☐ Home circumstances
☐ Sports ability	☐ Other

Individuals involved			
Name and contact details	Gender*	Age	Role*
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

* Gender: **F** – Female / **M** – Male / **NB** – Non-binary / Another – please write in

* Role: **V** – Victim / **P** – Perpetrator / **W** - Witness