



BNSC Complaints Procedure

Bristol North Swimming Club (BNSC) is committed to providing a nurturing, friendly and safe environment for all of our members, parents/carers, and volunteers who wish to participate in swimming.

To achieve this, we have established a set of policies and procedures which include this document. Our full set of policies and procedures with which all our members, parents/carers, and volunteers are expected to comply, are available on our website.

Our policies and procedures are founded on Swim England's Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, known as **Wavepower**. Links to Wavepower can be also be found on our website.

1 The BNSC Complaints Procedure

1.1 Introduction

The BNSC is committed to promoting the welfare of all involved in swimming and we will seek to establish a process that will make it straightforward for people to raise any concerns they have. BNSC will respond to all complaints raised ensuring the welfare of children is paramount.

This procedure sets out the method of dealing with concern when a complaint is received from a parent, guardian, carer or child.

1.2 General Complaints

All complaints and concerns should be raised with the BNSC Welfare officer (see the BNSC Key Contacts document and Swim Club managers '**whos who**').

See the BNSC Welfare & Child Safeguarding Policy (and Wavepower) for details of how to react to, record and report general concerns.

1.3 Child Welfare Complaints

This procedure is mandated by the Swim England Child Welfare Complaints Procedure.

It should be remembered that children and young people are equally as entitled to complain as an adult. Everyone within the BNSC must be conversant with the procedures for dealing with them in a child friendly way whilst ensuring these procedures are followed, the child's rights are protected and most importantly, the child's safety is paramount.



Equally, parents, guardians and carers of Swim England members must be assured that they will also be listened to and appropriate action taken if they have cause for concern or complaint in a child welfare complaints procedure.

This procedure must be followed when a complaint is received from any BNSC member, involves a child (a person under the age of 18 years) and which is deemed to be a child welfare issue by a Welfare Officer, County Welfare Officer, Regional Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding Team and the Swim England Independent Child Protection Officer (ICPO).

All other complaints will be dealt with under appropriate procedures as identified in the previous section.

If it is believed that a concern or complaint is considered being of sufficient seriousness as to involve, not just child welfare issues, but child protection issues, these will be dealt with either by direct referral to a Statutory Agency or by referral to the Swim England ICPO who in turn may:

1. Refer the matter to a Statutory Agency; or
2. Recommend the matter be dealt with by Swim England under the Protocols For Child Safeguarding Investigations found in the Swim England Handbook.

1.3.1 Why is this Procedure Necessary?

Adults often do not realise that their actions can significantly impact on children, causing them distress.

In return children often do not realise that adults can find it difficult to recognise problems, which would cause a child to be worried or unhappy. A concern, which may appear minor to an adult, can be overwhelming for a child.

Because of this it is vital to encourage communication between adults and children not least to put forward an environment whereby a child that is worried or unhappy about something feels confident that they can let someone know what is worrying them and believe their worries and concerns will be addressed.

It is for this purpose that the BNSC wish to work towards a culture at club level that is conducive to encouraging all our members under the age of 18 years to feel able to speak to other members of their club regarding their worries or concerns.

The following is the procedure for dealing with a complaint made by, or on behalf of, a child and which a parent, guardian, carer or friend may make. At all times action should be immediate where possible and all stages outlined within the procedure should be carried out within the timescale provided.

It is important to acknowledge that a child welfare concern from the point of view of someone under 18 years of age will be something very important to them and which has potentially been causing them concern long before they took the step of reporting it to another party.



It is important that complaints of this nature are dealt with at the earliest opportunity and as such the following procedure should be a last resort for matters that have been incapable of resolution.

Remember if the complaint is or may be a child protection matter a referral to a statutory agency (Children's Care Services, the police or the NSPCC) must be made immediately.

Guidance and support can be obtained from the Swim England ICPO.

1.3.2 The Procedure

Step One – Informal Resolution Locally Timescale: Immediate

As an adult member of the BNSC, when a child, parent or carer has made a complaint or drawn to your attention a concern, you must first assess as to whether it is appropriate for you to resolve it.

In general terms if it is minor in its nature (e.g. a misunderstanding) and if you are able to address the concern, you should do so. Ideally, if at all possible, you should consult the Welfare Officer before embarking on any course of action.

Confidentiality must be maintained on a 'need to know basis' i.e. only the coach, the Welfare Officer and child's parents may need to know of a concern and no one else. Sometimes the individuals involved may need to be extended to the Team Manager (for example a child causing distress to another during club sessions) or to the Chairman. The important factor is to keep the information restricted to as small a circle as possible.

Step Two – Resolution through Club Welfare Officer Timescale: Intervention Seven Days

The primary role of the Welfare Officer will be to resolve to the satisfaction of the child, parent, guardian, carer or anyone else the welfare issues complained of, if at all possible.

The Welfare Officer may have matters referred to them for example through Step One or may have matters brought directly to their attention.

The Welfare Officer will consider the nature of the complaint and if they are able to address the concern. Swim England anticipates that club Welfare Officers will be able to address issues such as minor club rule infringements, poor practice and bullying through this complaints process. Guidance and support can be obtained from the Swim England ICPO at any time (see **BNSC Contact Details**).

If the assistance of the Swim England ICPO is not sought before the issues are resolved, the concerns and outcomes should be reported to the Swim England ICPO afterwards.

The club Welfare Officer should at all times be mindful of the support and guidance that can be accessed from the Swim England ICPO and that concerns to be dealt with by a club Welfare Officer should be child welfare concerns only. Matters of child protection will be referred, where appropriate, immediately to the appropriate statutory authority and to the Swim England ICPO.

The club Welfare Officer must:

Record the details of the complaint – what was the problem?



How it was resolved? The actions taken and by whom (the Welfare Officer or others).

Observe confidentiality and secure storage of referral documentation (see appropriate policies within Wavepower).

Step Three – National Level – The Swim England Independent Child Protection Officer Timescale: Intervention three Days

The Swim England ICPO will have a right to be involved in any child welfare matter, which the Swim England ICPO in consultation with the Head of Legal Affairs reviews and decides needs Swim England intervention.

The procedure from this point is detailed in the Swim England Child Complaints Procedure and can be found by following the Wavepower links on our website.

Other related policies

BNSC Key contacts document

BNSC Welfare and safeguarding policy 2022

Published: January 2019
Last Review: January 2022
Next Review: January 2024
Contacts: Welfare Officer