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# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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**Contents**

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INTRODUCTION ..... 3

PURPOSE ..... 3

AIMS ..... 3

CPLO ..... 4

ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST BASA STAKEHOLDERS..... 4

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CPLO AND REPORTING PROCEDURE. .... 4

BASA PROCEDURE & GUIDANCE FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES ..... 5

HANDLING DISCLOSURES ..... 5

    Guidelines..... 5

RECORDING OF DATA ..... 5

SUPPORT STRUCTURE ..... 6

Appendix 1: ..... 7

Types of abuse..... 7

Appendix 2: ..... 8

Signs of abuse..... 8

Appendix 3: ..... 9

Guidance for BASA Stakeholders against allegations ..... 9

Appendix 4: ..... 11

BASA Overseas Travel with Children/Youth Policy ..... 11

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT ..... 13

## INTRODUCTION

Bermuda Amateur Swimming Association (BASA) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all Board members, staff, coaches and volunteer workers who work directly with children ("BASA Stakeholders") to share this commitment.

BASA adheres to the principles outlined in the Children Act 1998 which places a duty on the company to promote the safety and welfare of children in its care or under its jurisdiction.

It is the intention of the procedure within this policy to ensure that the appropriate action is taken immediately where it is alleged that a child is suspected of being abused. BASA is also committed to remedying any deficiencies or weaknesses in its child protection arrangements without delay.

## PURPOSE

BASA's main objective in implementing this Child Protection Policy is to guard against abuse by providing:

- An environment that fosters healthy relationships;
- A safer and more secure environment for all children who are entrusted to its care or under its jurisdiction;
- Clear and shared guides to appropriate behavior by staff, coaches and volunteers as they relate to children.

## AIMS

The aims of the policy are to:

- Ensure that training in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children is provided to all appropriate BASA Stakeholders.
- Ensure that all BASA Stakeholders are made aware of the Child Protection Policy and safeguarding arrangements at BASA and have access to the BASA policy.
- Ensure all BASA Stakeholders understand the different types of abuse (See Appendix 1).
- Raise awareness of BASA Stakeholders regarding signs of abuse and neglect (see Appendix 2).
- Ensure that the safeguarding of children extends to instances of abuse by one or more child against another child (See also Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Train BASA Stakeholders in handling disclosure (including allegations against BASA Stakeholders) and to recognize the dilemmas of confidentiality.
- Ensure that BASA Stakeholders are aware of the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO).
- Ensure that BASA Stakeholders are aware of the BASA Overseas Travel with Children/Youth Policy (See Appendix 4)

## CPLO

The designated CPLO for BASA will be selected from the Child Safety Policy Team (CSPT).

The members of the Board, including the CPLO, comprising the Child Safety Policy Team are noted in Appendix.

If an allegation is made about the CPLO, or should there be any disagreement within the CSPT, the matter will be escalated to the BASA President who, in turn, will report the matter to the other Officers of the Board of BASA, or the broader Board as appropriate.

## ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST BASA STAKEHOLDERS

All BASA Stakeholders can be at risk of allegations by children and therefore it is wise to take necessary precautions when dealing with children on a day to day basis at swim practices and meets (both locally and internationally) (see Appendix 3).

Any BASA Stakeholder who feels that he/she has overstepped the mark in any way should discuss the circumstances with the CPLO.

Any BASA Stakeholder hearing or being aware of an allegation of abuse against a BASA Stakeholder MUST inform the CPLO and/or Board Officer, immediately.

When the CPLO has been informed of a **disclosure of or suspected** abuse or a child is **at risk of significant harm** the matter must be referred to the Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS) immediately. The DCFS must also receive notification of the matter in writing within 24 hrs. If within 3 days there is no communication, the CPLO must contact DCFS for a response.

The DCFS will drive the investigation and advise the CPLO of proposed next steps. It is usually the responsibility of the DCFS to liaise with the Family and the Police (if necessary).

## DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CPLO AND REPORTING PROCEDURE.

The duties and responsibilities of the CPLO include:

- Ensure that Child Protection Procedures are in place and updated.
- Ensure that all new BASA Stakeholders (including temporary staff and volunteers) are aware of BASA's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Be able to provide advice/support to children and BASA Stakeholders.
- As far as possible keep disclosures/discussions as confidential. Share information on a "need to know" basis.
- Liaise with DCFS and discuss any issues that are not straightforward or seek advice when needed.

## **BASA PROCEDURE & GUIDANCE FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES**

Any BASA Stakeholder having concerns of a disclosure made should ALWAYS discuss this with the CPLO.

Any concern should be recorded along with the date, time, and name of child and then signed. This will be stored in a locked safe place.

### **HANDLING DISCLOSURES**

Information may not be sought from a child, but a child may choose to initiate confidence about having suffered some kind of abuse, neglect or unhappiness.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. Find a QUIET place to talk.
2. Stay CALM and REASSURING
3. Explain you cannot promise to keep what you are told a secret and NEVER promise confidentiality, it may depend on the disclosure.
4. LISTEN to the child and believe what you are told. Do NOT question/prompt the child.
5. Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events and Do NOT press them for details.
6. Ask if they have told anyone else.
7. Don't make any promises to the child; you may not be able to keep them.
8. Tell the child you are pleased they have told you and it was the right thing to do.
9. Empathize that it must have been hard to talk about these matters.
10. Make a written record of the discussion afterwards and discuss the matter with the CPLO.

If the child decides to stop the conversation do not pursue it, and inform the CPLO. BASA Stakeholders have a duty to share information regarding the safeguarding of children.

BASA Stakeholders should not discuss confidential information outside the appropriate context.

### **RECORDING OF DATA**

All concerns and disclosures must be recorded and kept safe by the CPLO. The data must include:

- Name of the child
- Date and Time
- Who was present
- Comments by child as near to his/her own words as possible
- Any notes regarding injury, body language etc.

The report must be signed by the reporting person and the notes must be clear and legible - as **they could be used as a reference point for legal matters.**

## **SUPPORT STRUCTURE**

The Child Protection Policy is available on the BASA Website.

Useful contact numbers are:

DCFS Child Abuse Referral Hotline: 278-9111

## Appendix 1:

### Types of abuse

**Abuse comes in many forms and a pupil may be suffering abuse by one or more adults or children.**

Neglect – Actual or likely persistent neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in significant impairment of the child’s health and development.

Physical Abuse – Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Sexual Abuse – Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse – The actual or likely severe adverse effects on behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, whether deliberate or not.

## Appendix 2:

### Signs of abuse

- Bruising
- Unexplained and / or recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothing to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for games
- Bald patches
- Speech disorder
- Continual self-depreciation
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of new situations
- Persistent tiredness
- Sudden mood swings
- Reluctance to go home
- Inappropriate conduct in relationships with others
- Attention seeking behavior
- Marked changes in eating habits

(This appendix is a guideline rather than an exhaustive list and there may be an entirely rational explanation for any such behaviours).

## Appendix 3:

### Guidance for BASA Stakeholders against allegations

BASA Stakeholders should ensure that their relationship with children remains on a professional footing and should be mindful of the following:

- Physical handling of children (roughly or not) even to break up a fight can be considered abuse.
- Only touch children for professional reasons, and when this is necessary and appropriate for the child's wellbeing or safety.
  - Inappropriate touching between an athlete and an adult non-athlete is prohibited, including but not limited to excessive hugging, kissing, sexually-oriented behaviour, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games and having an athlete sit on a non-athlete's lap.
  - Any rubdown or massage performed on an athlete by any adult, excluding the spouse, parent, guardian, sibling, or personal assistant of such athlete, is prohibited unless such adult is a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional.
  - Any rubdown or massage performed at a swim venue by a licensed professional must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only the athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room. Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.
- Not to behave in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children.
- Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.
- Be careful with choice of language - jokes and innuendos can be misunderstood, as can name-calling.
- Only give rides in your car with the prior knowledge and permission of the parent/guardian. Pick up and drop off procedures should be communicated to the parent/guardian in advance which shall include the manner in which the parent/guardian shall be notified when the child has been picked up and/or dropped off. To the extent that it is feasible, a youth/child shall not ride in a car alone with a BASA employee/National Coach.
- If interviewing a child on a one-to-one basis in a room, ensure that the door is open.
- If interviewing a child on disciplinary matters, have another person present.

- Not to develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with children, including over social media. Please see attached BASA's Electronic Communication Policy.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board and the CSPT. The CSPT will review annually the procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

## Appendix 4:

### BASA Overseas Travel with Children/Youth Policy

- All adults traveling with children/youths (coaches, team managers, chaperones, therapists etc.) must be suitably trained in advance of the trip, must sign off that they are aware of this policy, and background or police checks should be conducted on them.
- All overseas travel with children requires careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents and guardians.
- There must be adequate, gender-appropriate supervision for boys and girls.
- Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- Unless otherwise noted, the team manager will be designated to act as the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) (and thereby assume the roles and responsibilities as mandated in the Child Protection Policy) for the duration of the trip unless another adult is otherwise identified to assume the role. If another adult is selected their identity of the CPLO should be communicated in advance to all persons travelling and to the respective parents/guardians of the children that are traveling.
- Any mixed gender activity undertaken by BASA overseas travel with children/youth will require the presence of at least 2 adults (one male and one female) in all circumstances.
- When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parent's (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.

With regard to overseas hotel accommodations,

- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip and communicated to the parent/guardian at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of travel.
- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete.
- To the extent that it is feasible, non-family member adults should not share a hotel room with any child/youth. In those circumstances where this is not feasible there shall be a minimum of 2 children (under the age of 18) and 1 adult - all of the same gender in a hotel room (The adult should not share a bed with a child- unless they are the parent of that child)

With regard to overseas dormitory accommodations,

- Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by at least one adult of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- At least two adults should be present in dormitories in which children or young people are sleeping. Under no circumstances should an adult share a bedroom with a young person who is not their own child.
- If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances

## Appendix 5:

### **Bermuda Amateur Swimming Association (BASA) - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

- BASA is committed to supporting parents and families
- BASA is committed to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of children and young people
- BASA recognises that child protection is everybody's responsibility
- BASA is committed to following the agreed procedures and following statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines
- BASA seeks to support all in anyone affected by abuse
- BASA will review this policy annually

If you have any concerns for a child or in relation to any child protection matter then speak to one of the following who have been approved as Child Protection Liaison Officers for BASA.

A copy of the full policy can be seen on the BASA website.

#### **BASA Child Safety Policy Team**

- Aileen Smith (CLPO)
- Rebecca Pitman