

## **Child Protection Policy Summary**

### **Child Protection Policy Statement**

Portarlington Leisure Centre staff have a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in any activity from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Portarlington Leisure Centre will ensure the safety and protection of all children through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines it has adopted (Swim Ireland Child Protection Policy).

### **Policy aims**

**The aim of the Portarlington Leisure Centre's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:**

- ✧ Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Portarlington Leisure Centre staff.
- ✧ Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **Child Liaison Officer**

Our Child Liaison Officer is Amy Flanagan.

### **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters, the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment**

Written consent to take and use images of children should be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents should be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used in order to give their informed consent. This includes comprehensive information regarding use of images e.g. in print, multi-media, broadcast; for what purpose, e.g. promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit, review; and where possible an indication of who the audience will be e.g. the general public, the participating children and their families, other organisations and institutes.

### **Good practice guidelines For Parents/Guardians (Ref: Swim Ireland)**

***Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children.***

- ✧ Parents/guardians should work in partnership with their children's club to create and support a safe environment through the promotion of good practice and measures in place to prevent poor practice and all forms of abuse
- ✧ Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that the measures in the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 are implemented and to make sure their children are treated with fairness, respect and understanding.
- ✧ They should foster an open approach to discussing safeguarding issues to allow their children to tell them about anyone causing them harm or making them feel upset.
- ✧ Parents/guardians as representatives of their child/children are subject to and should be aware of the rules and procedures of Swim Ireland, and their Club, in particular where changes are made that affect them or their children. Parents/guardians should be informed of all matters relating to ethics and good practice. They

should encourage their children to participate in sport for fun and enjoyment and should ensure that their child's experience of sport is a positive one.

- ✧ Parents must read and understand **The Good Practice Guidelines For Parents** and should always remember that children play sport for their own enjoyment not that of the parents/guardians.
- ✧ Have an awareness of and respect for Swim Teachers and other adults and their roles within the Club
- ✧ Understand the complaints process and follow the proper procedure if you feel unjustly treated, with the knowledge that any complaint will be dealt with fairly and confidentially
- ✧ Know your child's training and/or competitive programme, and accept it is your responsibility for delivering and collecting your child/children. Parents/guardians should ensure they do not leave their child/children waiting unsupervised at any time
- ✧ Ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for your child/children
- ✧ Be a role model for your children and other young people by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behavior in any activity related to the Portarlington Leisure Centre or Swim Ireland.
- ✧ Allow your child to focus their efforts and success in terms of their goals rather than winning being the main objective
- ✧ Promote participation for children that is fun, safe and in the spirit of fair play

## **Complaints Procedure**

Portarlington Leisure Centre views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

### **Our policy is:**

- ✧ To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- ✧ To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- ✧ To make sure everyone at Portarlington Leisure Centre knows what to do if a complaint is received
- ✧ To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- ✧ To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- ✧ To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

## **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Portarlington Leisure Centre.

## **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Portarlington Leisure Centre,

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

*Email: [Info@portarlingtonleisurecentre.ie](mailto:Info@portarlingtonleisurecentre.ie)*

## **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Portarlington Leisure Centre

# **Bullying (Ref Swim Ireland)**

## **Definition of bullying**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Bullying and harassment should be prevented by anticipation of an occurrence and having a planned course of action.

## **Bullying Behavior**

Bullying behavior is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations with children and young people. It includes behavior such as teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting and extortion by one or more children against a victim. A bully operates using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore, only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel able to tell someone who can help or in a situation where it is not safe to do so. Bullying can take place between adults,

children and child to adult or adult to child, and is not restricted by age, socio-economic background or sex. Each case of bullying must be dealt with as soon as the symptoms are apparent or bullying is suspected.

### **Types of Bullying**

Bullying can occur in a number of ways and in various forms. Traditionally bullying would take place where the opportunity arises for a bully to meet a victim face to face – e.g. in a changing room, going to or from school/Club, travelling on a bus. This afforded a victim the opportunity to escape situations where they may be vulnerable. Unfortunately, today the technological advances in methods of communications has meant that people are much more accessible through the use of mobile phones, email, social networking sites, etc. This means that a victim can be targeted by a bully without being physically present.

Bullying need not be solely physical where a victim is physically harmed; bullying can be verbal, involve the use of gestures, by exclusion, and using extortion.

### **Recognising the signs of bullying**

- \* The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be the subject of bullying:
  - \* Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
  - \* Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
  - \* Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
  - \* Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to swimming, going via different routes, asking to be driven)
  - \* Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
  - \* Having few friends
  - \* Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
  - \* Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
  - \* Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

*This list is not exclusive to a victim of bullying; there may be other possible reasons for many of the signs listed above. Some signs will be more attributable to the bullying occurring within a child's peer group and some where an **adult is concerned.***

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse, you can contact social services or the Garda direct, or the **ISPC Child Protection Helpline on 01-6767960** , or **Childline on 1800 66 66 66.**

### **Links:**

#### ***Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policy 2010***

<http://www.swimireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/02/SI-Safeguarding-Children-Policies-and-Procedures-2010.pdf>

***If you would like a copy of our full Child Protection Policy, please don't hesitate to ask the Receptionist***

## **Child Admission Policy**

**All Children under the age of eight years must always be accompanied at all times in the water for unprogrammed Swimming Sessions.**

**Children aged 8, 9 or 10 must be accompanied by a responsible parent / adult (over 18 years) who must remain in view of the child in the water.**

**The ratio of children to adult is as follows:**

### **Under 4 Years:**

**1 Responsible Adult or parent on a 1:1 Basis**

### **Between 4 and 8 Years:**

**1 Responsible adult or parent with a maximum number of 2 children per adult are permitted**

**A full copy of our child admissions policy can be obtained at reception.**