

ASA 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.

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

Whistle Blowing is an important part of the safeguarding of children in swimming, delaying raising concerns does not deal with them, it just delays the inevitable and may cause matters to get worse. Such matters will seldom, if ever, improve by being ignored and the damage to the children involved will inevitably increase.

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.

For example, a child might tell you of something that has happened to them while in training with a swimming coach or being chaperoned by an ASA volunteer. Or

you might become suspicious about the behaviour of a colleague or volunteer. Or a parent might make an allegation of abuse involving someone working with you in a paid or voluntary capacity. It is not your responsibility to investigate such incidents. Your role is to respond appropriately and to report the situation in line with the ASA Safeguarding Policy Wavepower 2009/11.

Once the concern has been raised, the club Welfare Officer, the ICPO and/or the statutory agencies will take action as appropriate.

The person raising the concerns is likely to have mixed emotions at their action, as colleagues are seen as people to trust implicitly and suspecting “unpleasant things” about a colleague is hard. It may be the person concerned finds it hard to accept what is being alleged and to think that the person raising the concern is disloyal. Alternatively they may fear victimisation if they raise a concern against a colleague. It is not unusual to feel this way but it is important to consider the welfare of the child as paramount and not allow your judgment on what is the right action to be clouded by personal feelings and beliefs.

The ASA recognise that a person referring concerns involving a colleague may need additional support in light of the action they have taken and such support is available through the ICPO.

If you have a concern, it should be referred to the club Welfare Officer or another appropriate member of the club committee. Anyone who

refers a colleague or fellow club member in good faith will be supported by the ASA. Anyone against whom a concern is raised will have the concerns dealt with properly and in accordance with ASA law.