

Half Moon Swimming Club Child Welfare Policy

Overview

All child welfare issues are dealt with under the auspices of the Swim Ireland Child Welfare guidelines and relevant national legislation. The Swim Ireland document "Safeguarding Children, Policies and Procedures 2010" has been adopted by the club as the guiding principal to child welfare in the club. The primary preventative measures for child abuse, are awareness, education and monitoring. Parents are encouraged to discuss the subject with their children and raise their awareness of dangerous situations. Officials must be aware of all the Codes and measures in place and be vigilant to any possible breaches.

Club Procedures

The club has procedures in place to assist, in the event that a member or parent has a problem in the child welfare area.

Members - the problem could be a simple one about views that you have which you want to express but don't seem to be able to. It may be that you are concerned at the way you are being treated. It may be that you are worried that a situation is very uncomfortable, and you think it is wrong. What do you do? Who do you talk to?

The following outlines who can help, and how they can help you:

- **Club Captains** - If you have concerns, you can talk to them and if you ask, they can bring your concerns to the attention of the Club Committee. You can ask them not to name you, and just say that they have received a concern. If the concern is very serious then the captain may need to bring it to the attention of the Child Liaison Officer(s), in confidence. Talk to them about how they will deal with your concern.
- **Child Liaison Officers** - Child Liaison Officers are there so that if you have serious concerns or a complaint, you can talk to them and get their advice. If the matter is one that could involve abuse, please talk to your Child Liaison Officer, who is there to assist you. The Child Liaison Officers operate independently of the club's administrative and coaching structures.
- **Club Officers** - Perhaps the Club Secretary or one of the other Officers is someone you can approach and talk to about your concerns. If you are a young member, maybe you could ask your parent to talk to an Officer, with or without you present.
- **Coach** – You might have a concern relating to something that affects you in training. It is possible that just asking your coach, if you can talk to them during a session, might sort out the problem.

Parents - The same officials are available for parents to talk to. If you still have a concern, you have the right to appeal to Swim Ireland who have clear procedures in place to deal with complaints. In the event of a specific allegation of abuse being made against a club official, the club has no role in dealing with such an allegation, other than to require that official to step aside (per the Code of Ethics and Good Practice) and to inform Swim Ireland of its actions.

Child Welfare Complaints Procedure

Complaints related to child welfare or child abuse are outside the Club complaints procedures and no hearings related to child abuse may be held by the Club. The Complaints Procedure is set out in Swim Ireland's Document "Child Welfare Guidelines and Procedures" and in the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland".

In summary the Complaints Procedure applicable, in the event of a specific allegation of abuse being made, is as follows:

- The Child Liaison Officer is informed of the complaint.
- The Child Liaison Officer's role is to gather information and forward it to the Swim Ireland Child Protection Officer and/or the Statutory Authorities.
- The Child Liaison Officer informs the club secretary who, in confidence, informs the other club officers of the facts of the matter. He or she will also, in consultation with the Swim Ireland Officers, consult with the committee regarding the stepping down of the official until the matter is resolved.
- The Swim Ireland Child Protection Officer will contact:
 - The Area Social Worker
 - The Area Garda Station
 - The Health Board Director of Community Care
 - The Parents / Guardians

The Child Liaison Officers are required to maintain a Child Welfare Complaints Register, in confidence, recording both written and oral complaints.