

Cleveland Divers BSAC Branch 978
Safeguarding policy 2015

This document has been developed to highlight the areas for potential abuse in the instruction and conduct of scuba diving and snorkeling. It is an additional document to BSAC's 'Buddy Guard Safeguarding,' policy. It is aimed both at providing vulnerable members with a safe environment in which to enjoy these sports and also to protect those responsible for their care from the risk of accusation of abuse.

The safeguarding of vulnerable members, both adults and children, is the first consideration.

A vulnerable member potentially means all members.

All members have the right to be protected from bad practice, neglect, bullying and all forms of emotional and physical abuse. Suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behavior will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is the duty of all members suspecting inappropriate behavior and actions to act on any concern. As defined in the Children's Act 1989, anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this Policy.

All members must be treated fairly, equitably and without prejudice. Members must not participate in or tolerate behavior that frightens, degrades, embarrasses, demoralizes or negatively affects a member's self-esteem. Members must not tolerate acts of aggression. Members should be aware that recording of photographic images may be inappropriate and permission must be obtained beforehand from both the person concerned and the pool or establishment.

The members of Cleveland Divers should not discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, disability, sexuality, age, occupation, religion or political opinion.

Branch Officers and Instructors will be made aware of good practice with a specific safeguarding course available - free of charge, together with appropriate documentation, training and support from BSAC or other diving agencies, to ensure that Branches are able to implement the Safeguarding Policy.

Awareness of these issues, and the adherence to these simple guidelines, will help maintain professionalism, safeguard good practice and secure the protection of both the vulnerable and those responsible for them, from accusations arising from mis-interpretation of innocent actions. BSAC leaves it to individual branches to decide upon the type of training offered and to what age groups, but to ensure the safeguarding of all vulnerable people BSAC asks that all members observe and promote its policies with regard to the "Buddy Guard Policy". Cleveland Divers policy requires the DBS check of Branch Officers and Instructors and recommends that all those members directly involved with the training of minors or vulnerable adults and/or those members providing safety cover at the pool also complete the self-declaration process.

Cleveland Diver have a policy whereby 14-17 year olds may learn to dive and dive with the club.

Trainees aged 14- 15 years may only commence training after an assessment of training needs and resources by the Training Officer, Welfare Officer and in consultation with Parents, guardians or Carers.

Similarly, if Cleveland Diver members wish to use the pool on a Monday night for swimming or snorkeling and bring their children and guests along then they must be present during the pool session and take full responsibility for the safety, safeguarding and behavior of the children. Unaccompanied children and non-Cleveland Diver members will be unable to use the pool during Monday night sessions. However, non-members may use the pool as a guest of a club member with permission of the pool supervisor.

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Many sports environments provide a relaxed and "safe" place for those who are abused outside of the sport. Diving and Snorkeling instructors (or dive buddies) may develop such a relationship of mutual trust and respect with their students (buddies) that they may hear of abuse occurring outside of the direct influence of the club. As responsible citizens it is our duty to protect our members from abuse wherever it may occur. The information and guidance given therefore applies to situations that occur outside the club but come to our attention as a result of our club activities as much as to situations that occur within the club.

Indeed the information provided here also applies to our everyday lives outside of Cleveland Divers.

Finally, please remember that both the BSAC and the Cleveland Divers committee will support any member who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a vulnerable person is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.

Conditions of membership within the BSAC

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that people with convictions or past history of an inappropriate nature are prevented from significant contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Controlling access to children and vulnerable adults

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and also vulnerable adults. The particular circumstances of individual cases need to be taken into account. The fundamental principle is that those in charge of activities involving vulnerable persons must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of those who are given significant contact with the children and vulnerable adults in their care.

Self-Declaration

The BSAC safeguarding policy suggests that members in positions that involve significant access to young people under training and supervision are typically instructors and Branch Officers. For such members, as a minimum requirement, a Self-Declaration should be completed. This would ask for any information about a criminal record or other matter that might have a bearing on their suitability to work with children to be revealed (e.g. previous investigations by police or social services or disciplinary investigations in relation to contact with children). However, given Cleveland Divers policy requires the CRB check of Branch Officers and Instructors it recommends that all those members directly involved with the training of minors or vulnerable adults and/or those members providing safety cover at the pool obtain 'DBS,' clearance.

General Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of the BSAC when in significant contact with children or vulnerable adults. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by a member will be investigated by the branch Welfare Officer. Where required this may be passed to the safeguarding officer of the appropriate agency.

Good Practice and Observation

This is the most reliable way to strive to ensure the safety of all vulnerable people within the Cleveland Divers environment. Following the guidelines of this Policy will promote vigilance where inappropriate behavior and early signs of potential problems can be spotted and dealt with.

Promoting Good Practice

Abuse may occur within or outside training sessions. Don't be afraid to report your concerns, whatever their origin.

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Some situations may be open to misinterpretation by those unfamiliar with the teaching of diving and/or snorkeling. The following points are raised so that you are aware of where misunderstanding has occurred in the past and, by taking the actions recommended, you can limit the risks of innocent actions leading to an accusation.

Good Practice

Cleveland Divers policy require the DBS check of Branch Officers and Instructors and recommends that all those members directly involved with the training of minors or vulnerable adults and/or those members providing safety cover at the pool complete the DBS declaration process. All members will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the BSAC 'Buddy Guard,' Safeguarding Policy at their annual renewal.

Trainees aged 14- 15 years may only commence training after an assessment of training needs and resources by the Training Officer, Welfare Officer and in consultation with Parents, guardians or carers. Parents will be asked to attend all training sessions and provide transport to and from dive sites.

When working with children or vulnerable adults:

- Make activities fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for all activities.
- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the safeguarding of each child or vulnerable adult first before achieving performance goals.
- Be an excellent role model.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child or vulnerable adult, it is provided openly, the child or vulnerable adult is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- Deliver educational instruction first verbally; secondly role-modeled', and thirdly, and only if necessary, with hands on - after obtaining the child's or vulnerable adult's consent and having told them where you are putting your hands and why it is necessary to do so.
- Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Recognize the developmental needs and capacity of children and vulnerable adults and avoid excessive training and either pushing them against their will or putting undue pressure on them.

First Aid and Treatment of injuries:

If, in your capacity as a member of Cleveland Divers, a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Keep a written record, of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Ideally, only those with a recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- Where possible, the permission for any course of action should be sought from the child or vulnerable adult after such action has been discussed with them in language they understand.

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- The child's, or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child or vulnerable adult interests and on professional advice not to do so.
- A Notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the Branch Welfare / Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

Specific points to follow: - IF YOU ARE TEACHING/MANAGING SCUBA DIVING:
(These points should be borne in mind in any training situation.)

- Avoid training in a one to one situation. Always have an independent observer to support your position in case of misinterpretations of your actions
- Physical contact
Certain underwater skills require close physical contact, such as Rescue Breaths (RB), Controlled Buoyant Lift, etc. Before taking hold of your student in a manner that may be misinterpreted teach the skill out of the water (do a dry run) and give a verbal commentary to the whole group explaining what you are going to do. Advise students to wear Tee shirts or pool suits. This can avert potentially embarrassing situations.
- Never engage in rough or unnecessary physical contact.
- Guard against the effects of cold, especially when training in open water.
- Where children are involved, the parents should be aware of what will be required of their children and agree to abide by the branch policies before training commences. Specific help and advice on this issue is available from BSAC.
 - Avoid any form of electronic communication.

Ensure adequate supervision

BSAC recommend a maximum instructor/student ratio for pool and sheltered open water of 1:4. In open water the ratio should not exceed 1:2. (specific exceptions to this rule may be detailed in the diver training program - but instructor and managers should be aware that whatever is stated in the program is a MINIMUM requirement and then only in ideal conditions)

If you accidentally hurt a child, if he or she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something which you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. This should then be passed to the Branch Safeguarding / Welfare Officer.