



Richmond Dales ASC Policy Documents

From Wavepower 2016-19

Whistle Blowing

The concept of whistleblowing is important in any organisation that is committed to maintaining appropriate levels of safeguarding and good practice.

Whistleblowing allows individuals to raise the alarm on any potential incident of poor practice or misconduct by members and employees.

The ASA is committed to developing a culture that is safe and encourages all those involved in aquatics to raise concerns of poor and/or unacceptable practice, breaches in safeguarding and/or incidents of abuse. Children are vulnerable to abuse and all adults who work in sports organisations, whether paid or unpaid, member or non-member, must look to safeguard their welfare. The ASA believes it is necessary to develop a culture in all organisations and counties, regionally and nationally, where concerned individuals can raise the alarm about unacceptable practice and misconduct in a safe and supportive environment.

When is it necessary to whistleblow?

A member or employee may witness or be told about a situation of poor practice, a failure to safeguard or even an incident of abuse within the sport in which a colleague is implicated. While you may be the first person to become aware of an issue, it is not always easy to raise a concern as to do so may appear to be disloyal to your colleague(s) and you may be fearful that you will be victimised or disadvantaged as a result of taking such action. That is an understandable fear,

but you must remember that all children have a right to be protected and that it is often the most

vulnerable children who are targeted and who are least able to act or defend themselves, or

disclose what is happening. They need you and others like you to protect their wellbeing and safeguard them from harm or potential harm. Everyone involved in aquatics has a responsibility to raise concerns appropriately to individuals who can act upon them whether that is the welfare officer, the ASA Child Safeguarding Team or the statutory agencies. The ASA acknowledges that 'blowing the whistle' on a colleague or friend will be difficult but it is important you do so rather than allow a child to become or remain at risk. Once the concern has been raised, the welfare officer, the ASA Child Safeguarding Team and/or the statutory agencies will take action as deemed appropriate.

Reasons for whistleblowing

Every member, member's parent(s), employee and volunteer in the ASA has a responsibility to raise concerns about potential poor practice and abuse/unacceptable behaviour in order to:

- Prevent the problem increasing.
- Protect or reduce the risk to others.
- Prevent becoming a party to the concern by lack of appropriate action.

Why is it difficult to whistleblow?

You may feel worried that:

- You will be starting a chain of events you have no control over.
- To do so will be disruptive to the organisation, the young person/s and/or yourself.
- You may have got it wrong and the concern will prove to be unfounded.



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- You will not be listened to or believed.

At each stage, concerns are managed by professionals, with a view to independently assess the information, and act in the best interests of any children that may be involved. Concerns are taken seriously, and if proved unfounded, any action taken is designed not to disrupt children and families unnecessarily. Reporting concerns will not start a process that cannot be halted, if unfounded.

The ASA assures all those involved in aquatics that they will be treated fairly and all concerns will be properly considered. If you act in good faith in reporting a concern, even if the suspicion is unfounded, you will be supported and no action will be taken against you. However, if it is proven the concern has been raised maliciously to cause harm to others, you may be liable to action under the ASA complaints and disciplinary processes.