



Mer-Fin Swim Ltd

Safeguarding Policy

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Definitions:

The Business	Mer-Fin Swim Ltd
Team Members	Refers to all team members eg. teachers, poolside/in-pool assistants and team members and office staff who have <u>direct</u> contact with Children.
Customers	Refers to those people receiving services provided by Mer-Fin Swim Ltd. Primarily this would be swimming lessons or Mer-Babies lessons.
DSL	Refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Mer-Fin Swim Ltd, responsible for advising on all cases of safeguarding and welfare in The Business.
Child	Anyone under the age of 18 years
MASH	The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns.
LADO	The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people.
Appropriate Authorities	Either the police, MASH or LADO, dependent on circumstances.
Disclosure	Disclosure is the process by which a Child will let someone know that abuse is taking place

Statement of Purpose:

Mer-Fin Swim Ltd (The Business) operate to the very highest standards, and as such the safety and welfare of all our customers and team members is of the utmost importance. Mer-Fin Swim Ltd works with children and families as part of its activities. These include the provision of swimming and Mer-Babies lessons.

Mer-Fin Swim's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy:

Much of the information in this policy has been taken from the Swim England's Safeguarding Policy (Wavepower): [Wavepower Download PDF](#) of which Teachers are expected to adhere to as members.

Safeguarding Principles:

The Business is committed to ensuring any Child who uses our services is properly safeguarded and the correct procedures are adhered to when there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure.

The Business ensures that every Team Member recruited:

- Receives regular safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Are subject, dependent on their role, to the appropriate DBS check.
- Agrees to adhere to the internal safeguarding policy and any other safeguarding policy relating to venues in which Mer-Fin Swim Ltd delivers lessons from.

All Team Members agree to:

- Act appropriately in the presence of children.
- Ensure the Child's welfare is paramount.
- Remain alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children.
- Ensure all participants whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- Take all suspicious and allegations of abuse seriously; and respond swiftly and appropriately.
- Challenge any inappropriate or harmful behaviour.
- Do not take inappropriate risks.
- Understand the duty to report concerns in line with the Child protection procedures.
- Recognise the statutory responsibility of the Appropriate Authorities to ensure the welfare of children and commit to working together with the MASH and LADO.
- Agree to adhere to the legislation on Position of Trust.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:

Information passed to the MASH, LADO or The Appropriate Authorities must be as helpful as possible. The information should contain the following:

- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The Child's account, if they can give them, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Any times, dates, or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.

Reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities should not however be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. All personal information relating to a safeguarding issue shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy which can be located at [Privacy Policy PDF](#).

Recognition of Abuse

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-childabuse/> for the latest guidance.

Types of Abuse

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/> for the latest guidance.

Disclosure from a Child

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reportingabuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/> for the latest guidance.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

If a Child makes a Disclosure, or information is obtained which gives concern that a Child is being abused, the Team Member in receipt of the information will:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the Child.
- Tell the Child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell someone.
- Take what the Child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a Child who is very young, has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the Child, but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using The Business Safeguarding Incident Form.
- Refer all relevant information to The Business DSL who shall consult with any other relevant persons and make any appropriate referrals to the Relevant Authorities.
- If the Child is in immediate harm The Appropriate Authorities must be contacted.
- If the Child is not in immediate danger the Team Member subject to receiving the Disclosure or who has concerns regarding the Child, should complete the Business Safeguarding Incident Form within 24 hours.

Allegations of Abuse Against Team Members

This would include any Team Member working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse. If, following consideration the allegation is clearly about poor practice, then The Business will deal with this as a misconduct issue.

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a Team Member will be reported to The Business DSL who will take such steps as they consider necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Business DSL will refer the allegation to the LADO who may involve the police.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Appropriate Authorities, The Business must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary and welfare procedures, to decide whether a Team Member should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Business will reach a decision based upon the

information that is available which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of The Child should always remain paramount.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a Team Member, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A Child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of any external investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Non-Recent Historic Abuse

The Business follows the advice of the NSPCC in respect of [non-recent historic abuse](#).

Safe use of Changing Rooms

The Business adhere to the [Child Protection in Sport Unit's 'Safe use of Changing Facilities'](#) guidelines.

Best Practices Within Lessons and Venues

Manual Handling of Swimmers

- Team Members should only assist swimmers when necessary and in a safe, professional manner.
- Physical contact should always be appropriate, minimal, and clearly explained to the swimmer.
- Where swimmers require assistance entering/exiting the pool, two adults should be present where possible and consent gained from the child's guardian prior.

Photography and Video Recording

- No photographs or videos are permitted by parents or guardians within any venue, including poolside, changing rooms, and viewing galleries.
- Team Members may only take photographs or videos with prior consent from parents/guardians as per our documents at the pool which are derived from Swimphony.
- Images must be stored securely on company devices and deleted when no longer required.
- Photographs must only be used for approved promotional or educational purposes.

Photographs must be appropriate and highlight the sport.

Mobile Phone and Device Use

- Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms during Swim England regulated activities.
- Team Members must keep mobile phones stored safely and use them only for emergency communication.
- Parents and visitors must not use mobile devices for filming or photography at any time.

Safeguarding Team Members Under 18

- Team Members under 18 require guardian consent to be photographed and to be included in the Team communication channels.
- They must always be supervised by an adult during work hours.
- They must not be left responsible for children without an adult present.

Communication and Social Media

- All communication with swimmers or parents must be professional and through approved channels.
- WhatsApp and similar messaging services may only be used for operational coordination between Team Members, not for direct communication with swimmers or parents.
- Team Members should never share personal contact details with swimmers.
- Social media posts must not include images or identifying information about swimmers.

Contact

You must refer safeguarding concerns direct to The Business in the first instance. If you have queries regarding this policy, please contact admin@mer-finswim.com.