

POLICY STATEMENT - SWSAS

1 BACKGROUND

The South West Sydney Academy of Sport (SWSAS), is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all its members and is dedicated to providing a safe environment for participating in the Academies activities.

Abuse is defined as anything that individuals or organisations do, or fail to do, that directly or indirectly harms people or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development. This includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, inappropriate training, inappropriate touching, sexual abuse and neglect. (National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2000)

This Member Protection Policy conveys a message to all SWSAS members, and prospective members, responsible for the Academies activities, particularly those involving members under 18 years of age, about minimising risk exposure of these members. All SWSAS members, particularly age managers, coaches, officials, leaders, trainers and management personnel, have a responsibility to provide safeguards to protect the well-being of other members.

The abuse any SWSAS members, by other members or non-members, is not acceptable and SWSAS encourages all incidents of such abuse as described above to be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

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2 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

SWSAS endorses the Code of Behaviour for Academy members.

SWSAS expects all members, supporters, advisors and associates of SWSAS to abide by a Code of Behaviour, which upholds the principles and values of the organisation and this Member Protection Policy. Members should recognise that at all times they have a responsibility to a duty of care to all members of SWSAS. Specifically:-

- i. Understand the possible consequences if you breach SWSAS Member Protection Policy or Code of Behaviour.
- ii. Immediately report any breaches of the SWSAS Member Protection Policy or Code of Behaviour to the appropriate authority.
- iii. Refrain from any form of abuse towards others.
- iv. Refrain from any form of harassment towards others.
- v. provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity in accordance with relevant SWSAS policy.
- vi. show concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injured.
- vii. be a positive role model.

An SWSAS Team Manager will:

- i. Agree to abide by the code of behaviour.
- ii. Be responsible for the overall welfare and well-being of team members and officials when traveling with a team.
- iii. Maintain a 'duty of care' towards team members and accountability for the management of the team.
- iv. Have a sound knowledge of SWSAS policies, responsibilities and competition rules, and ensure that the conduct of the affairs of the team is in accordance with these policies and guidelines.
- v. Foster a collaborative approach to the management of the team.

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An SWSAS Coach or Official will:

- i. Agree to abide by the code of behaviour.
- ii. Be responsible for matters concerning the coaching, training and development of Academy athletes.
- iii. Maintain a 'duty of care' towards others and accountability for matters relating to training and competition.
- iv. Have a sound working knowledge of SWSAS policies, rules and regulations and coaching techniques.
- v. Ensure that any physical contact with others is;
 - a) Appropriate to the situation
 - b) Necessary for the persons skill development
- vi. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
- vii. Be a positive role model for Academy Athletes and SWSAS.

An SWSAS Administrator/Director/Officer will:

- i) Agree to abide by the code of behaviour.
- ii) Be fair, considerate and honest with others.
- iii) Operate within the rules of SWSAS.
- iv) Be professional in your actions. Your language, presentation, manner and punctuality should reflect high standards.
- v) Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
- vi) Maintain strict impartiality.
- vii) Maintain a safe environment for others.
- viii) Show concern and caution towards others.
- ix) Be a positive role model for others.

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3 PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR SWSAS ACADEMY PROGRAM STAFF.

SWSAS Program Staff are those members who undertake the delivery or supervision of Academy activities in their capacity as team managers, coaches, officials and administrators. These are responsible positions in the organisation and each staff member must adopt the following risk minimisation measures to protect themselves from any misconceptions about their behaviour in performing their designated roles.

3.1 Risk Minimisation Measures:

Do not engage, or allow others to engage, in any of the following:

- i. Abusive initiation ceremonies
- ii. Inappropriate undressing/dressing in front of youths
- iii. Invading the privacy of youths while showering or toileting.
- iv. Photographing youths while undressing/dressing, showering or toileting.
- v. Sleeping in closed quarters with youths without a second adult representative, parent etc.
- vi. Aggressive, physically distressing or sexually provocative activities.
- vii. Sexually suggestive comments about or to a youth.
- viii. Inappropriate or intrusive touching of a youth.
- ix. Joking, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating, or taking the 'Mickey' out of a youth.

While many of the above points may not be legally actionable, they are against the principles and values of SWSAS and guarded against in the Code of Behaviour.

Program Staff should maintain an open door policy when conducting briefings, meetings and assemblies of members. Program Staff should invite all athletes, parents, friends and other leaders to participate, particularly when performing interviews, transporting members and conducting camps/training sessions.

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Male and female adults, program staff or parents must accompany athletes when undertaking Academy activities away from home and especially overnight. Wherever appropriate.

All members should be treated with respect and dignity. Be mindful of your language, tone of voice and body language, address the problem not the person.

Foster teamwork and group cohesion between staff and athletes by allowing for the ability to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviour by members of the team. Abusive or inappropriate behaviour can not be tolerated and should be dealt with immediately.

Encourage athletes - don't pressure them.

Respect athletes privacy. Expect them to respect yours.

Do not become involved in excessive attention seeking behaviour, physically or sexually, by an athlete. Be mindful of the very needy athlete and redirect their attention to academy activities.

Maintain your status as a ROLE MODEL to youths and other adults. Be friendly, courteous and kind. Don't abuse your position. Always set a good example in dress, behaviour, language etc.

Mixed teams of program staff supervising Academy activities provides for a healthier environment for staff and athletes.

Remember – one program staff member's inappropriate behaviour reflects on all of SWSAS program staff.

UNDERSTAND SWSAS POLICIES on member protection and grievances, and respect them.

CHECKLIST for SWSAS staff where abuse is suspected

3.2 Use the following guidelines should you or any other member suspect abuse:

You have suspicion on reasonable grounds:

- i. When an athlete tells you they have been abused.
- ii. When someone else tells you an athlete has been abused.
- iii. An athlete tells you they know someone who has been abused (often they are referring to themselves)

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- iv. You observe an athlete's behaviour and/or injuries etc, and your knowledge of athletes, leads you to suspect abuse.
- v. You observe a member's abuse of another member.

3.3 If you suspect an athlete has been abused follow these procedures:

- i. Ensure the athlete is safe (if they are in your care).
- ii. Maintain the safety of other athletes in accordance with SWSAS Regulations and the Code of Behaviour.
- iii. Obtain and document the following information to provide to the SWSAS Executive Officer or appointed representative designated as liaison on member protection issues:
 - a) *the athlete's name, age and address*
 - b) *your reason for suspecting abuse (ie. observation, injury, information)*
 - c) *your assessment of danger posed to the athlete including information pertaining to the alleged perpetrator.*
 - d) *what arrangements, if any, exist for the immediate protection of the athlete.*
 - e) *what involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the suspected member protection issues.*

The **Executive Officer** of the SWSAS or an appointed representative designated as liaison on member protection issues, is tasked with advising you on such issues as parental involvement, police involvement, medical treatment, SWSAS's position, and the state authority's role. Remember, if in doubt, seek immediate advice.

In the event that you suspect abuse by someone who is not an SWSAS member (eg. family member, club visitor) advise the **Executive Officer** of SWSAS to seek appropriate advice.

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4. PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ACCUSATIONS OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BY SWSAS PROGRAM STAFF / MEMBERS

Ensure all members are aware of the SWSAS Member Protection Policy, SWSAS Regulations and SWSAS Code of Behaviour when joining the Academy.

Any person suspected of breaching any of the SWSAS Member Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour is to be reported to the Executive Officer at the Academy office when all known facts and suspicions are to be confided in that officer.

Anonymous claims of abuse or breaches of the above Code and policies are to be taken seriously and immediately reported to the Executive Officer at the Academy office for investigation.

4.1 If the issue involves suspected abuse then:

- i. The person reporting the suspected breach (or an advocate) will advise the Executive Officer immediately on being made suspicious and declare all available details.**
- ii. The Executive Officer shall notify the relevant state protection authority and receive advice about the ensuing course of action for addressing the reported breach of the SWSAS Member Protection Policy. The EO's first priority is to ensure the safety and well being of the victim. This may involve the removal of the alleged offender. The EO should insure that it is the risk that is removed and not the victim.**
- iii. The EO should make an initial assessment of criminality. If the case is considered to be a criminal act than the EO should immediately pass this information into the Police.**
- iv. Whether the case in considered a criminal act or not the EO should initiate a Member Protection Team to investigate the matter.**
- v. The parents/guardians of any member identified as a suspected victim of abuse will be encouraged to contact the Academy's Executive for advice on professional support services.**

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5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 Removal of Risk

If upon receipt of the allegation the EO or the Member Protection Investigation team considers that pending the determination of the matter the person complained about may put at risk the safety and welfare of the complainant or others, it may order that the person complained about be:

- (a) Suspended from any role they hold with SWSAS, the relevant State or the relevant Affiliated Club; and/or
- (b) Banned from any event or activities held by or sanctioned by SWSAS, the States and/or the Affiliated Clubs; and/or
- (c) Required not to contact or in any way associate with the complainant or other person about whom the alleged breach relates, pending the determination of the hearing.

There is no right of appeal of the decision by the EO.

5.2 Management of Risk

Individual Academies are committed to investigating means for implementing member protection specific to their state operations. The tools for implementing member protection vary according to state legislation and guidelines set by government agencies and protection authorities. An example of a member protection vehicle is police screening of SWSAS program staff as part of recruitment for a variety of Academy roles.

The following guidelines may be used as a measure by the Academy for addressing member protection issues:

- i. Report the matter to the relevant state department of welfare services, children's services or member protection.
- ii. Report the matter to the police and preferably the member protection unit as appropriate in your state.
- iii. The suspected victim and other family members shall be asked to approach their local GP to obtain a referral to professional support services and medical specialists.
- iv. The GP can contact the Executive Officer for advice of the name of an appropriate specialist known to SWSAS.

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- v. Inform all other Academies of such action to guard against future application for membership.
- vi. Check periodically to ensure the former member is having no further contact with members of SWSAS.
- vii. Periodically follow up on the victim's progress after initial counseling and that they have access to available care.