



Safeguarding Children Policy

SwimTayka - Safeguarding Children Policy



Introduction

At SwimTayka, we put the safety of the children we are entrusted to teach foremost in everything we do.

We exist to help them, teach them, encourage and nurture them and understand the responsibility we hold whilst they are in our care.

We have developed this policy with the children in mind and commit to doing everything in our power to keep them safe.

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1. The scope of this policy

The purpose of this document is to set out the SwimTayka Policy for Safeguarding Children.

The mission of SwimTayka is to build a generation of confident swimmers and clean water stewards. We provide free swim lessons and environmental education to underserved children who live along oceans, rivers and lakes.

The nature of our work is designed to bring adults and children into contact with each other through hands-on education initiatives that take place in swimming areas, classroom settings and on field trips.

Our projects are conducted around the globe and among diverse geographic, cultural and social settings. Such a working environment could be exploited by adults seeking to gain untoward close contact with children. Such behaviour is totally unacceptable. **SwimTayka maintains an absolute zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate behaviour of any kind, with children and young adults.**

Without exception, the safety of the children we serve is our top priority. By virtue of one's age alone, being a child or young person makes one vulnerable to abuse by adults and thus a member of a protected class of persons.

2. Our Commitment

SwimTayka's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is as follows.

1. For all incoming volunteers and staff, we will conduct
 - a) background checks. For example, in the United Kingdom, we use the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and in the United States, we conduct state and local criminal background screenings
 - b) character references from an environment where they have already worked with children
 - c) interviews. Most likely interviews will be conducted via the internet but will be in person wherever possible
2. The volunteer to child ratios on all projects are kept now more than 1:5 in order to allow for close supervision and regular check-ins by SwimTayka staff and our host organisations.

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3. We have clear procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers. People who work within our organisation are empowered to spot signs of sexual misconduct and make meaningful reports of actual or suspected misconduct.
4. Every staff member, trustee and volunteer receives a copy of our Policy on Safeguarding Children. Every volunteer and staff will need to confirm they have read, understand and will abide by the policy. A copy signed by the volunteer or staff will be kept on file.
5. All Staff, Volunteers and Trustees understand and carry out their responsibilities effectively. We will keep them up-to-date of any changes to our policy which will be reviewed annually or when any change in the law is made (USA & UK).
6. We promote a culture of safety, that encourages listening to and engaging in dialogue with children and young people.
7. We will act upon any concerns or allegations made regarding the health, safety and/or wellbeing of children.
8. SwimTayka will report any person suspected of any kind of abuse against a child or young person, to the appropriate authority in their home country. If required, we may give evidence at a trial where the authorities decide to prosecute.

3. How do we define abuse?

Recognition of abuse or neglect is paramount to being able to do something about it. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse and neglect may occur regardless of socioeconomic status, religion, gender, race or ethnicity.

Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

a. Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

b. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse may involve bullying, causing children and young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Emotional abuse often accompanies other forms of abuse, although it is sometimes carried out in isolation.

c. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is

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happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children and young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children and young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

c. Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or guardian failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or young person's basic emotional needs.

As our organisation works with very poor communities, neglect may be very hard to differentiate between the normal way of life in the area. However, even in very poor communities, it should be apparent if one child appears more malnourished or poorly clothed than other children of the same community and social standing.

Individuals within our organisation need to be alert to all types of potential abuse of children and young people both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of our organisation or partner organisation.

4. How can we prevent abuse in our organisation?

SwimTayka's policy for safeguarding children starts from the top. We have developed this policy to try and protect every child we come into contact with and the best way we can do that is to ensure we put no child into a situation where there is potential for abuse.

SwimTayka will:

1. Complete Background Checks - No volunteer under any circumstances will be allowed to attend a project without a valid background check in place to ensure we are not sending people with harmful intent into the communities where we work.
2. Minimise Opportunities - We will eliminate one-adult/one-child situations. This will lower the risk of abuse. We will always arrange group situations to involve several children and adults together rather than placing a child alone with one adult.

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3. Volunteers should be mindful of putting themselves in one-adult/one-child situations with children and avoid this where at all possible.
4. Volunteers must Stay Alert - Don't expect obvious signs when a child is being sexually abused. Signs are often there but you have to spot them. Some of the warning signs that a child might be abused or neglected include:
 - Nervousness around adults
 - Aggression toward adults or other children
 - Inability to stay awake or to concentrate for extended periods
 - Sudden, dramatic changes in personality or activities
 - Acting out sexually or showing interest in sex that is not appropriate for his or her age
 - Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries
 - Low self-esteem
 - Poor hygiene

5. What should you do if you suspect abuse or Neglect?

To do nothing is not an option. If you suspect abuse of any kind you have the responsibility to act.

The welfare of children and young people will always be paramount. There is an expected responsibility for all members of our organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

Sometimes when abuse is only suspected and there is no firm evidence, complaint or admission, it can be difficult to establish but you are urged not to ignore strong suspicions or feelings. In these cases, it is still imperative to act.

- a. Always consult with your Project Manager/Charity Coordinator who will:
 - i. contact the appropriate authority in that country.
 - ii. discuss your suspicions or concerns directly with the local partner organisation.
 - iii. contact our partner organisation may know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse as they work closely with families within the community.
- b. Some of our partner organisations work with local law enforcement, teachers, nurses, social workers, lawyers or therapists who may have helpful insights on how to make an effective report.
- c. If for any reason you are not able to discuss your concerns with someone from our partner organisations, you should contact SwimTayka directly. An example of this

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would be if your suspicions or concerns involve someone who works within our partner organisation.

- d. If immediate action is necessary (ie you witness abuse taking place or a child comes to you immediately after an event) IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD OR CHILDREN AND/OR YOUNG PEOPLE CONCERNED.
- If emergency medical attention is required, call an ambulance or take the child directly to the nearest hospital, clinic or emergency department.
 - If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted, unless doing so would further endanger the child.
- e. It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible about any concerns. However, you MUST NOT discuss your concerns with parents in the following circumstances:
- where contacting parents/guardian would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk
 - where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
 - where organised or multiple abuse is suspected

6. What to do if a child or young person talks to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child and/or young person may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present.

In these situations YOU MUST:

1. Listen carefully to the child and/or vulnerable adult. DO NOT directly question the child.
2. Give the child and/or young person time and attention.
3. Allow the child and/or young person to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
4. Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's and/or young person's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
5. Use the child's and/or young person's own words where possible.

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6. Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared - do not offer false confidentiality.
7. Reassure the child and/or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you and they have not done anything wrong;
8. Tell the child and/or young person what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.
9. **DO NOT** ask the child and/or young person to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

It is good practice to ask a child and/or young person why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child and/or young person wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

7. Procedure for Acting on Complaints

There are several steps SwimTayka and/or its volunteers must take when presented with a complaint of suspected child abuse

1. Speak out

If you have information which suggests an adult who works with children (either a SwimTayka volunteer or other person) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child and/or vulnerable adult.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child and/or vulnerable adult.
- behaved towards a child/children and/or vulnerable adult/s in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children and/or young people.

You must speak immediately to one of the people designated as responsible for child protection within our organisation

In SwimTayka the person to speak to regarding

- Bryan Avery Tel: +44 7973 167169

If either of these people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with

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- A Trustee

Bryan Avery, Swindon, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 79731 167169

Jody Fry, Swindon, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 7514 508435

Dale Roberts, Vancouver, Canada
Tel: +1 (604) 808-1934

Lorraine Mackie, Folkestone, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 7894 945569

If any of these people are not immediately available to talk to, then you must discuss it with your Project Manager/host NGO senior manager.

2. Investigate

If the complaint is against a volunteer or staff member of SwimTayka, that person will be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.

Any potential witnesses and the individual reported should be interviewed in a sensitive manner bearing in mind that it may be a false accusation or the person may be innocent of the accusation.

This investigation should be carried out by the host NGO manager or other person nominated by them to act responsibly in accordance with their own procedures or ours if they do not have one.

A report of the investigation must be made and sent to SwimTayka within two days.

3. Take Action

Any action taken will be with the safety of the children first and foremost in mind.

Should the investigation reveal a real possibility of false accusation, then the volunteer should be allowed to return to their duties but procedures enforced which ensure they are not put in a 'one adult/one child situation'. This is as much for their own protection as for the children's.

Should the investigation raise concerns over the behaviour of any volunteer, then any person found to have behaved in an inappropriate manner toward any child while engaged on a SwimTayka project will be summarily expelled from the SwimTayka programme.

The person will be asked to leave the project site immediately at their own expense, they will be excluded from all SwimTayka activities and will be barred from participating in any future SwimTayka projects.

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SwimTayka has the legal responsibility to notify the appropriate authorities if any of our volunteers or project workers are suspected of child abuse. Abusers will be reported to the appropriate authority in their home country and maybe prosecuted locally in the host country.

SwimTayka will assist in any criminal case involving abuse of a child against that person.

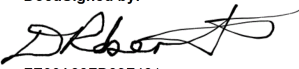
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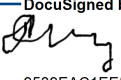
8. Policy Review Timetable

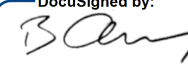
This policy will be reviewed annually at the meeting of Trustees. Requests for amendment should be made prior to the meeting with changes proposed.

Version Number	Changes made	Date
1.0	created	May 2017
1.1	Changed logo and added new Trustees 3b: replaced 'serious bullying' with just 'bullying' 7.3: SwimTayka will assist in any criminal case, changed from may to will	January 2018
1.2	2. added 1:5 ratio 3b. changed: Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of all treatment of a child and/or vulnerable adult though it may occur alone. to Emotional abuse often accompanies other forms of abuse, although it is sometimes carried out in isolation. 5a. Added a step by step process	January 2019
1.3	Removed USA references Sign by all Trustees	January 2020

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 Dale Roberts
 2/23/2020

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 Lorraine Mackie
 2/25/2020

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 Jody Fry
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 Bryan Avery
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