



SWPSA SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Schools Water Polo South Africa

Effective May 2026

1. PURPOSE

Schools Water Polo South Africa ("SWPSA") is committed to providing a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all participants, particularly children and young people participating in school water polo activities.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Protect children and young people from harm;
- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of all players;
- Establish safeguarding responsibilities and expectations;
- Provide clear reporting and response procedures;
- Promote a culture of safety, accountability and respect throughout SWPSA.

SWPSA adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, exploitation, bullying, harassment, grooming and unsafe conduct involving minors.

2. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Policy applies to:

- Players;
- Coaches;
- Managers;
- Team staff;
- Referees and Officials;
- Selectors;
- Administrators;
- Volunteers;
- Tour staff;
- Parents and Guardians;
- Service providers acting on behalf of SWPSA.

This Policy applies:

- During all SWPSA activities, events and competitions;
- During tours and travel;
- At accommodation venues;
- During online or digital communication connected to SWPSA;
- In any context where conduct may impact participant welfare or safety.



3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Child / Minor

Any person under the age of 18 years.

3.2. Safeguarding

Actions taken to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or unsafe environments.

3.3. Abuse

Abuse may include:

- Physical abuse;
- Emotional or psychological abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Neglect;
- Exploitation;
- Online abuse;
- Bullying or cyberbullying.

3.4. Grooming

Conduct intended to build inappropriate relationships or trust with a child for exploitative purposes.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SWPSA is committed to:

- Prioritising the welfare of children above competitive outcomes;
- Creating safe sporting environments;
- Treating all concerns seriously;
- Acting promptly and appropriately;
- Promoting dignity, inclusion and respect;
- Encouraging participants to speak up about concerns;
- Supporting fair and confidential reporting processes.

5. RIGHTS OF PLAYERS

All players have the right to:

- Feel safe and respected;
- Participate free from abuse and harassment;
- Be treated fairly and inclusively;
- Be listened to;
- Raise concerns without fear of retaliation;
- Have their welfare prioritised.



6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. SWPSA Responsibilities

SWPSA shall:

- Promote safeguarding awareness;
- Implement safeguarding procedures;
- Appoint designated safeguarding contacts where possible;
- Respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- Promote safe recruitment and screening practices;
- Support education and training;
- Maintain confidentiality where reasonably possible.

6.2. Responsibilities of Coaches, Managers and Team Staff

Adults working with players must:

- Place player welfare first;
- Maintain professional boundaries;
- Act as positive role models;
- Treat players with dignity and respect;
- Avoid favouritism and inappropriate relationships;
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- Follow SWPSA safeguarding procedures.

Adults must never:

- Engage in inappropriate conduct with minors;
- Use degrading, humiliating or abusive language;
- Engage in grooming behaviour;
- Share inappropriate content with players;
- Be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while supervising minors;
- Use physical punishment or intimidation.

6.3. Responsibilities of Players

Players are expected to:

- Treat others respectfully;
- Speak up about unsafe behaviour;
- Respect personal boundaries;
- Avoid bullying or harassment;
- Follow safety instructions.

6.4. Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians should:

- Support safeguarding measures;
- Encourage respectful behaviour;
- Report concerns responsibly;
- Respect SWPSA processes and personnel.



7. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

SWPSA may require:

- Safeguarding declarations;
- Disclosure of conflicts of interest;
- Verification of qualifications or references;
- Criminal background or police clearances where appropriate;
- Screening for persons working directly with minors.

SWPSA reserves the right to restrict participation where safeguarding concerns arise.

8. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Adults involved with SWPSA must always maintain appropriate professional boundaries with players.

This includes:

- Maintaining appropriate communication;
- Avoiding secrecy;
- Avoiding favouritism;
- Respecting physical and emotional boundaries;
- Avoiding private one-on-one situations where reasonably possible.

Adults must not:

- Engage in romantic or sexual relationships with players;
- Share hotel rooms with players unless specifically authorised and appropriately supervised;
- Communicate in a secretive or inappropriate manner;
- Exchange inappropriate gifts or favours.

9. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND ONLINE SAFETY

All digital communication involving players must remain:

- Professional;
- Respectful;
- Transparent;
- Appropriate.

Coaches and staff should:

- Use approved communication channels;
- Include parents or guardians where appropriate;
- Avoid private or secretive messaging with minors.

The following are prohibited:

- Sharing inappropriate images or content;
- Cyberbullying;
- Harassment;
- Sexualised communication;
- Exploitative or manipulative online conduct.



10. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Appropriate physical contact may occur where necessary for:

- Safety;
- Medical treatment;
- Instruction or correction;
- Emergency situations.

Any physical contact must:

- Be appropriate and proportionate;
- Respect the dignity of the player;
- Never be abusive, intimidating or unnecessary.

11. CHANGING ROOMS AND ACCOMMODATION

Adults must respect player privacy in changing rooms and accommodation settings.

The following principles apply:

- Appropriate supervision must be maintained;
- Privacy should be respected at all times;
- Adults should avoid unnecessary presence in changing areas;
- Accommodation arrangements should prioritise player safety and welfare.

On tours:

- Curfews and supervision rules must be enforced;
- Clear rooming arrangements should be established;
- Players should know how to access support if uncomfortable or unsafe.

12. TRANSPORTATION

Transport arrangements involving minors should:

- Prioritise safety and accountability;
- Be transparent and authorised;
- Avoid unnecessary one-on-one transportation where possible.

Parents or guardians should be informed of travel arrangements.

13. ANTI-BULLYING

SWPSA prohibits:

- Bullying;
- Cyberbullying;
- Hazing;
- Initiation practices;
- Intimidation;
- Social exclusion.

All participants are expected to contribute to a positive and respectful environment. Reports of bullying will be treated seriously.



14. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

14.1. Obligation to Report

Any participant who becomes aware of:

- Abuse;
 - Grooming;
 - Bullying;
 - Neglect;
 - Harassment;
 - Inappropriate conduct;
- must report the concern immediately.

14.2. Reporting Channels

Concerns may be reported to:

- SWPSA Safeguarding Officer;
- Tournament Director;
- SWPSA Executive Committee member;
- Team Manager;
- Appropriate safeguarding authority.

Emergency situations should be referred immediately to relevant authorities.

14.3. Confidentiality

Reports will be handled confidentially where reasonably possible.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- Participant safety is at risk;
- Legal obligations require disclosure;
- External authorities must be informed.

15. RESPONSE TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

SWPSA may:

- Conduct preliminary assessments;
- Implement interim protective measures;
- Restrict participation;
- Initiate disciplinary processes;
- Refer matters to external authorities;
- Support affected participants.

Participant welfare shall remain the priority throughout any process.

16. WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

No participant shall suffer retaliation for reporting a safeguarding concern in good faith.

Retaliation, intimidation or victimisation of reporters constitutes misconduct.



17. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

SWPSA encourages safeguarding education for:

- Coaches;
- Managers;
- Officials;
- Administrators;
- Players;
- Parents and guardians.

Training may include:

- Recognising abuse;
- Professional boundaries;
- Online safety;
- Reporting obligations;
- Tour safeguarding practices.

18. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Breaches of this Policy may result in:

- Removal from activities;
- Suspension;
- Disciplinary proceedings;
- Referral to schools or governing bodies;
- Referral to law enforcement or safeguarding authorities;
- Permanent exclusion from SWPSA activities.

19. RECORD KEEPING

SWPSA shall maintain safeguarding records securely and confidentially.

Records may include:

- Reports;
- Investigations;
- Risk assessments;
- Outcomes;
- Protective measures implemented.

20. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy:

- Takes effect on 4 May 2026;
- Applies to all SWPSA activities;
- Shall be reviewed periodically by the SWPSA Executive Committee.

Approved by RC Irvine (Chairman of SWPSA) on 4 May 2026 on behalf of the SWPSA Executive Committee