

4.2 The BSAC Whistle Blowing Policy

Why do we need a whistle blowing policy?

A whistle blowing policy will:

- Encourage individuals to feel confident in raising concerns about the safety and welfare of children involved in a BSAC club.
- Provide a method by which to raise concerns and to receive feedback.
- Ensure that individuals receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to how to pursue further if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

Who is covered by the BSAC Whistle Blowing Policy?

ALL those involved in an activity carried out under the jurisdiction of BSAC are covered by this policy.

The Key Principles of the BSAC Whistle Blowing Policy

- The policy is complementary to the BSAC's Child Protection Policy & Procedures.
- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy;
- If a matter raised results in any disciplinary action, the BSAC's disciplinary procedures will apply.

Potential bars to Whistle Blowing:

Instructors, students, club Officers and other parents/carers are often the first to realise that a child is being, or is at risk of being, harmed and/or their welfare is being compromised. They may feel unable to disclose their concerns because:

- They may fear the consequences and the difficulty of handling them.
- They may fear harassment or victimisation.
- They may know and respect the person concerned and cannot believe what they have seen or heard. They may minimise or excuse their fears for the child.

However

- BSAC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. All BSAC members are required, when they have a concern about any aspect of a child's safety and welfare, to come forward and voice their concern.
- BSAC expects all members to consider the welfare of the child above their relationship with the individual concerned.
- BSAC is committed to enabling everyone to raise matters of concern without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

Dealing with allegations made by Whistle Blowers.

- BSAC is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone within BSAC Clubs.
- BSAC recognises that disclosing concern may be uncomfortable but, when facing a real threat to the safety of a child, members should not fear. They will, after all, be acting in the best interest of the child concerned.
- BSAC will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith.

- Any investigation into alleged poor practice will neither influence nor be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals.
- Confidentiality will be maintained in line with BSAC policy (see **Buddy Guard** policy).

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages the whistle blower to put their name to their allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they must always be considered in line with BSAC Policy guidance.

False allegations

- It is not a false allegation if an individual raises a concern in good faith which is not confirmed by investigation and in such circumstances no action will be taken against the whistle blower.
- If, however, it is established that the allegation was malicious or for personal gain, the club must consider if disciplinary action should be taken against the referrer. In such cases, the BSAC's disciplinary procedure will apply.
- All actions taken to address any concerns raised by a whistle blower must follow the guidance "What to do if a concern is raised". - see "Buddy Guard" policy.

Advice from External Agencies

- **Public concern at Work - making whistle blowing work**

Advice email: whistle@pcaw.org.uk

Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 7404 6609

- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000: help@nspcc.org.uk