



## **Thame Swimming Club - Swimmers' Behaviour Policy**

*This policy has been written in language which we hope can be understood by most of our swimmers, but does contain some complicated points and language. Please let us know if your child needs it to be explained by one of the coaches or the committee.*

Thame Swimming Club (TSC) is a competitive club that wants all our swimmers to reach their full potential, both in and out of the pool. The TSC is also intended to be an inclusive, fun and friendly club. The club is run by volunteers who coach and help in their own time. Coaches and volunteers who are giving up their time will only continue to do so if they feel that the swimmers are paying attention, following the rules and are polite and respectful. Appropriate behaviour is essential for the safety and wellbeing of all swimmers and adults volunteering for the club. It also means the club can keep up its good reputation, which allows us to keep using the various leisure centres and sports clubs that we visit. Remember that the public may be using the pool at the same time and that swimmers represent the swimming club.

### **Aim**

TSC members have all signed up follow Codes of Conduct using the Swim England models and Wave Power guidance, plus other relevant TSC and Swim England policies. TSC wants to make sure everyone follows the Code of Conduct that applies to them. If a swimmer is considered to have breached (broken) their Code of Conduct, this document is designed to guide the Swimmer, Committee, staff, and parents/carers through what actions will happen next (the disciplinary process).

This policy is not for use where breaches of the Code of Conduct of parents/carers, committee members, coaches and volunteers are concerned.

This policy is intended for use in all situations when a swimmer is representing TSC, including at training sessions, competitions, swim camp and similar events.

### **What is disciplinary action or a disciplinary process?**

A disciplinary action or process is when the Club takes action because it has concerns about a swimmer's behaviour. The Club can set consequences for poor behaviour or 'misconduct'. These consequences can be warnings, or they can be more serious, for example, not being able to swim or compete for the club for a set period of time, or being asked to leave the club permanently. Usually, the Club would move through different steps before these serious consequences. There may be some situations when the Club would move straight to a serious consequence. This depends how much concern there is about the swimmer's behaviour. This considers the effect on other people, as well as the Club's reputation.



## What is misconduct?

The following list does not include all possibilities but gives examples of behaviours which can be 'acts of misconduct'. These are major issues which can negatively affect other people and the Club will take them seriously if they happen.

'Acts of gross misconduct' mean actions which are so serious that they may lead to suspension (time away from the Club) or termination (ending) of membership. Acts which have safeguarding or welfare implications will be dealt with by the Club Welfare Officer. Some serious issues might need to be reported to Swim England, and to the police if they are illegal. Allegations of a potential crime will also be reported to the police. There may be times when Children's Social Care will also need to be informed.

### Examples of misconduct

- Bullying Club Members: this can include physically, verbally, in written communication or through social media or gaming platforms, either directly or indirectly. Bullying can also include intimidating behaviour and belittling of the swimmer.
- Taking or sharing inappropriate photos or videos.
- Using mobile phones/ devices in the toilets or changing rooms at training sessions or at galas.
- Undermining coaching staff either in speech, or in written or online communication, either directly or indirectly. This means saying unreasonable negative things about someone, or putting someone down.
- Acting outside the TSC Codes of Conduct, Swim England Wavepower guidance, or any other relevant TSC or Swim England policies.
- Physical or verbal abuse of swimmers or adults.
- Refusal to obey reasonable instructions, or to follow event or local pool rules.
- Doing things which are unsafe and which could put other people or yourself in danger, or to cause damage to Club/hired property.
- Gross negligence (which means a major lack of the expected care and attention) which causes unacceptable loss, damage, or injury.
- Showing a lack of respect towards leisure centre staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, and swimmers, and the club.

An 'act of gross misconduct' means an incident of very serious poor behaviour. This can lead straight to the final stage of the disciplinary process.



### **Note for parents and carers regarding young people with additional needs:**

*If a young person is neurodiverse or has particular medical, emotional or learning needs affecting their communication or behaviour, reasonable adjustments will be taken into consideration (this means we can change the way we approach some issues if a young person has a difficulty like autism or ADHD, for example). We understand it can take time to have a formal diagnosis, so we ask that parents/carers make us aware upon joining the club or at any stage that they become aware that a young person might benefit from a different approach. Coaching staff will be guided by parents to assist them in understanding and moderating a swimmer's behaviour where different approaches might be helpful in these situations. However, the process below will still need to be followed and expectations of acceptable behaviour cover all swimmers.*

### **The Four Stages of Disciplinary Action**

All recurring/significant Stage 0 issues and all Stage 1-3 actions must be formally documented in the TSC incidents log by the Coaches/Land Training Lead who will then make the Head Coach aware.

#### **Stage 0 - Standard Coaching Intervention/Interaction (Coach asks the swimmer to stop the behaviour)**

Stage 0 will be the first action taken by the Group Coach for minor issues. The Coach might need to discuss it with the parents, carers, Club Welfare Officer, and Head Coach.

- Most coaching, training, and behavioural issues can be appropriately, effectively, and quickly dealt with through standard and informal intervention, interaction, and discussion by the coach, Chair or other appropriate committee member.
- If the behavioural issue continues after the swimmer has been spoken to within a training session, the swimmer will be asked to sit on poolside. The coach chooses how long this needs to be for, but this would usually be quite short, as we would not want a child sitting out for a long period of time.
- If the coach thinks the issue is serious, or it is not solved by a short time sitting out on poolside, the coach can exclude a swimmer from the session where the incident takes place. This means they can ask the swimmer to leave the session. The swimmer's parents will be called to collect them, unless it is quite close to the end of the session.



- The group coach will consider asking the swimmer and their parents/carers to a 'Performance Review' with the group coach, and the Head Coach (if required). The Chair or another suitable committee member chosen by the Chair can join this.
- Coaches can use their judgement to use and repeat Stage 0 any number of times before moving to Stage 1. Where there is a negative impact on other swimmers, it would generally be appropriate to move on to a further stage quickly if the behaviour happens again.
- Moving to Stage 1 should always be the next step once standard coaching interventions or interactions have not improved the issue.

**Stage 1 - Verbal Warning (A clear explanation to the young person and parents/carers about what the concern about behaviour is, and a record of the warning is kept by the Club).**

For minor issues where a swimmer breaks the Code of Conduct, and difficulties have not resolved at Stage 0, then Stage 1 of the process will start and a verbal warning will be given. Moderate issues will go straight to Stage 1.

- The Group Coach will report concerns to the Head Coach. The Group Coach will also, depending on the situation, either report it to the Welfare Officer if it is a welfare or safeguarding issue, or to the Chair or other appropriate committee member if not.
- To manage the behaviour, the Group coach can do either of the following:
  - call a meeting with swimmer and parents/carers along with the coaches to discuss what the concern is and what change is expected;
  - or issue a verbal warning, copied to the swimmer and parents/carers in writing and which will be referred to if the issue happens again.
- To ensure the swimmer is aware of the concerns and can be given the opportunity to change their behaviours, a Swimmer's Behaviour Contract may be given to them. A Club Template is attached as an Appendix.



## Stage 2 - Written Warning

- In the case of more serious incidents, or if a repeat incident occurs (either of a similar or different type), or there is a breach of a Swimmer's Behaviour Contract, a written warning will be given to the swimmer and parents/carers by the Club Chair or other appropriate committee member and Head Coach.
- This will give the reasons for the warning, explain the improvement required, and record the date when the warning runs out. Typically, a Stage 2 Written Warning will apply for 6 weeks.
- Stage 2 will warn that action under Stage 3 of the disciplinary procedure will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement, or if further incidents happen in this time.
- As for Stage 1, a note will be entered into the incident log, copied to them in writing and may be referred to if there are further incidents.

## Stage 3 Suspension or Termination of Membership

- If behaviour is still unsatisfactory after the swimmer has received a written warning, or if the swimmer has done something which is an 'act of gross misconduct' (a serious breach of any of the TSC Codes of Conduct or those of Swim England), then a fixed term suspension (missing Club activities for a set period of time) or termination (ending) of a swimmer's membership will be the next step.
- Membership can be suspended by the Head Coach, a Committee Member, or the Club Welfare Officer. It will always be a decision including more than one of these identified persons. If there is a welfare concern, this will be dealt with by the Welfare Officer or County/Regional/National Welfare Officer separately.
- Once the period of suspension has been served a return meeting will be held with the group coach, head coach and any committee member, where the swimmer will re-sign the code of conduct and the behaviour policy. Alongside this, there will also be a Risk Mitigation Plan which will need to be signed by both the swimmer and their parents/guardians. Any further breaches of behaviour which fall under serious misconduct may result in expulsion from Thame Swimming Club.
- Termination of Club membership will follow the process in the Club Constitution.



## **Club Complaints**

If parents/carers are unhappy with the process above and are not able to resolve their concerns informally, they can make a Club Complaint. The process follows Swim England guidance and is detailed in our Feedback, Concerns and Complaints Process page. Swim England Handbook also contains information about complaint escalation to Swim England such as a disagreement about the Club's decision to terminate membership.

Similarly, if another swimmer, coach or committee member wishes to, they can raise a Club Complaint against the swimmer whose behaviour is causing concern. The process will then follow the Club Complaints process, rather than the above steps being followed one after the other.

Date policy agreed by committee: 31.1.24

Recommended review timeframe: February 2025 or as required



## Appendix

### Thame Swimming Club - Swimmer's Behaviour Contract

#### Contract between:

Thame Swimming Club (TSC) and ( child's name/ parent's names)

This contract has been drawn up on ( date) to address incidents of poor behaviour by .....; who now agrees to follow the TSC code of conduct.

( Name of child ) will additionally not:

1. *(Details of specific actions about which the concerns have been raised.)*
2. *(Details of specific actions about which the concerns have been raised.)*
3. *(Details of specific actions about which the concerns have been raised.)*

*(Name of parents)* will be required to:

1. *(Details of what is required of the parents.)*
2. *(Details of what is required of the parents.)*
3. *(Details of what is required of the parents.)*

If the member is reported to have breached (broken) this contract, or to have behaved in a way that breaches the Code of Conduct, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Parents will be informed immediately.
2. Stage 2 of the Swimmer's Behaviour Policy will be followed, and a written warning will be issued to the swimmer and parents/carers by the Club Chair. This will give reasons for the warning, the improvement required and the date when the warning expires.
3. The swimmer will be warned that if further acts of misconduct occur, action under Stage 3 of the disciplinary procedure will result in the swimmer's suspension or termination.
4. Parents will be advised over their rights to appeal through Swim England if Stage 3 consequences are applied.

#### Signatures

Member:

Date: ..



Parent 1:

Date: ..

Parent 2:

Date:

Coach:

Date:

Committee Member

Date: