

# **Mamma Swim:**

## **Safeguarding, Children and Young People Policy & Procedures.**

Date last review: July 2023.

### **Contents**

1. Key contacts
2. Introduction
3. Who this policy applies to
4. Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Data capture and consent
6. Keeping this policy up to date and external guidance
7. Training and Code of Conduct for Participants/ members
8. Venue Rules and Regulations
9. Responding to Child Protection Concerns
10. Whistleblowing and Duty to Report Concerns and Suspicions
11. Appendix 1 - Signs of abuse
12. Appendix 2 - Concern or Incident report form (CIRs)

### **1. Key Contacts**

**Founders of Mamma Swim:** Abigail Sutton & Bridget Flynn

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Kate Mulcahy

If you want to seek advice, report any abuse or discuss concerns in relation to children and young people external to Mamma Swim activities, please contact the local safeguarding boards:

Hackney	020 83565500
Camden	020 79743317
Waltham Forest	020 84962310
Haringey	020 84894470

Alternatively, you can contact the NSPCC and speak to their advisors for advice and support 24hrs a day on 0808 800 5000.

**In a safeguarding emergency, you can also call the police on 999**

## **2. Introduction**

Mamma Swim is a swim community empowering women to boost their mental and physical health. Our mission is to inspire, engage and empower mums through swimming to help them build confidence and strength in the water and all areas of their lives.

Mamma Swim comes into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activity:

- Community childcare swap, where members/participants look after one another's babies whilst members/participant take it in turns to swim.

The Mamma Swim community is committed to keeping children and young people safe, and the welfare of children is of the utmost importance. This is reflected within our policies and procedures. The creation and application of a Safeguarding Policy supports members of the community, their children and volunteers to participate and interact safely and confidently with the children in our sessions. This policy aims to ensure that children and young people are safe and appropriately supported, and that the members of our community are informed and confident with respect to their participation in our activities. This policy will be reviewed annually in autumn by the DSL and the founders of Mamma Swim, along with other policies and procedures following any communication and feedback received in the previous year.

It is unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind, and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief,

sexual orientation or identity. We endeavour to be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that all children receive support and protection.

To keep children who participate in our sessions safe, we ensure that all adult participants/members and volunteers adhere to the code of conduct and that all adult participants/members understand how to respond to and raise concerns about a child.

For the purposes of this policy, children are defined as individuals under the age of 18.

### **3. Who this policy applies to**

This policy applies to all participants/members and those who coordinate activities and sessions as part of the Mamma Swim community.

The meet up sessions are typically arranged in registered facilities with their own safeguarding and child protection procedures and as such not all staff will need to be fully aware of this document however, where possible this policy should be shared with those organisations.

### **4. Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The responsibility for safeguarding children as part of Mamma Swim is overseen by a Designated Safeguarding Lead known as the 'DSL'. Kate Mulcahy is the DSL. Contact details for the DSL are provided at the beginning of this policy.

This person has the necessary authority to take responsibility for safeguarding matters including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other participants/members.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Raising awareness of this policy and ensuring that it is kept up to date and observed
- Liaising with local Children's Social Care and the local LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and with other external agencies, such as other local authorities, schools, the police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), as necessary
- Providing support, advice and guidance to members of the community on an ongoing basis, and on specific safeguarding issues as required

## **5. Data Capture and Consent**

The Mamma Swim team only collects data when strictly necessary. Examples include allergies and emergency contact details.

All participants/members who take part in meetup sessions will be expected to share with the organisation any relevant medical and dietary requirements of participants/members and their attending children. This information and additional consent forms regarding code of conduct and photography/film consent are required to be signed by a parent or guardian of the participant as well as the participant's attending children. This is to ensure that all parties are aware of the community expectations and have provided specific consent for the community to gather the relevant information. These records will be deleted and / or destroyed annually or once the specific activity is concluded.

## **6. Keeping this policy up to date and external guidance**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- [Children Act 1989 & 2004](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)
- [Working Together to safeguard children 2018](#)

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSLs and Mamma Swim team and was last updated on the date stated at the top of this document. If any changes are needed before the next annual review is due, these will be made as soon as reasonably practicable.

## **7. Training and Code of Conduct for Participants/members**

The DSL(s) has attended child protection training, and leading safeguarding training with the NSPCC, which equips them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect. The DSLs undertake refresher training every other year.

The Mamma Swim community strives to create an environment where all children are respected and kept safe.

All participants/members in activities or sessions are expected to follow the rules within this policy. These documents outline the expectations for all participants/members with regard to children and interactions within the team.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

All participants/members should:

- Treat the safety and welfare of children as paramount at all times
- Treat all members of the activities and programmes, including children and other parents, with consideration and respect
- Model appropriate behaviour for the children to follow, e.g., this would exclude bullying, racism, sexism, aggression, but include friendliness, respect, openness and tolerance
- Report and challenge abusive adult activities, such as ridicule or bullying
- Adhere to the principles and procedures contained in this policy
- Be alert to any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm
- Share any concerns about a child, or another adult's behaviour, to the DSL(s)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child
- Take steps to ensure that they are not alone with a child, and if this is unavoidable take steps to ensure that they can be observed by others
- Not make suggestive or inappropriate comments to, or about a child, even as banter
- Do not take photos or films of children without relevant adult's permission, see below
- Never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or adults
- Refrain from any action that would bring the Mamma Swim community, our team or our programmes and activities into disrepute
- Use appropriate language at all times

If participants/members feel uncomfortable in any situation, they should speak to the venue staff, DSL or Mamma Swim team without delay for advice and support.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Safeguarding matters are highly sensitive and must not be discussed with those outside of the team, unless it is in the context of a necessary external referral (which will typically be made by the DSL).

Participants/members should not discuss anything to do with safeguarding individuals in the community with parents or other stakeholders. If conversations are required with parents or other stakeholders, it must be the DSL or Mamma Swim core team who does this.

No participant should guarantee confidentiality to children or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. You can say that you will pass on information in confidence only to the people

who must be told in order to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. You can also reassure those involved that the team will take all available steps to protect the informant from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that may occur after a disclosure has been made.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

All participants/members must strive to ensure the health and safety of every child and participant in the community by observing the code of conduct and other rules and regulations of the hosting venue. All participants/members should be aware that young people and children have a lack of experience, are often unaware of potential risks and have a reduced perception of risk compared to adults. Therefore, participants/members need to be extra vigilant to potential hazards to children.

## **FITNESS TO PARTICIPATE**

Participants/members must not be under the influence of alcohol, or any other substance, which may affect their ability to support and supervise children appropriately during the sessions. If there is any doubt about an individual's ability to participate, they will be asked to leave the session pending investigation.

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES, CAMERAS AND DEVICES**

Participants/members are encouraged to use discretion with the use of personal mobile phones during sessions. Participants/members must not take pictures or films of other participants/members or their children without express permission of the parents. Anyone wishing to take photos or film must seek permission for all relevant participants/members and their children. No photos or films of other participants'/members children may be posted to social media platforms (including Heylo app) or shared publicly in which children can be identified. If a participant is wishing to share media online, after seeking relevant permission, then the faces of the children must be obscured.

No photos or films of children may be taken when they are in a state of undress, i.e. where their genitalia or buttocks may be seen. Particular caution should be used when taking photos or films while children are having their nappies changed or are changing clothes. No photos or films of children in a state of undress should be shared within the community.

Participants/members are expected to act responsibly when using the internet during sessions. The viewing of content inappropriate for children is not allowed and viewing of content that is not age appropriate is discouraged.

## **8. Venue Rules and Regulations**

Most meetups organised within the community will take place in organised venues e.g. community sports venues, community pools etc. These venues will have their own safeguarding practices, health

and safety procedures and risk assessments for activities. All participants/members and their children attending sessions in organised venues must adhere to the rules of the venue and follow the instructions of venue staff. If a participant has health and safety concerns or in the case of an emergency the participants/members should liaise with venue staff where possible.

## **9. Responding to Child Protection Concerns**

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD'S WELFARE?**

All participants/members are expected to be watchful and observant to any signs of abuse and neglect or other issues of concern in a child's life, at home, or elsewhere for children with whom they interact during sessions. A list of types of abuse and potential signs that a child is being abused are set out in Appendix 1 to this policy.

If you have **any** concerns about a child, you should raise these with the DSL(s) using the contact numbers provided on the front page of this policy as quickly as possible.

### **PROCEDURE FOR MAKING EXTERNAL REFERRALS**

**NB. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that concerns are reported, and appropriate action is taken.**

Once the DSL is alerted to a concern, the DSL will discuss the matter with the person reporting and will decide on an appropriate course of action.

If it appears that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL will immediately make a report to the Children's Social Care in the Local Authority where the child is resident, or, in an emergency, to the police.

If a child has not suffered and is not at risk of suffering serious harm, but is in need of additional support, the DSL will take steps to initiate this support process with the local agency.

If concerns are raised about the conduct or suitability of a participant, the DSL will refer the matter to the Mamma Swim team who will take relevant action.

A record of all referrals made, and any resulting action will be kept by the DSL(s) electronically in a restricted folder.

### **HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD RAISES A CONCERN**

Participants/members should always listen to a child who wants to talk about a concern. If a child tells you something which suggests that they know about or have been a victim of child abuse or neglect, it is important that you:

- Remain calm
- Listen carefully to what the child says, allowing them to talk at their own pace
- Be comforting and sympathetic
- Ensure that the child feels as little responsibility as possible
- Do not make any suggestions to the child regarding how the incident may have happened, therefore do not question the child except to clarify what they are saying
- Do not promise to keep the matter secret
- Tell the child what will happen next, and reassure them
- Write down exactly what the child says or what actions concern you, and what you have said in response as soon as possible, using the child's own words as far as you can. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with your name printed alongside the signature, using the concern or incident form where possible (see Appendix 2)
- Report the matter to the DSL who will decide whether it is appropriate to make an external referral. If the concern involves the DSL then external agencies should be contacted directly.
- Do not make assumptions about who the allegation might concern
- Seek support if you feel distressed from the DSL who will signpost to appropriate people and / or resources.

There are a number of ways in which a child or an adult may raise concerns about a child's welfare, and these include (but are not exhaustive – for more information see Appendix 1):

- A child may tell you about their abuse or another child's abuse directly
- Someone else might report that a child has reported to them, or that they believe a child is being or has been abused
- A child may show signs of physical injury, with no satisfactory explanation
- The behaviour of a child may indicate they are being abused
- Observation of a child abusing another, or an adult abusing a child
- A person may be acting suspiciously around children

## **10. Whistleblowing and Duty to Report Concerns and Suspicions**

All participants/members have a responsibility to report any concerns about improper, poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of children.

If you have concerns about the behaviour of fellow participants/members or staff of the Mamma Swim community or if you believe that best practice is not being adhered to, or that a practice may put a child or children at risk, you should follow this procedure.



In the first instance you should raise the matter immediately with the DSL(s), or the Mamma Swim team if the DSL is not available. You can also escalate the concern to external agencies if the concern is about one of the DSLs.

Any matters raised will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and promptly. No participant will suffer a detriment for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, provided that they do so with good intentions.

### **PROCEDURE IF AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER**

Allegations of abuse may arise against any person who comes into contact with children. If you think, for whatever reason (including where a child has disclosed abuse) that another member of staff or a volunteer has harmed or may have harmed a child, may be unsuitable to interact with children and/or may pose a risk of harm to children, you should inform the DSL(s) immediately. Should the allegation concern the DSL(s), you should report to the local agency.

In the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff of hosting venues or member of the Mamma Swim team the DSLs will follow the same reporting and escalating procedures and may liaise directly with venue agency but will not discuss with said staff member.

### **CONCERN OR INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE**

Participants/members have access to electronic copies of Concern or Incident report forms (CIR form) through the community platform app Heylo. These forms are structured to enable those who may need to report concerns about a child or adult, or a specific incident, to the DSL with ease. These can be found in Appendix 2. The creation of a form is not essential for reporting a concern to the DSL but it helps ensure that the information provided is what is needed and is as accurate as possible.

It is important that when reporting a concern

- That the account is provided in your own words or the child's own words (if reporting something disclosed to you)
- Times, dates and witnesses where possible are as accurate as possible
- Any actions taken by you, including words said at the time to the child, are described as accurately as possible a

As well as contacting the DSL - forms should be submitted to the DSL at [mammaswim@gmail.com](mailto:mammaswim@gmail.com) as soon as possible after the incident or concern is observed. The form will then be entered into the single reporting record held securely by the DSL. Safeguarding or welfare incidents will be dealt with according to this policy via the DSL(s).

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## **11. Appendix 1: Types and signs of abuse**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. A child may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children, and it is important to recognise that abusers can be any gender. As well as in person, abuse can take place wholly online and technology may also be used to facilitate abuse off-line.

### **TYPES OF ABUSE**

This is a non-exhaustive list of abuse:

#### **NEGLECT**

Defined as persistent or severe neglect of a child, likely to result in significant impairment of the child's health or development. For example:

- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter
- Failure to protect from physical or emotional harm
- Failure to meet child's basic emotional needs
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care.

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Defined as deliberate or intended injury to a child. For example:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or poisoning
- Deliberate inducement of an illness.

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Defined as actual or likely sexual exploitation. For example:

- Use of force or enticement to take part in sexual activity - penetrative or non-penetrative
- Involvement in non-contact activities such as looking at or making abusive images
- Encouraging children to watch sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse
- Any sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 (with or without their consent)

Note that this can happen in an online environment as well as in person.

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Defined as persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection which adversely affects the child's emotional and behavioural development conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. For example:

- Overprotection, limiting exploration and learning, preventing normal social interaction or imposing inappropriate expectations.
- Causing a child to feel frightened or in danger by the witnessing of violence towards another person whether domestic or not.

Note that this can happen in an online environment as well as in person.

## **ONLINE ABUSE**

Defined as any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, and it can happen anywhere online including social media, messaging apps, text messages, emails, online chats, online gaming and live streaming sites. Examples include:

- Cyberbullying, which is any type of bullying that takes place online
- Online grooming, which is where someone builds a relationship online with a child so they can abuse, exploit or traffic them
- Sexting which is abusive if someone is coerced or pressured into sharing sexual, naked or semi-naked images of themselves or others or sending sexual messages.

## **CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE**

This is the abuse of children by other children. It is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying and / or cyberbullying
- Physical abuse (hitting, biting, kicking or otherwise causing physical harm)
- Sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting and sexting
- Initiation / hazing, violence and rituals
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children.

## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

This is all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

## **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION**

Children being forced or manipulated into committing crimes such as transporting drugs or money, shoplifting or violent crime.

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

This abuse can happen as a one-off incident or over time. Children can be victims of domestic abuse, witness domestic abuse or experience it within their own intimate relationships. It can include:

- Psychological abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

## **THE SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Being aware of the signs of abuse is the best way to help children. Participants/members and volunteers should make themselves aware of the signs so they can identify children who may need support.

The list below is not exhaustive but outlines the common signs of abuse. Participants/members and volunteers should realise that not all who are being abused exhibit external signs of this abuse, and sometimes children don't recognise that they are being abused or neglected.

## **PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Signs of abuse and neglect can include:

- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen
- Respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns, human bites
- Abdominal pain
- Headaches
- Scarring, scalds and burns
- Sexually transmitted infection/diseases
- Pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus
- Urinary infections
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Persistent sore throats
- Untreated health/dental issues
- Poor hygiene
- Poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather
- Regularly left alone, or in the charge of siblings who are not old enough to look after them properly.

## **BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

If a child is being abused, their behaviour may change in a number of ways. For example, they may:

- Behave aggressively or be disruptive, act out, demand attention and require more behavioural support than other children
- Become angry or disinterested and/or show little creativity
- Become sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Exhibit sleeping problems
- Exhibit inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age or sexualised drawings or behaviour in their play with other children
- Refuse to change their clothes for activities or participate in physical activities
- Develop eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Lack confidence or have low self-esteem
- Display a sudden change in behaviour – aggression, extroversion, depression, withdrawn
- Exhibit attention seeking behaviour, hyperactivity or a low attention span
- Appear frightened of parents or family members
- Display indiscriminate attachment
- Suffer from anxiety/irritability
- Have poor peer relationships
- Have frequent visits to the toilet (possible urinary infection)
- Spend more or less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- Become more secretive about who they are talking to or what they are doing online.

### **SIGNS THAT A PARENT OR OTHER RESPONSIBLE ADULT MAY BE ABUSING OR NEGLECTING A CHILD**

The parent/adult may:

- Offer conflicting or unconvincing explanations of any injuries to the child
- Appear indifferent to, or overtly rejects, the child
- Deny existence of or blames the child for the child's problems at home or on the programmes
- Display unrealistic expectations of the child i.e. demands a level of academic or physical performance of which they are not capable
- See and describe the child as worthless, burdensome or in another negative light
- Refuse offers of help for the child's problems
- Be isolated physically/emotionally.

If a child is being groomed, there are indicators within an adult's behaviour that may become apparent. However, it is important to realise that not all adults who are grooming will show these signs, and not all adults who show these signs are grooming. It is unlikely that in the activities the Mamma Swim community host, participants/members will come across these signs, but they are highlighted for awareness.

- Overly affectionate behaviour with a child
- Affording special attention or preferential treatment to a child
- Excessive time spent with a child outside of the organisation
- Frequently spending time with a child in private or isolated areas
- Making friends with a child's parents and visiting their home
- Acting as a particular child's confidante
- Giving small gifts, money, toys, cards, letters to a child
- Flirtatious behaviour or making suggestive remarks or comments of a sexual nature around a child.

## 12. Appendix 2: Mamma Swim concern or incident forms

Forms should be submitted to the DSL Kate Mulcahy. Email address: [Mammaswim@gmail.com](mailto:Mammaswim@gmail.com)

Editable form available [HERE](#), or via Heylo.

<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:</b>			
<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>No follow-up required:</b>	<b>Follow-up required:</b>	<b>Follow-up completed:</b>	
<b>Follow up action:</b>			
<b>Action by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Filed by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### SUBJECT DETAILS:

<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Last Name:</b>		<b>Gender:</b>
<b>Subject is:</b>	Child	Participant	Venue staff:	Other:

**CONCERN / INCIDENT DETAILS:**

<b>Date:</b> (dd/mm/yy)	<b>Time:</b>		<b>Location:</b>
<p><b>Description</b> Please be factual, and ensure you note what was said / heard / observed. It is important that you also include what action you or any other adult involved have taken regarding this incident:</p>			
<p><b>Witness(es)</b> (if applicable)</p>			
<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Last Name:</b>
<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Last Name:</b>

**REPORTED BY:**

<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Last Name:</b>	
<b>Contact number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	

Electronic copies of this form are made available to all participants/members who form part of the Mamma Swim Community through the community platform Heylo.