

South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club

Member Protection Policy
v.1 (October 2018)



Member Protection Statement:

The South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club (the Club) is committed to the health, safety and the well-being of all members and volunteers and provides a safe environment for participating in surf lifesaving activities.

The Club wishes to ensure that all those taking part in Surf Life Saving can do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with Club Officers (paid or volunteer), coaches and/or other volunteers/Members. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

This policy does not address all membership protection matters and there are a number of SLSNZ documents that relate to Member Protection that members should be aware of, including:

- SLSNZ Competition Safety Manual.
- SLSNZ Regulations in particular the Member Protection Regulation, Code of Conduct and Health and Safety Regulation and guidelines.
- SLSNZ Patrol Operations Manual for the Club.

Purpose of this policy:

The purpose of the Membership Protection policy is to set out the process that the South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club will follow to help ensure the protection of its members, with particular reference to Minors and Vulnerable Adults. The principles of the policy and attached documents are based on our moral and ethical duty to ensure all Members can enjoy Surf Life Saving in a safe environment and as such they intend to reflect current best practice.

The Policy may be amended by the Club management committee at any time and will be made available to the members as soon as practical after any changes.

Member Protection Overview:

Awareness:

South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club members will be kept aware of what defines Member Protection and the Clubs role in keep Members safe. All Members especially those in a position of management of responsibility will have a clear understanding of the terms referenced below. Individuals will be referred to the SLSNZ member protection guidelines if more information is needed.

Defined Terms:

- *Club committee/board* means the Committee or Board of the Club as defined in the Club Constitution.
- *Constitution* means the Constitution of the South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club.
- *Member* means a member of South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club as defined in the Club Constitution.
- *Minor/Child/Children* means a person under the age of 18.
- *Vulnerable Adult* means a person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Duty of Care:

For the purpose of this policy, a 'Duty of care' generally means: *"The duty which rests upon an individual or organization to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organization is responsible"*.

Adults also have a responsibility to ensure Children and Vulnerable Adults are protected. In relation to Surf Life Saving, all South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club Members have a duty to ensure the highest possible standards of care are achieved in relation to Children and Vulnerable Adults taking part in Surf Life Saving.

In an activity such as Surf Life Saving, safety and keeping people safe is all about risk assessment and minimizing the risks involved at all levels of participation. In organized Club activity there is a heightened duty of care and as such members will be made aware that the principal risks extend to the quality of control exercised by those in charge. This duty will extend to Club managers, coaches, officials, event managers or administrators. Therefore, they will all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those directly taking part in Surf Life Saving activities as at any time they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge. For example, circumstances where a duty of care will be owed includes in vehicles, during journeys to and from Surf Life Saving activities, during events, team training events and camps etc.

The welfare of Minor & Vulnerable Adults is everyone's responsibility in the South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club, particularly when it comes to protecting Minors and Vulnerable Adults from abuse. All members of the South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club are expected to help - administrators, club officials, coaches, parents, friends, and the children themselves.

The common law principle *in loco parentis* imposes a duty on a person to provide the degree of care towards children in their care that could be expected from a reasonably careful and prudent parent. This includes taking reasonable measures to prevent foreseeable risks of injury to children and young people.

Abuse:

Abuse is defined as anything which individuals or organizations do, or fail to do, that directly or indirectly harms people or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development. It is generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse - Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect. Abuse generally occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power and/or trust and can include all forms of bullying. More information about abuse is available for members in the SLSNZ member protection guidelines.

Indications of Abuse:

There are physical and behavioral signs that might raise concern about the welfare or safety of a member. They are only indicators - not confirmation. Some examples are:

Where the person(s):

- Says that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or know) that abuse is occurring.
- Has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent?
- Behavior changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.
- Appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom she / he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship.
- Shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.
- Becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.

Physically disabled children and children with learning difficulties and Vulnerable Adults are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Minors:

The protection of Minors procedures at South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club stem from the following principles:

- The Child's welfare is paramount.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a Minor.
- All Children, regardless of age, any disability they have, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity and/or social/economic status have a right to be protected from abuse.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of Minors.
- Clubs and Members (particularly those holding positions of authority e.g. coaches, officials, managers) will be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice and guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation.

Health and Safety:

The environment South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club operates in can hold many elements of risk to manage. Health and safety of individuals (Members and non-members) in the South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club environment is the responsibility of all Members. The Club and its members will take all reasonable steps to ensure it has safe people, safe systems and safe operations. Individuals have the responsibility to keep themselves and others safe at all times. South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club has a Health and Safety manual, hazard register and a

number of documents and processes that must be followed including incident reporting. All Members will be made aware of all health and safety responsibilities and this is especially those roles that have the responsibility for others.

Some areas of particular importance for H & S are:

- Sports events.
- Patrol activities on or off the beach.
- Training sessions and courses.
- Travelling to and from events and Patrol locations.
- Use of Vehicles, especially driving on the beach.
- Manual Handling.
- Storage of equipment, food, fuel and chemicals.
- Building related hazards including decks, stairs, wet areas, kitchens.
- Working around the club (working bees, maintenance, contractors, chemicals)
- Environmental conditions (exposure to sun, heat, cold...)
- Unsupervised and social activities

South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club standards of practice:

The Club is committed to protecting all our members and has the following processes in place which will be managed by the club committee or executive.

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers:

The South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club has in place the following process for recruiting and managing volunteers:

1. Clear roles and responsibilities for volunteers and officers.
2. Volunteers must read and understand the Member Protection policy and Health & Safety policies.
3. Information about club's rules/operating procedures.
4. System for feedback and support.
5. Regular checks or supervision of helpers.
6. Support training of helpers and coaches in protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

Club Committee meetings:

The Club Committee will discuss the following on a regular basis at club committee meetings:

1. Any Member issues/incidents that have come up since the last meeting.
2. Any activities that have or have the potential of breaching member protection policy.

3. Any health and safety issues.
4. Any camps or team travel activities.
5. Any new staff or volunteers involved in dealing with Members.
6. Any changes that need to be made or reviews of this policy.

Any risks or incidents identified must have a remedial plan put in place by the committee to resolve the issue and this must be followed up at the next meeting (or sooner if required).

Codes of Conduct:

All members/coaches/officials/volunteers will adhere to the club Code of Conduct and SLSNZ Code of conduct. The Club will review the Club Code of Conduct annually or as required.

South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club Guidelines for Members

The South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club promotes the following guidelines and all Members will follow these to help to protect both Minors and Vulnerable Adults in our Clubs our Club coaches/helpers and Members from wrongful allegations:

1. Avoid situations where a Member is alone with one Minor or Vulnerable Adult. Occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, where a Minor or Vulnerable Adult falls ill and must be taken home, however, that one to one contact will not be allowed to occur on a regular basis.
2. If any form of physical support is required ask the person's permission, explain what is going on and why to both the Minor or Vulnerable Adult and their parents or caregivers.
3. Where possible ask parents or caregivers to be responsible for minors or Vulnerable Adults in changing rooms. Always ensure that whoever supervises minors work in pairs.
4. Where there are mixed teams/groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by at least one adult male and at least female coach or helper.
5. Don't allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate touching.
6. If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for Minors or Vulnerable Adults, make sure there is another responsible adult involved. Get the consent of the parent/caregiver and if possible the Minor or Vulnerable Adult. Let them know what you are doing and why.
7. Ensure that any claims of abuse by a Minor or Vulnerable Adult are taken seriously and that it is dealt with by club representatives or officer who knows what to do.
8. Ensure that the nature and intensity of training and competition does not exceed the capacity of a Minor's immature growing body and ability or the capacity or ability of a Vulnerable Adult.
9. Follow the SLSNZ guidelines for photography and video use (see reference sheet 'Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment').
10. Follow the overnight stay & alcohol policies from the Club.

All members that have contact with minors and vulnerable adults will be asked to read and acknowledge their understanding of these guidelines.

Reactive measures and process

This section of the policy sets out a process for the committee and members of South Brighton Surf Life Saving Club to be followed if there are concerns about the welfare of another member involved in Surf Life Saving. In particular, it sets out some examples of situations where a member may have concerns over the welfare of another Member including a Child or Vulnerable Adult.

If there is suspicion on reasonable grounds that abuse is/has taken place:

This may be by one of the following:

1. When a member advises that they have been abused.
2. When someone else advises that a member has been abused.
3. A Member advises that they know someone who has been abused (often they are referring to themselves).
4. Observation of a Member's behavior and/or injuries etc., and knowledge of the Member, leads to suspicion of abuse.
5. A Member is observed abusing another Member.

If another person advises a member of an abusive situation the approach will be:

1. Stay calm.
2. Don't promise to keep it confidential.
3. Listen to what the person says and take it seriously.
4. Only ask questions if needed to identify what the person is saying - don't ask the person about explicit details.
5. Make a detailed note of what the person has said.
6. Ensure the Member is safe.
7. Ensure the safety of other Members potentially at risk.
8. Obtain and document the following information:
 - a. The Members name, age and address.
 - b. The reason for suspecting abuse – i.e. observation, injury, information.
 - c. The assessment of danger posed to the Member including information pertaining to the alleged perpetrator.
 - d. What arrangements, if any, exist for the immediate protection of the Member?
 - e. What involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the suspected membership protection issues?
 - f. Immediately tell the Secretary, Chairperson, coach or any committee member, or at an event, the Event Manager or Referee - unless, of course they are suspected of being involved.

Call Police in the case of emergency or serious abuse.

Club Officers or event organizers will:

1. Talk to the child's parents/caregivers about the concerns if there may be an obvious explanation.
2. If working with athletes or lifeguards away from home, at a training camp, or a national/regional competition etc. - advise the Team Manager or the Coach.
3. If working with a school - inform a teacher.
4. If involved with another organization refer to their contact person for their action.
5. If necessary, seek advice from SLSNZ Staff

Contacting SLSNZ:

Confidential contact can be made directly with the Regional Manager (or the CEO for Northern Region) or the Chief Executive of SLSNZ. These staff have access to external resources and are tasked with advising you on such issues as parental involvement and police involvement.

It is not an individual Members responsibility to decide whether a person is being abused but it is the Members responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person. Members will make detailed notes of what they have seen or heard and won't delay passing on the information.

Actions to be taken by the Club:

In case of abuse involving club members the club will take some form of action. The following steps are examples of actions that may be required by Club officials:

1. Report the matter to the relevant authorities.
2. Report the matter to the police and preferably the child protection unit as appropriate.
3. Refer the matter the SLSNZ for further assistance.
4. The suspected victim and other family members may be asked to approach SLSNZ support services or their local GP to obtain a referral to professional support services and medical specialists.
5. The club committee may refer the matter to a judicial committee made up of people appointed by the committee with specific expertise to investigate the matter and look for a resolution.
6. Seek legal advice on how to manage the issue at a club level as it needs to be in accordance with the Constitution.
7. The club might impose some form of consequence on the offender which may include termination or suspension.
8. If the Member is suspended or his/her membership of SLSNZ is terminated, check periodically to ensure the Member is not being involved with Surf Life Saving in NZ.
9. Periodically follow up on the victim's progress after initial counseling and that they have access to available care.

This is a list of basic options for the club. There may be many other options or actions that may be appropriate to the situation.

Incidents and Accidents:

For situations in which a member has been injured or potentially injured ('near miss's or non-injury accident) by an accident, incident procedures will be followed. For major incidents an investigation will be held and learning from this will be documented to minimize the chances of similar incidents happening in the future.

Tools and Specific Policies:

This section provides some specific detail for individual policies that all club Members are required to observe and comply with.

Patrol Operations Manual:

All patrol activities will be directed by the Patrol Operations Manual that is approved by SLSNZ and the Local Lifeguard Committee. All members will comply with the policies in section 3 of the manual.

Travel Procedures:

All teams and individuals travelling on club activities will do so in accordance with the club travel policy. This refers to the care of minors, behavior and conduct and vehicle use.

Alcohol Protocols:

The Alcohol policy details the use and restriction of alcohol use by club members at club functions and activities. This will be consistent with New Zealand liquor licensing laws.

Health and Safety plans:

The club has a Health and Safety Manual to protect the safety of its members. All Members will be made aware of the relevance of its contents and any policies or procedures that are contained in the Manual.

Police Vetting:

The Club may undertake police screening for the following persons:

1. Voluntary club coaches and managers that have responsibility for and contact with Minors, especially while travelling or when other adults are not present.
2. Club volunteers i.e., drivers, parent helpers and support staff if necessary due to the amount of contact with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
3. All new paid employees/staff at the time of job offer.

More information about police vetting can be found in the SLSNZ member protection guidelines.

Privacy Policy:

The club privacy policy protects the privacy of its members and their information. The policy is consistent with the Constitution and the SLSNZ Membership Form.

Complaints Procedure:

Amicable relationships between all club members, parents, employees, contractors, and the public are essential for a positive environment. The South Brighton SLSC Complaints Policy, and related procedures, ensures that complaints are managed through a consistent and transparent process.

This will promote clear communication and processes for resolution of potential conflict. All complaints will be responded to promptly, fairly and in good faith; bearing in mind that the people involved are volunteers.

Anyone with a concern or complaint is encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the person involved as soon as possible to prevent the issue from escalating unnecessarily. All

such discussions should be amicable and not confrontational in nature. All parties are reminded to keep issues factual.

If direct discussion with the person involved with the issue is not successful, then the matter should be raised to the attention of the chair of the South Brighton club or any member of the greater South Brighton committee. If required, the complaint will then be referred to the club executive committee who will follow the requirements of this policy and any subsequent procedures.

Complaints or allegations made publicly, for example via social media or other public forum, by any member that have the potential to be harmful to the reputation of South Brighton SLSC, the matter will also be deemed as a serious complaint.

Complainants in this situation will be informed of the complaints policy and requested to follow the required procedures. The club committee will be informed of any potential risk to the Surf Club i.e., contractual/employment, reputation, or financial issue. In these situations, relevant external agencies may also need to be contacted.

Note: Members that repeatedly use public forums to air grievances or harm the reputation of the club, it's members or employees/contractors may be subject to the Club's Disciplinary Policy.

There is an expectation that until an investigation of a complaint has been made that all parties involved will treat the matter in confidence (including the Board, all members, and employees/contractors).

Complaints procedures:

1. Members, Parents or Public with concerns should approach the person directly in the first instance, at an appropriate time to discuss the issue.
2. If the concern or complaint is not resolved, any committee member should be approached by either party. They will then inform any member of the club executive group for investigation.
3. The executive committee will then decide appropriate action as per club polices.
4. If the concern is related to the management or organization of the club, the club chair or president should be contacted in the first instance and the club executive committee with then deal with the complaint.

Serious complaints procedure

- Normal procedure is for complaint to be passed on to the executive committee so the contents can be verified or investigated. Where possible, the general club committee will be kept informed of investigations.
- Written complaint documents must be signed and received in hardcopy; or signed, the document scanned and sent electronically as an e-mail attachment. Note: Anonymous complaints cannot be followed through; however, they may invoke an investigation of some type depending on the seriousness of the allegation.
- If the complaint is against a committee member, it should be directed to the chairman or president of the committee, who will form the executive committee to discuss the nature and basis of the complaint. Where possible, the general club committee will be kept informed of investigations.

- If the complaint is about the South Brighton committee president or chairperson, it should be directed to anyone of the club executive not involved in the complaint. The executive committee may seek assistance from SLSNZ.
- If a member makes a complaint against another member the club president or chairman will investigate and meet with involved parties. Where possible both parties will meet and agree on a resolution or future actions. If the complainant does not wish to be identified, then the club chair or president is required to provide any evidence or feedback to the member named with confirmation of the result of the meeting.
- If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily with, a written complaint should be sent to the president or chairman. The committee then may seek assistance from SLSNZ.
- Employees or contractors will be advised if the complaint involves either discipline or competency proceedings as well as their right to request representation at any stage.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes / decision(s) in writing.
- Where a complaint is formally investigated, minutes of all meetings will be taken, and any arrangements or actions will be recorded in writing.
- Where any complaint is raised against a member under the age of 18 a parent or guardian will be required to be present during any discussions of the matter.
- Where the complaint raises serious issues such as assault or sexual misconduct, the matter will be immediately referred to SLSNZ and other parties for investigations such as the police.