

Puddle Ducks Franchising Ltd

Safeguarding Policy

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Definitions:

The Business	Puddle Ducks Franchising Ltd
Teachers	Refers to Teachers working for The Business or The Franchise, teaching swimming or aquanatal lessons.
Team Members	Refers to all team members eg. teachers, poolside assistants and office staff who have direct contact with Children. This includes team members wearing the Puddle Ducks Mascot.
The Franchise	A business trading as Puddle Ducks under a Franchise Agreement with Puddle Ducks Franchising Ltd
The Franchisee	The owner(s) of businesses trading as Puddle Ducks under a Franchise Agreement with Puddle Ducks Franchising Ltd
Customers	Refers to those people receiving services provided by Puddle Ducks Franchising Ltd or one of its Franchisees. Primarily this would be swimming lessons or aquanatal lessons.
Franchise DSO	Refers to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, responsible for advising on all cases of safeguarding and welfare in The Franchise.
PDF DSO	Refers to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at Puddle Ducks Franchising Limited (Head Office), responsible for advising on all cases of safeguarding and welfare in The Business and supporting Franchise DSO's in their role.
Child	Anyone under the age of 18 years.
MASH	The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns.
LADO	The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people.
Appropriate Authorities	Either the police, MASH or LADO, dependent on circumstances.
Disclosure	Disclosure is the process by which a Child will let someone know that abuse is taking place.

Statement of Purpose:

Puddle Ducks Franchising (The Business) and all its Franchises (The Franchise) operate to the very highest standards, and as such the safety and welfare of all our Customers is of the utmost importance. Puddle Ducks Franchising Limited works with children and families as part of its activities. These include the provision of swimming and aquanatal lessons.

Puddle Ducks Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Much of the information in this policy has been taken from the STA Safeguarding Policy: <https://www.sta.co.uk/policies/safeguarding-policy/> of which Teachers are expected to adhere to as members of the STA.



Safeguarding Principles

The Business and The Franchise is committed to ensuring any Child who uses our services is properly safeguarded and the correct procedures are adhered to when there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure.

The Business and The Franchise ensures that every Team Member recruited:

- receives safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- are subject, dependent on their role, to the appropriate DBS check.
- agrees to adhere to the internal safeguarding policy.

All Team Members agree to:

- Act appropriately in the presence of children.
- Ensure the Child's welfare is paramount.
- Remain alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children.
- Ensure all participants whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- Take all suspicious and allegations of abuse seriously; and respond swiftly and appropriately.
- Challenge any inappropriate or harmful behaviour.
- Do not take inappropriate risks.
- Understand the duty to report concerns in line with the Child protection procedures.
- Recognise the statutory responsibility of the Appropriate Authorities to ensure the welfare of children and commit to working together with the MASH and LADO.
- Agree to adhere to the legislation on Position of Trust.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information passed to the MASH, LADO or The Appropriate Authorities must be as helpful as possible. The information should contain the following:

- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The Child's account, if they can give them, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Any times, dates, or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.

Reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities should not however be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

All personal information relating to a safeguarding issue shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy which can be located at <https://www.puddleducks.com/privacy-policy>.

Recognition of Abuse

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/> for the latest guidance.



Types of Abuse

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/> for the latest guidance.

Disclosure from a Child

Team Members will adhere to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/> for the latest guidance.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

If a Child makes a Disclosure, or information is obtained which gives concern that a Child is being abused, the Team Member in receipt of the information will:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the Child.
- Tell the Child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell someone.
- Take what the Child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a Child who is very young, has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the Child, but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using The Business Safeguarding Incident Form - Child.
- Refer all relevant information to The Franchise DSO who shall consult with any other relevant persons and make any appropriate referrals to the Relevant Authorities.
- If the Child is in immediate harm The Appropriate Authorities must be contacted.
- If the Child is not in immediate danger the Team Member subject to receiving the Disclosure or who has concerns regarding the Child, should contact their Franchise DSO within 24 hours.

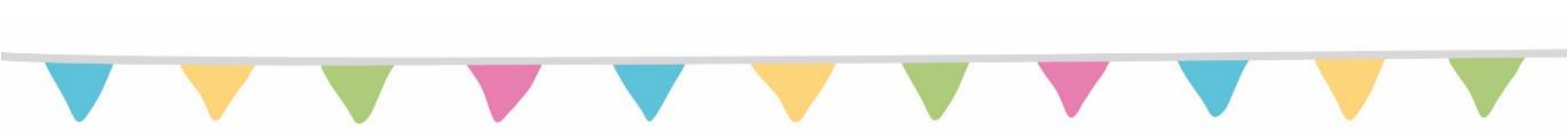
Responsibility of the Franchise DSO

It is not the responsibility of a Team Member or The Franchise DSO to determine whether Child abuse is taking place. There is, however, a responsibility to report concerns so that appropriate action, if required, can be taken. There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns however The Team Member and/or The Franchise DSO may wish to take advice from MASH or the NSPCC before doing so. This does not constitute a report of abuse.

Allegations of Abuse Against Team Members

This would include any Team Member working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse. If, following consideration the allegation is clearly about poor practice, then The Franchise will deal with this as a misconduct issue.

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a Team Member will be reported to The Franchise DSO who will take such steps as they consider necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Franchise DSO will refer the allegation to the LADO who may involve the police.

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- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
 - Irrespective of the findings of the Appropriate Authorities, The Franchise must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary and welfare procedures, to decide whether a Team Member should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Franchise will reach a decision based upon the information that is available which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of The Child should always remain paramount.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a Team Member, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A Child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of any external investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Non-Recent Historic Abuse

The Business and The Franchise follow the advice of the NSPCC in respect of [non-recent historic abuse](#).

Safe use of Changing Rooms

The Business and The Franchise adheres to the [Child Protection in Sport Unit's 'Safe use of Changing Facilities'](#) guidelines.

Contact

You must refer safeguarding concerns direct to The Franchise DSO in the first instance (see local Franchise web page for details). If you have queries regarding this policy or you are not satisfied with the response/outcome of your safeguarding enquiry, please contact The Business DSO (welfare@puddleducks.com).