



Totnes Sub-Aqua Club Policy on the Welfare of Vulnerable People

BRANCH POLICY GUIDELINES

Totnes Sub-Aqua Club believes in the Welfare of all of its members, both adults and children, as their first consideration. *Vulnerable members* potentially means all members.

Totnes Sub-Aqua Club fully adopts the BSAC Buddy Guard policy, as demonstrated by this Totnes Sub-Aqua Club Policy on Welfare of Vulnerable People. The Buddy Guard policy is reviewed periodically by the BSAC and the Committee of Totnes Sub-Aqua Club will take all practicable steps to ensure that the document is enacted as far as is possible.

BSAC leaves it to individual branches to decide upon the type of training offered and to what age groups, but to ensure the Welfare of all vulnerable people BSAC asks that all members observe and promote its policies with regard to their "Buddy Guard" document. TSAC strongly recommends that all those directly involved with the training of minors or vulnerable adults make themselves aware and act on these guidelines.

TSAC can teach 12-17 year olds to dive and dive with the club PROVIDED that either a parent or guardian is present during all training and diving or a BSAC qualified diver who has agreed to act as loco parentis for them, and is appointed in writing by them, is present in their place. All activities in open water (i.e. the sea) involving 12-17 year olds will be with the consent of the TSAC Diving Officer. Similarly, if TSAC members wish to use the pool on a Wednesday night for swimming or snorkelling and bring their children and guests along then they must be present during the entire pool session so as to take full responsibility for the safety, Welfare and behaviour of the children. Unaccompanied children and non-TSAC members will be unable to use the pool during TSAC Wednesday night sessions.

Awareness of these issues, and the adherence to these simple guidelines, will help maintain our professionalism, Welfare good practice and secure the protection of both the vulnerable and those responsible for them, also from accusations arising from mis-interpretation of innocent actions.

The Training officer and the Welfare officer will ensure that all active instructors and dive marshals are aware of the substance of the Buddy Guarding document at an annual instructors meeting and the Club's Welfare Officer will keep the signed declaration on which each instructor declares his/her knowledge and understanding of the above document.

Finally, please remember that both the BSAC and the TSAC committee will support any member who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a vulnerable person is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused. Diving and Snorkelling instructors (or dive buddies) may develop a relationship of mutual trust and respect with their students (buddies) so that they may hear of abuse occurring outside the direct influence of the club. As responsible citizens it is their duty to protect their friends from abuse wherever it may occur. The information and guidance given therefore applies to situations that occur outside the club but come to our attention as a result of our club activities as much as to situations that occur within the club. Indeed the information provided here also applies to our everyday lives outside TSAC.

Conditions of membership within the BSAC

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that people with convictions or past history of an inappropriate nature are prevented from significant contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Disclosure & Barring Service Checks

The BSAC Welfare policy suggests that these checks are required for members in positions that involve significant access to young people under training and supervision. These are typically instructors and Branch Officers. For such members, as a minimum requirement, we ask you to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check; the Club's Welfare Officer will give you the relevant forms and instructions on how to get these checks. DBS checks ask for any information about a criminal record or other matter that might have a bearing on your suitability to work with children to be revealed. It only tells us whether you are suitable or not and doesn't disclose any personal information. (e.g. previous investigations by police or social services or disciplinary investigations in relation to contact with children).

The Expectations and Members codes of Conduct:

All Members are expected to:

- Abide by TSAC codes of conduct and rules in the constitution, including those relating to Welfare and Equal Opportunities, and to respect club officials and their decisions.
- Respect the rights, dignity, safety and worth of all club members, regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background or religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- Not exert undue influence over other members for personal benefit, or encourage them to take part in activities for which they are not adequately trained or experienced, unless as part of a formal programme of training.
- Accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour whilst taking part in Branch activities.
- Promptly pay any fees for diving, training or club events.
- Feedback any concerns that they may have about possible breaches of this code of conduct to club officers, including the Welfare Officer.

In addition, Junior members are not allowed to:

- Smoke, consume alcohol or illicit substances of any kind on club premises or whilst taking part in Branch activities.

When undertaking training members are expected to:

- Honour the training commitments agreed at the start of their course.
- Pay any fees for training promptly.
- Attend training sessions at agreed times and come prepared for both practical and classroom sessions.
- Inform the Training Officer or their instructor in good time if unable to attend agreed sessions.
- Respect the rights, dignity, safety and worth of other trainees.
- Wear suitable kit for training in the pool or sea.
- Bring lecture notes to classroom sessions.
- Bring their Qualification Record Book to all sessions.
- Read through lecture notes and complete any exercises in preparation for the relevant theory assessment.
- **Junior members** are also expected to pass on information from their instructor to their parent or guardian and vice versa.

TSAC Instructors, Officers and Volunteers are also expected to:

- Display consistently high standards of behavior.
- Hold appropriate qualifications and insurance cover.
- Fulfill their responsibilities under the TSAC Policy on Welfare of Vulnerable People and Buddy Guard, BSAC's Child Welfare Policy and Procedures.
- Never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
- Consider the wellbeing and safety of others before the objectives of the task/ dive.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with club members, based on mutual trust and respect.
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part.
- Follow all guidelines laid down by TSAC and BSAC.
- Ascertain all permissions have been given from parents/guardians if a junior is to be included in any publicity or photography –The necessary form is available on TSAC Website.

Parents/Guardians and Carers of Junior members are expected to:

- Encourage their child to know the TSAC club rules and to act within them.
- Discourage poor behaviour and arguing with instructors or other club officials.
- Help their child to recognise good performance, not just results.
- Publicly accept the decisions of club instructors and other club officials.
- Support their child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Helping their child to be prepared for their training, arriving with the necessary kit and lecture notes
- Transporting their child to and from the training venue, or arranging transport for them (e.g. with another parent/guardian)
- Transporting their child to training, or other diving, conducted at open water sites and being present during their training, or arranging for someone else to do be, such as another parent/guardian. Initially this will involve dives from the shore (e.g. at Brixham) but will also include boat diving from a range of locations (e.g. Plymouth, or Salcombe. This may well involve a whole day.
- If there are exceptional circumstances where the parent/guardian or carer cannot be present (e.g. on the boat) an *in loco parentis* form will need to have been signed allowing a qualified and DBS checked instructor to act on their behalf them. This form is available on the TSAC website.

Guidelines for Dealing with an Incident/Accident:

If, in your capacity as a member of TSAC, a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Keep a written record, of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Ideally, only those with a recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- Where possible, the permission for any course of action should be sought from the child or vulnerable adult after such action has been discussed with them in language they understand.
- The child's, or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child or vulnerable adult interests and on professional advice not to do so.
- A Notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the Branch Welfare Officer as soon as possible. Copies of the form are available on the club's website.

Additional Guide Lines:

IF YOU ARE TEACHING/MANAGING SCUBA DIVING:

(These points should be borne in mind in any training situation.)

- Avoid training in a one to one situation. Always have an independent observer to support your position in case of misinterpretations of your actions
- Physical contact certain underwater skills require close physical contact, such as Rescue Breaths (RB), Controlled Buoyant Lift, etc. Before going under water during the lesson briefing give a dry run, with a verbal commentary to the whole group explaining what you are going to do. Advise students to wear Tee shirts or pool suits. This can avert potentially embarrassing situations.
- never engage in rough or unnecessary physical contact.
- Guard against the effects of cold, especially when training in open water.
- Where children are involved, the parents/guardians should be aware of what will be required of their children and agree to abide by the branch policies before training commences. Specific help and advice on this issue is available from BSAC.

Ensure adequate supervision:

BSAC recommend a maximum instructor/student ratio for pool and sheltered open water of 1:4. In open water the ratio should not exceed 1:2. (Specific exceptions to this rule may be detailed in the diver training programme - but instructor and managers should be aware that whatever is stated in the programme is a MINIMUM requirement and then only in ideal conditions).