Child Safeguarding Complaints Procedure

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Introduction

The British Wrestling Association Limited “British Wrestling” is committed to promoting the safeguarding of all involved in wrestling and we will seek to establish a process that will make it straightforward for people to raise concerns they have.

This procedure sets out the method of dealing with a child safeguarding concern when a complaint is received from a parent, guardian, carer or child

It should be remembered that children and young people are equally entitled to complain as are adults. Everyone within the British Wrestling must be conversant with the procedures for dealing with them in a child friendly way whilst ensuring these procedures are followed, the child’s rights are protected and most importantly, the child’s safety is paramount.

Equally, parents, guardians and carers of British Wrestling members must be assured that they will also be listened to and appropriate action taken if they have cause for concern or complaint in a child safeguarding complaints procedure.

This procedure is mandatory for all British Wrestling staff, members and other affiliated bodies.

This procedure must be adopted when a complaint is received from any British Wrestling staff member, member or affiliated body, which involves a child i.e. a person under the age of 18 years and is deemed to be a child safeguarding issue by a club welfare officer (CWO) or the BWA Lead Safeguarding Officer (BWA LSO).

All other complaints will be dealt with under appropriate procedures as identified in the British Wrestling signposting documents which are available to view or download from the website at: www.britishwrestling.org

If it is believed that a concern or complaint is considered to be of sufficient seriousness as to meet the threshold for child protection issues, these will be dealt with either by direct referral to a statutory agency or by referral to the BWA LSO who in turn may:

- Refer the matter to a statutory agency or
- Recommend the matter be dealt with by British Wrestling (very exceptional occasions)

Why is this Procedure Necessary?

Adults often do not realize that their actions can significantly impact on children, causing them distress.

In return children often do not realize that adults can find it difficult to recognize problems which would cause a child to be worried or unhappy. A concern, which may appear minor to an adult, can be overwhelming for a child.
It is vital to encourage communication between adults and children and foster an environment whereby a child who is worried or unhappy about something feels confident that they can let someone know what is happening and feel that their worries and concerns will be addressed.

British Wrestling wants to further develop a culture throughout the organisation that is conducive to encouraging all our members under the age of 18 years to feel able to speak to members of their club or the organisation regarding their worries or concerns.

The following text is the recommended procedure for dealing with a complaint made by or on behalf of a child by a parent, guardian, carer or friend. Action should be immediate (where possible) and all stages outlined within the procedure should be addressed within the timescale provided.

It is important to acknowledge that a child safeguarding concern from the point of view of someone under 18 years of age will be something very important to them and which has potentially been causing them concern for long before they took the step of reporting it to another party.

It is also important that complaints of this nature are dealt with at the earliest opportunity and the following procedure should be viewed as a last resort for matters that are incapable of resolution.

N.B. If the complaint is or may be a child protection matter a referral to a statutory agency (Children’s Care Services, the police or the NSPCC) must be made immediately.

Guidance and support can be obtained from the BWA LSO.

The Procedure

Step 1 – Informal Resolution Locally
Timescale: Immediate

As an adult member of British Wrestling when a child, parent or carer has made a complaint or drawn to your attention a concern, you must first assess as to whether it is appropriate for you to resolve it.

In general terms if it is minor in its nature and if you can address the concern, you should do so; if possible, you should consult your CWO before embarking on any course of action.

Confidentiality must be maintained on a “need to know basis” i.e. only the coach, the CWO and the child’s parents may need to know of a concern and no one else. The important factor is to keep the information restricted to as small a circle as possible.

Step 2 – Resolution through Club Welfare Officer
Timescale: Intervention 7 Days

The primary role of the CWO will be to resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the child, parent, guardian, carer or anyone else the safeguarding issues complained of (if at all possible).
A CWO may have matters referred to them for example through Step One or may have matters brought directly to their attention.

They will consider the nature of the complaint and if they are able to address the concern. It is anticipated that CWOS will be able to address issues such as minor club infringements, poor practice and bullying through the club’s own process; guidance and support can be obtained from the BWA LSO at any time.

If the assistance of the BWA LSO is not sought before the issues are resolved, the concerns and outcomes should be reported to the BWA LSO afterwards.

The CWO should always be mindful of the support and guidance that can be accessed from the BWA LSO and that concerns to be dealt with by a CWO should be child safeguarding concerns only.

The CWO must:

- Record the details of the complaint – what was the problem?
- How it was resolved? The actions taken and by whom (the CWO and/or others)
- Observe confidentiality and secure storage of referral documentation (see British Wrestling policies @ www.britishwrestling.org)

If matters of child protection are discovered, they should be referred immediately to the appropriate statutory authority and the BWA LSO.

**Step 3 - National Level – BWA Lead Safeguarding Officer (BWA LSO)**

**Timescale: Intervention 3 days**

The BWA LSO has a right to be involved in any child safeguarding matter, which the BWA LSO in consultation with the CEO of British Wrestling, views as one that requires an intervention from the organisation, for example:

1. Where one party remains unhappy that the problem has not been resolved at Step 1 or Step 2.
2. Where a matter is brought to the attention of the BWA LSO by a CWO at Steps 1 or 2.
3. At any stage, by direct referral to the BWA LSO by a British Wrestling member (child or adult), parent, guardian or carer of a British Wrestling member.

Within three days of a child safeguarding complaint being brought to the attention of the BWA LSO consideration will be given to Section 2.1 of the Protocols for Child Safeguarding Investigations.

The BWA LSO will liaise with the CWO to ensure that the club is handling the child safeguarding issue correctly; the CWO will be responsible for ensuring that the club follows the BWA LSO guidance.

It is entirely a matter for the BWA LSO as to the level of involvement and the guidance given.

At any point throughout the BWA LSO’s involvement the issues will be kept under constant review and a decision may be taken to:
1. Implement a referral to a statutory agency under Section 2 (iii) of the Protocols for Child Safeguarding Investigations or
2. Appoint an independent investigator to complete a fact-finding investigation under Section 2 (iv) of the Protocols for Child Safeguarding Investigations or
3. Make a formal complaint under the appropriate BWA Disciplinary Policy under Section 2 (v) of the Protocols for Child Safeguarding Investigations
4. Take such action as recommended by the BWA LSO e.g. a direction that an individual be required to submit to a risk assessment or that British Wrestling open a complaint against a club or an individual.

All clubs must note that if the guidance of the BWA LSO is not followed, the BWA LSO may complete a report to the CEO of British Wrestling and may recommend that a formal complaint be made, under the BWA Judicial Code i.e. that the club has failed to comply with the required level expected of British Wrestling clubs in complying with British Wrestling child safeguarding procedures.

The above timescale provides an indication that within three days of being notified of a child safeguarding issue, the BWA LSO will decide the level of his/her involvement and will inform all parties accordingly. The BWA LSO will have the injured parties safeguarding needs as their main concern and will try to resolve the issues with that in mind.

As a guide the BWA LSO will try to achieve a successful resolution or to decide other appropriate action or to have concluded and closed the file within three months of the original referral.

Where a three-month conclusion is not possible, e.g. because of the involvement of a statutory agency, the BWA LSO will seek to keep the child (through their parent, guardian or carer) informed of progress being made.

**Appeal Procedure**

The BWA LSO’s final report as to the steps taken, closing the file and/or recommendation as to alternative action is final.

In the case of a decision being taken under British Wrestling safeguarding regulations there shall be a right of appeal to an Appeals Committee which should comprise:

- The Chair of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee shall be someone with at least 7 years’ experience in legal matters who is not a member of British Wrestling.
- Two further Disciplinary Appeals Committee members will be appointed by the Chair of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee from the membership of British Wrestling who have held continued membership of British Wrestling for a period of not less than 5 years prior to the date of the Disciplinary Appeals Hearing.
Note

Failure to comply with this procedure may result in a recommendation from the BWA LSO that a club is not meeting its obligations under child safeguarding. This may result in a formal complaint or other action being taken under the appropriate British Wrestling disciplinary procedures.

Any action complained of under these procedures may also amount to a breach of other British Wrestling rules and regulations or of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Any British Wrestling member may bring a complaint under the appropriate disciplinary policy against a member of the organisation. It is therefore possible for a child safeguarding concern to amount to a breach of other British Wrestling rules and regulations and/or the Code of Ethics and Conduct and for a complaint to be filed for the same set of circumstances.

It is for the individual to consider as to whether they wish to file a complaint under the Child Safeguarding Complaints Procedure or otherwise; child safeguarding/protection complaints will take precedence over all other related matters.

This document is subject to continuous review and amendment as best practice evolves and accordingly British Wrestling reserves the right in particular cases to depart from the procedures where it is deemed to be appropriate by the BWA LSO in consultation with the CEO of British Wrestling.

N.B. British Wrestling would like to thank the Amateur Swimming Association who have shared their Child Complaints Procedure and on which this policy is based.