

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Guildford City Swimming Club — in association with Swim England's Wavepower

Guildford City Swimming Club (GCSC) wants every member — swimmers, coaches, volunteers and officials — to feel supported, both in and out of the water. Mental health is as important as physical health, and we want GCSC to be a club where people feel able to talk about how they're doing, without judgement. This policy sets out our approach, in line with Swim England's wider work on athlete welfare and mental health.

Our approach

- We aim to build a training environment based on encouragement, not fear — mistakes and setbacks are a normal part of sport.
- We do not tolerate body-shaming, weight-related comments, or language that links a swimmer's worth to their appearance, weight or performance.
- Coaches and volunteers are encouraged to check in on how swimmers are doing, not just how they are performing.
- We recognise that pressure, competition and body image can affect mental health in sport, and we want to reduce that risk wherever we can, rather than add to it.

Weighing and body composition

GCSC follows Swim England's Weighing Aquatic Athletes Policy. Swimmers under the age of 18 should not be weighed, unless they are on a nationally supported talent pathway. Where weighing does take place for an eligible athlete, it will only be undertaken with clear, documented reasoning specific to that athlete, and always with their long-term wellbeing in mind — never as a routine or comparative exercise.

Recognising when someone might be struggling

There isn't a single sign that tells you someone is finding things difficult, and you don't need to be sure before saying something. Things that might be worth noticing include a swimmer seeming withdrawn, unusually irritable or tearful, losing interest in training, talking negatively about themselves, or a noticeable change in eating, sleep or energy. The same applies to coaches, volunteers and officials — everyone at the Club is entitled to support, not just swimmers.

If you're worried about yourself

You do not have to manage things alone, and you do not need to have the right words before reaching out. You can talk to a coach, the Welfare Officer, a parent/carer, or another trusted adult — or use one of the confidential support services listed below.

If you're worried about someone else

- Let them know you've noticed, gently and without pressure, and listen without trying to fix things.
- Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult, the Welfare Officer, or a support service — but avoid promising to keep it secret.
- Let the Club Welfare Officer know, particularly if you are concerned about a swimmer's safety. This is about getting them the right support, not about getting them in trouble.

- You are not expected to diagnose, treat, or manage the situation yourself — GCSC's role is to listen, support, and help connect people with appropriate help.

Guidance for coaches, teachers and volunteers

- Avoid comments about a swimmer's body, weight or shape, even when intended as encouragement or as a joke.
- Do not give specific advice on dieting, weight loss, or eating patterns — signpost instead to a GP, registered dietitian, or Swim England's health guidance.
- If a swimmer discloses a mental health difficulty, thank them for telling you, listen without judgement, and pass this on to the Welfare Officer so appropriate support can be arranged — rather than managing it alone.
- Complete Swim England's approved safeguarding training, which includes awareness of athlete welfare and mental health.

Confidentiality

We cannot promise complete confidentiality, but information about a member's mental health will only ever be shared with those who need to know, in order to keep that person safe and get them appropriate support.

If someone is in crisis

If there is immediate risk to life, call 999 or go to A&E.

Samaritans: call 116 123 (free, 24/7) or email jo@samaritans.org

Shout: text SHOUT to 85258 (free, 24/7 crisis text support)

Childline (for under 19s): call 0800 1111, or chat online at [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Further support

- [Swim England – Mental Health Referral Flowchart and resources](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [YoungMinds](#)
- [NHS – Every Mind Matters](#)

Related policies

- [GCSC Welfare and Safeguarding](#)
- [Codes of Conduct – Swimmers, Parents, Coaches and Officials](#)

Contact

- [GCSC Welfare Officer — welfare.officer@gcsc.co.uk](mailto:welfare.officer@gcsc.co.uk)

This policy is not a substitute for professional medical or mental health advice, and it does not replace Swim England's Wavepower policy or GCSC's wider Welfare and Safeguarding procedures. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner if Swim England guidance changes.