



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Club wishes to ensure that all those taking part in canoeing are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff, coaches and/or volunteers. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

With this in mind the Club recognises that it has a duty towards all those taking part in Paddlesport activity and to its constituent clubs in providing paddling opportunities ensuring that support is provided to enable all to do so with the highest possible standards of care.

All coaches should have a clear understanding of operation within an appropriate code of ethics, aware of what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position in providing activities and being responsible for others.

In any active sport there is a possibility of someone being harmed. In a small percentage of cases action may be taken against you if the person decides to make a claim. This action may result in financial losses but can also harm your reputation or that of the Club.

A good definition of 'duty of care' is:

'The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible'

In an activity such as canoeing, safety and keeping people safe involves the assessment and minimising of risks involved at all levels of participation. While all taking part in activity have a duty to their neighbours, in organised activity we all have a heightened duty of care and as such we should be aware that the principal risks extend to the quality of control exercised by those in charge. Trainers, coaches and administrators should all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those taking part in activities and at any time may be deemed to be responsible for those in their charge - in vehicles, during journeys to and from the activity, during events, team training events and camps, etc.

This document provides specific information in respect of Child Protection and the protection of vulnerable adults in order that coaches and clubs can appreciate their 'duty of care' with regard to these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.



The guidelines presented in this document provide members with ideas and recommendations to assist them in implementing specific procedures and safeguards to protect young and vulnerable paddlers.

Paddlesafe

In this Club we believe that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in the Club can help - administrators, officials, coaches, parents, friends and children themselves.

Abuse can occur wherever there are children - at home, at school, in the park, at the Watersports Centre. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are, simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone in the Club has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after the children and vulnerable adults with whom we are working. The Children Act 1989 indicates that everyone who has responsibility for the care of children should 'do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare.'

While the welfare of young people is the Club's first consideration in establishing a child protection programme it is also seen that the interests of coaches themselves need to be taken account of, particularly where falsely accused.

Our child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

- The child's welfare is the first consideration
- Anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child
- All children, regardless of age, any disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse
- Coaches, administrators and helpers need to be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice, guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation

If the procedures are to help to protect children, everyone involved in paddlesport needs to see and discuss them. Club officers are therefore asked to make sure they are widely distributed and discussed at management meetings.

Good Practice Guidelines

By following these guidelines you will help to protect both the children in our care and our coaches/helpers from wrongful allegations.



Avoid situations where you are alone with one child. The Club acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, where a child falls ill and has to be taken home. It is stressed, however, that one-to-one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis.

- If any form of physical support is required ask the paddler's permission, explain what you are doing and why to both the child and their parents/carers.
- Where possible ask parents/carers to be responsible for children in changing rooms. Always ensure that whoever supervises young people works in pairs.
- Where there are mixed teams/groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by an adult male and female coach/helper.
- Don't allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.
- If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent/carer and if possible the child. Let them know what you are doing and why.
- Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child are taken seriously and that it is dealt with by people who know what to do.
- Ensure that the nature and intensity of training does not exceed the capacity of a child's immature and growing body.
- Follow the British Canoe Union guidelines for photography and video use (see BCU reference sheet 'Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment').

The Club should adhere to the BCU best practice guidelines with particular reference to:

- The BCU Code of Ethics/Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct.
- This guidance on child protection and the Paddlesafe Guidelines.
- The requirements for coaches and helpers to have undergone disclosure.
- Publicise the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000.

What is Child Abuse?

It is generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse:

Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child, e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting them. In sport this might result if the



nature or intensity of training is inappropriate for the capacity of the performer or where drugs are tolerated or advocated. Bullying is likely to come into this category - see below.

Sexual Abuse

Where young people are used by adults to meet their own sexual needs. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse and includes the use of pornographic material.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed, e.g. racial or sexual remarks.

Neglect

Failing to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention or constantly leaving them alone. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm or injury.

Bullying

The parent/carer who pushes too hard, the coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy or adult paddlers who attempt to impose unacceptable behaviour on young paddlers to make them unwelcome or prevent them using Club equipment. Bullying can also occur between young people.

What if you accidentally hurt a child

If you accidentally hurt a child and they seem distressed in any way, appear sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstand something you have done, report any such incident immediately to another Club Coach/official and make a brief written note of it. You should also inform the child's parents/carers, preferably in person.

Is touching OK?

If a coaching technique would benefit from physical contact or support then first ask the paddler's permission, e.g. would you mind if I held your shoulders to show you what I mean? It is useful to take time to explain why and how this is used to the paddler and their parent or carer. Touching can be OK and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing.

Indications of Child Abuse



There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child. They are only indicators- not confirmation.

Some examples are where the child/children:

- Say that s/he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring,
- Has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent,
- Behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy,
- Appears not to trust adults, e.g. parent or coach with whom s/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/puts on weight for no apparent reason.

Bear in mind that physically disabled children and children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

If you have concerns about the welfare of a child

Please remember the Golden Rule, it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused but we are asking you to fulfil your legal obligation and act on your concerns. Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information

If you are a member, or the parent/carer or friend of a member of the Club you should:

- Tell the appointed Child Protection officer of the Club, or alternatively the Secretary, Chairperson, Coach or any committee member, or at an event possibly an event organiser - unless, of course, you suspect them of being involved.

Or;

Contact the BCU Child Protection Lead Officer or BCU appointed Child Protection Officer (contact via BCU Head Office, Nottingham).

Or;

If you need urgent advice contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour Helpline- 0808 800 5000.

If you are a Club officer or event organiser you can:



- Talk to the child's parents/carers about the concerns if you think there may be an obvious explanation such as a bereavement or pressure from studies/exams,
- If you need urgent advice contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour Helpline.
- Contact your local Social Services Department or, in any emergency, the Police,
- If you are working with paddlers away from home, at a training camp, perhaps, or a national/regional competition - tell the manager or the chief coach,
- If you are working with a school - tell the Head teacher,
- If you are involved in a paddle scheme refer to their Child Protection procedures.

NB Even if you have reported your concerns to Club appointed persons or Club officials you are also required to write to the BCU to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. A standard reporting form for this purpose is available from the BCU Coaching Office or the BCU Website. Address the letter/form to:

The BCU Child Protection Officer British Canoe Union
18 Market Place
Bingham

Nottingham NG13 8AP

If a child tells you that he or she is being abused

- Stay calm.
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself.
- Listen to what the child says and take it seriously.
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you - don't ask the child about explicit details.
- Make a detailed note of what the child has told you but, as advised in the previous section, please don't delay passing on the information.