

Guidance information to be considered for a child protection policy suitable for sports clubs/holiday clubs

(this should be used as a basis for individual policies)

Introduction

All clubs/settings providing childcare for children and young people must ensure that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- staff/volunteers attend suitable training and understand that it is not their role to decide if abuse has occurred, but to report any concerns to the appropriate authority or colleague.

Policy statement/aims

- The club/setting has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm.
- All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.
- The club/setting will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved through adherence to Wiltshire Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures (<http://www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers>) in respect of concerns about a child or allegations against members of staff.
- The aim of the club/setting child protection policy is to promote good practice by:
 - providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in their care.
 - training and supporting all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
 - teaching childcare how to keep themselves safe

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgments about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the childcare environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A childcare worker, teacher, coach, official or volunteer will have regular contact with children and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice and or abuse should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club/setting having been subjected to child abuse outside the childcare environment, support and an open, safe environment can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club/setting's Supervisor should aim to work with the parents/carers and appropriate agencies (if applicable) to ensure the child receives the required support and that staff are well informed.

Good practice guidelines

All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children with equal concern and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play. Activities should be age appropriate.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to the child's needs as identified in partnership working with parents and other relevant professionals involved in the child's care.
- Consulting with children and their parents. Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Ensuring that appropriate qualifications and training is provided to all staff.
- Ensuring that paediatric first aid and safeguarding training is in place.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol, or using personal mobiles in the company of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism to both children and adults.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children including those with additional needs - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will. Providing opportunities that will challenge but are achievable.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Ensuring that up to date contact details are available and that details of adults responsible for collection of the child are recorded and adhered to.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.
- Avoid taking photographs of children unless written permission has been given by parent/carer.
- **Not taking** personal mobile phones into sessions. There should be somewhere where they can be stored and accessed on breaks only.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a toilet or changing facility with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to meet or stay with you at your home.
- Invite children to 'become friends' on social networking sites such as Facebook.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child involved. There is a need to be responsive to the child or young person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the club/setting's designated child protection liaison person (usually the supervisor or manager) and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed unless doing so puts the child at additional risk:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or displays sexual activity.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If a child discloses abuse of any kind – physical, emotional, sexual, neglect.
- If any adult behaves in a way is inappropriate or may pose a threat to the safety of children.

Use of photographic equipment.

There is evidence that some people have used childcare as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young children in vulnerable positions. All clubs/settings should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the designated child protection liaison person who should then follow Wiltshire's Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance (see LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected'). (<http://www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers>)

Any photos should be taken using the club/setting's own camera – not personal ones or personal mobile phones. Images should be downloaded and printed off as soon as possible and the originals deleted.

Written permission should be sought from parents to take photographs and they should be aware of how they will be used by the club.

Use of mobile phones.

There is a need for clubs/settings to have access to emergency support and a mobile is often the best way to ensure this. However, with the development and advance of mobile technology this may now pose a threat to the safety of children – images and video footage can be taken and uploaded to the internet without anyone being aware. It is therefore recommended that the club/setting have a standard mobile phone with no camera, video or internet facility. All staff members should be asked to leave their personal mobiles in a secure place and access them only during breaks and not in the presence of the cared for children. Similarly, there should also be consideration taken regarding the children's use of mobiles during their time with the club/setting. Provision should be made to ensure the safety of the children and this may mean storing the children's phones in named envelopes/small plastic bags which are kept safe. It is the supervisor's/manager's responsibility to make exceptions to this in the case of a family emergency etc and to risk assess appropriately.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

The club/setting should recognise that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact before employment/voluntary work commences.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo).
- Details of staff/volunteers successful CRB confirmation should be recorded on a 'Central Record document' – Your childcare officer can supply you with an example of this.

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) should be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. The childcare officer from Wiltshire Council may be able to support you with this.

All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated with evidence of the originals checked.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified and any questions discussed and clarified.
- Expectations of behaviour and conduct should be clearly explained and given in writing.
- Child protection procedures are explained, training needs identified and booked within the first three months.
- They should be asked to sign to say that they have received copies of, and understand the organisation's behaviour and conduct policy as well as their responsibility to report any concerns regarding Child Protection Policy.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to support staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Clubs/Settings that are committed to Safeguarding should require that:

- All staff, including volunteers should attend a foundation child protection course to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards the recognition and reporting of any child protection concern.
- Supervisors and managers must attend a Foundation Safeguarding course (previously Level 2 multi-agency) or the advanced multiagency child protection training.
- A member of staff involved in the interviewing of staff and volunteers should have completed the Safer Recruitment training.
- A member of staff should be named as the child protection liaison person and all other staff should be made aware of this individual as the first point of contact if any safeguarding concerns are raised. Staff should also be aware that if they have safeguarding concerns about that named individual then they know how to report these concerns.
- Staff will be supported to identify training needs as part of their continuous professional development.
- All staff and volunteers must have regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the club/setting, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there **is** a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the named child protection liaison person and following the Wiltshire's Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance (<http://www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers>)

The club/setting should reassure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who, in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation or even a combination of all.

- a child protection investigation
- a criminal investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information should be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated child protection liaison person will deal with it as a conduct issue and report it to the person's line manager.
- If the allegation is about the poor practice of the designated child protection liaison person, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, any person may report directly to the Wiltshire LADO (local authority designated officer) at Wiltshire Council (see LSCB flow chart 'Allegations against Staff'), who will decide how to deal with the allegation and advise regarding whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to the designated child protection liaison person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The designated child protection liaison person must follow the Wiltshire's Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance (see LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected' at (www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers), referring the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department or the LADO and providing this will not put the child at risk of further harm.
- If the child protection liaison person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to their manager or in his/her absence the Wiltshire LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) at Wiltshire Council (see LSCB flow chart 'Allegations against Staff' www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers).

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only. This includes the following people:

- The child protection liaison person.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.

In English law, where there are concerns that a child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm, the prevailing consideration is to safeguard the child and confidentiality may be overridden in such situations.

Any information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Allegations of previous (historical) abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (for example by an adult who was abused as a child or an allegation about someone who is still currently working with children has abused).

Where such an allegation is made, the club/setting should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the

social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the club/setting, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

Bullying is also classed as abuse and the LSCB procedures should also be followed. If the allegation is against a member of staff then the procedures should be followed in the LSCB flow chart 'Allegations against Staff'. If the allegation is against another child then the LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected' can be used and confidential advice sought in the first instance regarding the most appropriate action to take.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).
- Help the victim to speak out and make all children aware of the importance to tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the club/setting's child protection liaison person.

Action towards the bully:

- Talk with the bully, explain the situation, and try to get the bully to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully compensates the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour.
- Where possible, hold meetings with the families to support and report on progress.
- Inform all staff members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by staff and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated child protection liaison person and may lead to criminal charges.

3. Concerns outside the immediate club environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the child protection liaison person who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible child protection liaison person. *See 4 below regarding information needed for social services*
- If the child protection liaison person is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should follow the guidance on the LSCB flow chart 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused or neglected'. Social Services will decide how to proceed.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

The child's home address and telephone number.

Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.

The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.

Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

Details of witnesses to the incidents.

The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

Have the parents been contacted?

If so what has been said?

Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.

If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

The name of the person who took the referral should be recorded.

Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours

Current Wiltshire Local Safeguarding Children Board's Guidance flowcharts 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' and 'Allegation against staff' can be downloaded from www.wiltshirelscb.org/workers

Safeguarding training can be accessed at www.wiltshirepathways.org

If anyone is worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, anyone can contact follow the LSCB flowchart processes or the police direct.

**Further confidential advice can be sought from
NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 11 11.**