



Child/Vulnerable Person Protection Policy for Cycle Seahaven

Introduction

All sporting organisations which make provision 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 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

Policy Statement

Cycle Seahaven has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in the club 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. Cycle Seahaven will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Cycle Seahaven through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Cycle Seahaven

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy Aims

The aim of the Cycle Seahaven Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Cycle Seahaven
- Allowing all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

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 your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

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

When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. 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)
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with members (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play

- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the sport's National Governing Body. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained before offering any form of manual/physical support. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about this and their views should always be carefully considered
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs
- Ensuring that if mixed groups are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same-gender abuse can also occur
- Ensuring that at events or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars

Practices to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. 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) it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club and / or the child's parents:

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking a child to an event/session or taking them home afterwards

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 room 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
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised

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 are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the riders involved. There is a need to be responsive to a 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 another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a member
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a rider appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a rider misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant.

Videoring as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and give their permission, and such films should be stored safely.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Cycle Seahaven 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 through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Cycle Seahaven will assure 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:

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

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are Concerns

1. Concerns about Poor Practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

2. Concerns about Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Committee, 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 Club Committee will refer the allegation to the Social Services department who may involve the Police, or will go directly to the Police in an emergency.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services department.

The Club Committee should also notify the relevant National Governing Body Officer who in turn will inform the National Governing Body Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

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 Club Committee
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services / Police
- The National Governing Body Regional Development Manager and National Governing Body Child Protection Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). Seek Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser

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).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension¹

The Cycle Seahaven Committee or a single Committee Member, in the case of time critical matters, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries.

¹ To be read in conjunction with Cycle Seahaven complaints procedure <http://cycleseahaven.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Representations-and-Complaints-Procedure.pdf>

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police inquiries the Cycle Seahaven Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, the Cycle Seahaven Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to Deal with the Aftermath of Abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk. Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the club 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 sport, 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.

3. Concerns Outside the Immediate Sporting Environment (e.g. a Parent or Carer):

Report your concerns to the Club Committee, who should contact Social Services or the Police as soon as possible. See below for the information Social Services or the Police will need.

Social Services and/or the Police will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

The Club Committee should also report the incident to the National Governing Body. The National Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in Cycle Seahaven and act accordingly.

Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.

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 **NEVER QUESTION A CHILD** as this can contaminate police evidence. Report only what you are told.
- 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
- Where possible referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Social Services or the Police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.

Rider Leaders working with Children and Young Persons

All Cycle Seahaven Ride Leaders and members engaged primarily in children and youth roles will be provided with a copy of this document before they engage in such activity. A record of receipt will be retained by the Committee.

This Policy was formally adopted by the committee of Cycle Seahaven on _____ (Date)

It will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the next review taking place on _____ (Date)

Declaration:

On behalf of Cycle Seahaven we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Position within (Organisation/Club):

Position within (Organisation/Club):

Date:

Date:

Code of Conduct for Club Personnel

Cycle Seahaven

The essence of good ethical conduct and practice is summarised below. All Club Personnel must:

- Consider the well-being and safety of participants before the development of performance
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with participants, based on mutual trust and respect
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part
- Promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance
- Follow all guidelines laid down by (*the National Governing Body*) and the club
- Never exert undue influence over participants to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Never condone rule violations, rough play or the use of prohibitive substances

