

## Good Practice Guidelines

It is important to develop a culture within the club where both children and adults feel able to raise concerns, knowing they will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and will not make the situation worse for themselves or others.

These common sense guidelines cover the essential points of good practice that should be observed within the club.

**Remember** – Good Practice protects everyone!

- Avoid spending any significant time working in isolation with children
- Do not take children alone in a car, however short the journey
- Do not take children to your home as part of any club activity
- Where any of these is unavoidable, ensure it is with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge, or the child's parents
- Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child
- If a child requires assistance with a wetsuit or buoyancy aid, ensure there is another responsible adult present, or ask them to ask a friend for help
- If you do have to help a child, make sure you are in full view of others, preferably another adult

You should **never**:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use such language yourself when with children
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Fail to respond to an allegation made by a child; always act
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves

It may sometimes be necessary to provide personal care for a child, especially if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of both child (where possible) and their parent/carers. In an emergency situation requiring this type of help, parents should be informed as soon as possible.

In such situations it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

## Handling concerns, reports or allegations

This section is primarily for the club's designated Safeguarding Officer, or volunteers whose role brings them into regular contact with young people, but everyone should be aware of the procedures to follow.

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources,

### **Handling an allegation from a child.**

#### **Always:**

- Stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe
- Show and tell the child you are taking what he/she says seriously
- Reassure the child and stress he/she is not to blame
- Be careful with physical contact, the child may not want it
- Be honest and explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse
- Record what the child says as soon as possible after the event, using the child's own words.
- Follow club child protection procedures
- If there is any evidence, e.g. soiled clothing, or other items, do not wash these, or allow them to be removed or destroyed
- Any evidence should be stored securely, as it may need to be produced at a later date

#### **Never**

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make promises you can't keep, (e.g. you won't tell anyone)
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g. suggest an answer or only provide 'Yes' 'No' answers), e.g. 'Did X hit you?' instead of 'How did you get that bruise?' Use open questions and allow the child to explain things in their own words, deviation from this may jeopardise any formal investigation. Do keep a record of anything the child tells you or that you have observed so that this can be passed on to the relevant authorities.
- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else, preferably the Safeguarding Officer, person in charge or someone you trust so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

You may be upset by what the child tells you, or worry about the consequences of your actions. However your first duty is to the child and you **must** act!

**All confidential information must be processed and stored securely and only shared with those who need to know, it will later be destroyed in accordance with the club's Privacy Policy and Data Protection legislation. Records containing personal information should be adequate, relevant, and not excessive for the purpose for which they are held; accurate and up to date; and only kept for as long as is necessary. They should be reviewed on a regular basis.**

**If a person is removed from the club for safeguarding reasons, essential details should be retained of the reasons for the action taken, these should be kept securely and should only be viewed by current committee members in the event that the former member tries to re-join in the future or a further allegation is made against them.**

If the allegation or suspicion concerns a member of the club, only the child's parents, the person in charge (unless they are the subject of the allegation), the relevant authorities and the RYA Child Protection Co-ordinator should be informed. Phone numbers can be found in the RYA Policy and Procedures file in grey filing cabinet.

If you suspect that a child may have been the subject of any form of physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect, the allegation must be referred as soon as possible to Children's Social Care or the Police who have trained experts to handle such cases. It should not be discussed by anyone other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the person in charge.

If the incident attracts media interest, do not give any response until you have had an opportunity to check facts and seek further advice.

In the event of a serious allegation involving harm caused to a child, either on the premises, or as a result of taking part in club activities, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Secretary who will notify the insurers in case of a subsequent claim being made against the club.

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