



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN

### CONTENTS

Duty Of Care

Indications Of Abuse

What To Do If You Have A Concern

What Should You Do If You Have Allegations Made Against You?

Dealing With Disclosures Or Discovery Of Abuse

### DUTY OF CARE

**Learn To Paddle** are committed to ensuring that all those taking part in any activity/event can do so protected and kept safe from harm. This is particularly true in respect of children. We all have a duty with respect to safeguarding and protecting children to ensure they can participate and enjoy outdoor activities with the highest possible standards of care. All Coaches and Assistants should have a clear understanding of operating 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.

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 outdoor activity setting, safety and keeping people safe is all about risk assessment and minimising the 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. Coaches and Assistants should all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those directly taking part in activities and at any time they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge.

**The content of this document provides specific information in respect of safeguarding and protecting children in order that everyone can appreciate their 'duty of care' regarding these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.**

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting a child from abuse. Everyone at any session can help – Coach, parent, friend and children themselves. Abuse can occur wherever there are children- at home, at school, in the park. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that

anyone taking part in activities has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after the children with whom we are working. Whilst the welfare of children is our first consideration in establishing child protection policies and procedures, we have also taken account of the needs of Coaches and Support Staff, particularly where falsely accused.

A feature of our policy on safeguarding children is to ensure that we provide individuals with access to confidential advice, guidance and support, provided separately to that provided for those with concerns that abuse may be taking place. These safeguarding and child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy, maternity and sexual orientation have a right to be protected from abuse.
- To respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Coaches need to be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice and guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation.

**Learn To Paddle** recognises that some children may have additional vulnerabilities or are disadvantaged by their experiences. It is important that all those who work with children are vigilant in creating a safe culture and are aware of those who may have additional vulnerabilities.

#### **INDICATIONS OF 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,

- Says that she/ he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or 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. a parent or coach with whom she/ 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 or puts on weight for no apparent reason. Bear in mind that some children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN**

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 it is your responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person. Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but do not delay passing on the information:

- Tell the person appointed for safeguarding, OR
- If you need urgent advice, contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hours Help Line 0808 800 5000 If you are the person responsible for safeguarding children at your organisation 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 their studies/exams.
- If you are working with attendees away from home, at an event or organised activity with a third party - tell the person in charge or designated welfare officer.
- If you are working with a school - inform the head teacher.
- If you are involved in a scheme such as local authority sessions or social prescribing, refer to their safeguarding and child protection procedures

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

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

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST YOU?**

If, as a Coach, Assistant or helper with **Learn To Paddle**, you have had allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial adviser you could contact Lynne who will advise you of what support may be available.

#### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

**It is generally acknowledged that there are five main types of abuse in relation to children - Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect and Bullying.**

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: occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed e.g. racial or sexual remarks. It can also occur if a child is over protected. Abuse can occur where a parent or coach has unrealistic expectations over what a child can achieve.

Neglect: Failing to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, and 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 bully can be an adult - the parent/carer who pushes too hard, the Instructor/teacher who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy or adult coaches who attempt to assert unacceptable behaviour on younger people to make them unwelcome. Bullying can also occur between young people.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

By following these guidelines, you will help to protect both the children who attend our activities/events and our Instructors/volunteers from wrongful allegations.

- Avoid situations where you are alone with one child.
- If any form of physical support is required, ask the young person'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.
- Where possible, there should not be a time when one adult is alone in a changing room when a child is present and vice versa.
- Where there are mixed groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by an adult male and female Instructor/volunteer.
- Do not allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.
- If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for a child, 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 growing body and ability.
- Follow the recognised guidelines for photography and video.
- What if you accidentally hurt a child? - You should report such an incident immediately to **Learn To Paddle** and make a written note of it. You should also inform the child's parents/carers, preferably in person.

**Learn To Paddle will follow all British Canoeing guidance in relation to safeguarding issues for the relevant activities.**

**We are committed to ensuring all our events and activities are held in a safe and support manner.**

**Signed**.....

**Date**.....

**Last updated**.....

**Next review date**.....