



CHELTENHAM CANOE CLUB

Safeguarding Children (Welfare) Procedure



1.0 Introduction

Cheltenham Canoe Club (CCC) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all individuals involved in supporting or participating in kayaking and kayaking associated activities. CCC has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Children's Act 1989 defines a 'child' or 'young person' as a person under the age of 18.

Safeguarding Children applies to a young person who: -

- 1.1 Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authorities are meeting any of those needs) and;
- 1.2 Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- 1.3 As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

2.0 Practises and Principles in relation to working with Children

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in the club, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as '**The Coaches Code of Conduct**', comply with relevant UK legislation and be guided by Paddle UK (PUK) documentation, including **NSPCC** guidance.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practise from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of coaches, volunteers, members, parents or paddlers to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practise and possible abuse and act if they have suspicions about the welfare of the child or are aware of allegations of abuse.

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2.2 Good Practice

All coaches, volunteers, members, parents and paddlers should adhere to the following principles and action:

Always work in an open environment, e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication without secrets.

Make paddling and club activities fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.

Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.

Always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning.

Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children, e.g. it is not appropriate for coaches and volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them.

Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where any form of physical support is required, it should be conducted openly and with the consent of the child. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing.

Involve parents, chaperones or carers wherever possible. Where children need to be supervised in changing rooms etc, parents should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own child; parents, coaches and volunteers should work in pairs.

Request written parental consent if club volunteers are required to transport children in their cars. Where a child is travelling as the only child, a minimum of two adults should be in the vehicle.

Adults should not enter a child's room, or invite a child into their room, during 'away' events where overnight accommodation is required.

Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.

Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

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Recognising the development needs and capacity of the child and do not sacrifice welfare in desire for club or personal achievements, i.e. avoid excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.

Obtain written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment as the need arises.

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided:

Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

Taking young people alone in car journeys, however short.

Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

Sharing a room with a child.

Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.

Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.

Reducing a young person 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 that the child can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impracticable or impossible to avoid a situation, e.g. transporting a child in your car, the task should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent or carer and the child involved.

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If during your care you accidentally hurt a child, a child is distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and, or, the child misunderstands something you have done, report any such incident to another colleague as soon as possible and make a written note of it. The parents should be advised of the incident.

3.0 Guidance and legislation

The practises within this procedure are based on the principles contained within UK Legislation, NSPCC Guidance and Paddle UK (PUK) guidance, as detailed in the 'Cheltenham Canoe Club Safeguarding Children (Welfare) Policy'.

4.0 Responsibilities and implementation

CCC will seek to promote the principles of safeguarding by:

- 4.1 Reviewing CCC policies and procedures every two years or whenever there is a change in legislation.
- 4.2 Giving guidance on appropriate recruitment procedures to assess the suitability of volunteers working with Children and are trained in compliance with the requirements of PUK's documents [Standards for Deployment Policy](#), [G29 Disclosure and Baring Service Flowchart](#) and [G21 Safeguarding Training Requirements](#).
- 4.3 CCC will appoint a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who will have completed training required by PUK 'Standards for Deployment:

BCAB eLearning 'Code of Conduct for Coaching'.

UK Safeguarding and Protecting Children (or approved Designated Safeguarding Lead training)

Time to Listen training course.

Safeguarding and Protecting Children 'refresher' course every three years.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

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5.0 Complaints, concerns and allegations

- 5.1 As a paddler, parent, carer, chaperone or volunteer you may be concerned about the welfare of a child, become aware that abuse or poor practise is taking place, suspect abuse or poor practise may be occurring or be told about something that may be abuse or poor practise. These concern's should be brought to the attention of the clubs Club Welfare Officer (CWO) on email: welfare@cheltenhamcanoeclub.com and the Paddle UK Safeguarding Team on email: safeguarding@paddleuk.org.uk and telephone **0115 8655354**. If the CWO or PUK are uncontactable, advice can be sought through the **Gloucestershire Children and Families Front Door Service (01452 614758)** or **NSPCC (0808 800 5000)**.
- 5.2 The person reporting the concern is not required to decide whether abuse has occurred, simply has a duty to pass on their concerns and any relevant information. Details should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis with those who can help with the management of the concern.
- 5.3 CCC will work with PUK and other external agencies to take appropriate action where concerns relate to potential abuse or serious poor practise.
- 5.4 Safeguarding children requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability, CCC supports an environment where paddlers, volunteers, parents, carers, chaperones and the public are encouraged to raise safeguarding concerns.
- 5.5 If you have allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial person, you should contact PUK Safeguarding Team. PUK will arrange for a Safeguarding Support Officer who can inform you of the investigation process, what you can expect and signpost you to further advice and support.

6.0 Receiving Evidence and Responding to Suspicions of Abuse.

Members may become aware of possible abuse in a number of ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it is happening because of signs (as detailed in section 8.0 of this procedure), it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the child.

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6.1 If a child indicates that they are being abused, the person receiving the information should:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the child to continue at their own pace, and take it seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify or clarify what the child is telling you. Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information that you have is accurate.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Inform the child that you have to inform other people about what you have been told. Tell the child that this is to help stop the abuse happening.
- Safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention, call an ambulance, inform the medics of the concern and make them aware that the child is a protection issue.
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible.

6.2 DO NOT:

- Dismiss the concern.
- Panic or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Conduct an investigation of the case.
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.

If the matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of the child, then contact the police immediately. Inform the CWO and PUK Safeguarding team within 24 hours.

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7.0 Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect.

Abuse can take place in any context. Abuse may be inflicted by anyone. Paddlers, Volunteers, Members and Chaperones may suspect that a child is being abused or neglected outside of the club setting. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending or no longer enjoying their sessions.
- Someone losing or gaining weight or becomes of unkempt appearance. A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group or individual, particularly an adult and an inability to make friends.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- They may tell you or another person that they are being abused, i.e. a disclosure.

7.1 Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment at Club Events.

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. Members, coaches, volunteers, paddlers, parents and chaperones should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer.

All parents and participants should be made aware when coaches, volunteers, members, paddlers, parents and chaperones are intending to use photographic or filming equipment. Parents should be aware that most paddling events and trips take part in public access venues where the public may take photographs or film of club paddlers.

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8.0 Guidance on types of harm.

The NSPCC and various UK Legislations recognises a number of categories of abuse that may be experienced by children.

8.1 Domestic Abuse

This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes what is termed as 'honour' based violence.

8.2 Discriminatory

Discrimination is abusing which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

8.3 Organisational

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practise as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practises within the organisation.

8.4 Physical

This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

8.5 Sexual

This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault.

8.6 Financial or Material

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

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8.7 Neglect and Acts of Omission

This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

8.8 Emotional or Psychological

This includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services.

8.9 Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another online or repeatedly picks on another person through text and email messages, or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating another person or group of persons.

8.10 Mate Crime

A 'mate crime' is when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community, including other children, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative impact on the individual. Mate Crime is carried out by someone the child knows and often happens in private.

8.11 Radicalisation

The aim of radicalisation is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. This may be through a direct relationship or through social media.

12.0 Club Welfare Officer (CWO)

The role of the CWO is to take the lead in the Club on welfare and protection issues and ensure appropriate action is taken when there is a potential for or alleged abuse, bullying or poor practice with respect to children and their welfare. It is not their role to fully investigate any allegations made.

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