

BCU Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Good practice to help prevent Child Abuse

Concerns about the welfare of a child

Duty of Care

Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Paddlesafe with the BCU



A Resource for BCU Paddlers and Coaches



BCU Duty of Care

The policies and guidelines referenced within this document and its various appendices are those of the British Canoe Union and its affiliated member countries. The principles of both the policy and the appendices are based on our moral and ethical duty to ensure children and vulnerable adults can enjoy canoeing in a safe environment and as such they reflect current best practice.

Legal variation and social policy may require national association bodies to establish caveats to and separate guidelines to take account of home nation government, law and social work practices.

Introduction

The BCU wishes to ensure that all those taking part in canoeing are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff, coaches and / or volunteers. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

With this in mind the BCU recognises that they have a duty towards all those taking part in paddlesport activity and to any club providing paddling opportunities ensuring that support is provided to ensure all can do so with the highest possible standards of care.

All coaches and clubs 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.

As the organisers of activity, there is a possibility of someone being harmed. In a small percentage of cases action may be taken against you if the person decides to make a claim. This action may result in financial losses but can also harm your reputation or the reputation of your club and the BCU itself.

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 activity such as canoeing, 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. Trainers, coaches, referees, umpires or administrators 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 - in vehicles, during journey's to and from the activity, during events, team training events and camps etc.

The content of this document provides specific information in respect of Child Protection and the protection of vulnerable adults in order that coaches and clubs can appreciate their 'duty of care' with regard to these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.

Paddlesafe with the BCU, the guidelines presented on the final pages of this document provide clubs and centres with ideas and recommendations to assist them in implementing specific procedures and safeguards to protect young and vulnerable paddlers.

Further to this document you may wish to consult the following additional information.

- BCU Coaching Directory
- BCU Code of Ethics
- Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct
- BCU Duty of Care policy
- BCU Harassment Policy
- BCU Articles of Association and Disciplinary Procedure
- BCU Recommendations for Squad Trips and Residentials
- BCU Canoe and Kayak handbook

The BCU acknowledges Celia Brackenridge, Joy Bringer, Cheltenham and Gloucester University, Sports Coach UK, the NSPCC, the ASA, and others for origination of material within this document.

Based on: 1989 Children's Act, The Protection of Children Act 1999, The Sexual Offences (amendment) Act 2000, Home Office Document - Caring for Young People and the vulnerable





Paddlesafe with the BCU

In the BCU we believe that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in Paddlesport can help - administrator, club official, coach, parent, friend and children themselves.

Abuse can occur wherever there are children - at home, at school, in the park, at the club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone in the BCU has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after the children and vulnerable adults with whom we are working. The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has responsibility for the care of children should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare."

While the welfare of young people is the BCU's first consideration in establishing a child protection programme it is also seen that the interests of coaches themselves need to be taken account of, particularly where falsely accused. A feature of the BCU's policy on Child Protection is to ensure that we provide coaches with access to a confidential advice, guidance and support path, provided separately to that provided for those with concerns that abuse may be taking place.

These child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

- the child's welfare is the first consideration
- anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child
- all children, regardless of age, any disability they have, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse.
- Coaches, clubs and centres need to be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice and guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation.

We know that if the procedures are to help to protect children, everyone involved in Paddlesport needs to see and discuss them. We are, therefore, asking club secretaries/officers to make sure that they are widely distributed and discussed at club executive and general meetings.

Good Practice Guidelines

By following these guidelines you will help to protect both the children in our sport and our coaches/helpers from wrongful allegations.

Avoid situations where you are alone with one child. The BCU acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, where a child falls ill and has to be taken home. We would stress, however, that one to one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Further guidance on this is contained in the BCU Code of Ethics/scUK Code of Conduct.

- If any form of physical support is required ask the paddler'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. Always ensure that whoever supervises young people work in pairs.
- Where there are mixed teams/groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by an adult male and female coach/helper.
- Don't allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.
- If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, 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 and growing body.
- Follow the BCU guidelines for photography and video use (see reference sheet 'Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment')

Ensure your club adheres to the BCU best practice guidelines with particular reference to:

- The BCU Code of Ethics/scUK Code of Conduct.
- This guidance on child protection and the Paddlesafe Guidelines provided.
- The requirements for coaches and helpers to have undergone disclosure.
- Publicise the NSPCC Child protection Helpline

0800 800 500



BCU Child Protection Policy



BCU Child Protection Policy

What is Child Abuse?

It's generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse -

Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child eg 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

Emotional abuse occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed eg racial or sexual remarks.

It can also occur if a child is overprotected. 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, 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 in Paddlesport can also be an adult - the parent/carer who pushes too hard, the coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy or adult paddlers who attempt to assert unacceptable behaviour on younger paddlers to make them unwelcome or prevent them using club equipment. Bullying can also occur between young people.

What if you accidentally hurt a child?

If you accidentally hurt a child and they seem distressed in any manner, appear sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstand something you have done, report any such incident immediately to another Club Coach/official and make a brief written note of it. You should also inform the child's parents/carers, preferably in person.

Is touching OK?

If a coaching technique would benefit from physical contact or support then first ask the paddler's permission (eg would you mind if I held your shoulders to show you what I mean?) It is useful to take time to explain why and how this is used to the paddler and their parent or carer.

Touching can be OK and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing.

Indications of Child 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(s)

- Say that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually 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, eg. 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 some times 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 physically disabled children and children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.



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 we are asking you to fulfil your legal requirements and act on your concerns. Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information.

If you are a member, or the parent/carer or friend of a member of a Canoe Club you should:

- Tell an appointed Child Protection club officer, if your club has one, or alternatively the secretary, chairperson, coach or any committee member, or at an event possibly an event organiser - unless, of course you suspect them of being involved.- (See BCU club guidelines for club/centre recommendations for implementing a child protection policy)

or

- Contact the BCU Child Protection Lead Officer or BCU appointed Child Protection Officer (contact via BCU Office Nottingham)

or

- If you need urgent advice contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour HelpLine. 0800 800 500

If you are a club officer or event organiser 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 need urgent advice contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hour HelpLine. Contact your local Social Services Department or, in an emergency, the Police.
- If you are working with paddlers away from home, at a training camp, perhaps, or a national/regional competition - tell the team manager or the chief coach.
- If you are working with a school - inform the head teacher.
- If you are involved in a paddle scheme such as local authority paddle lessons, refer to their Child Protection procedures.

NB Even if reporting your concerns to club appointed persons or club officials you are also required to write to the BCU to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. A standard reporting form for this purpose is available via clubs, the BCU Coaching Office or the BCU Web site. Address the letter / form to:

**The BCU Child Protection and Harassment Officer,
British Canoe Union Coaching Service, Adbolton
Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS**

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

- Stay calm.
- Don't 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 - don't ask the child about explicit details.
- Make a detailed note of what the child has told you but, as advised in the previous section, please don't delay passing on the information.

What should you do as a coach if you have allegations made against you.

If as a coach you have had allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial adviser you could contact the BCU's Coach Advisor. That person will have had no involvement with the reported concerns or incident and will be able to support and advise you as to how to represent yourself.

**The BCU Coach Adviser, British Canoe Union
Coaching Service, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 5AS - tel 0115 9821100**



Concerns about the welfare of a child





**Good
practice to
help
prevent
Child Abuse**

Paddlesafe with the BCU

Guidelines for Clubs and Organisations

If you have good standards of practice within your club or organisation people are more likely to join!

We recommend that clubs/organisations review their existing policies and practices to help safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults within their organisations. By taking these basic steps you will also help protect your helpers/ coaches and the club from wrongful allegations. In addition, many funding bodies such as the Lottery Sports Fund, now require you to have a child protection policy and procedures in place.

Adopt a Child Protection Policy

This should suit the type of organisation you are and what you provide. It can be brief - or long - the important point is that everyone is made aware of it and you establish how it will be implemented – and then implement it. It should contain a statement of your commitment to providing a safe place for children to participate in Paddlesport and to preventing their abuse. You should also include a code of practice and procedures for how you aim to achieve this.

The reference sheet 'Club Child Protection and Harassment Policy' is an example of what you might say – you may wish to leave bits out or add other points you feel are important.

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers and Helpers

Having good standards of practice within your Club or organisation is likely to encourage more people to join. This includes:

- screening of helpers (see below)
- establishing clear roles
- regular checks or supervision of helpers
- information about clubs rules /operating procedures
- system for feedback and support
- support training of helpers and coaches in child protection issues

Nominate a Youth Co-ordinator to liaise with the committee and others on youth matters. Also someone as the contact for Child Protection issues – who should receive training. Wherever possible involve young people in the planning and organisation.

No system is foolproof – it is important that we do not rely on just one system to help create a safe environment for young people

Dealing with Disclosures or Discovery of Abuse

Issue written procedures and have systems in place for dealing with incidents of abuse (see enclosed reference sheets).

Codes of Conduct

Ensure all members/coaches/officials adhere to the BCU Code of Ethics/scUK Code of Conduct and establish Codes of Conduct for Paddlers, Coaches and Helpers, Parents/Guardians.- (see reference sheet 'Club Code of Conduct')

Create a Safe Environment

Have you done a risk assessment?

Do you have a safety policy?

Screening Volunteers, Helpers and Staff

The BCU makes the following recommendation to clubs, centres and coaches with respect to the vetting of helpers and coaches having access to young people:

All full time paid staff should be asked for or undertake Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosure (see page 7).

Actual contact time with Young People may determine whether this should be standard or enhanced disclosure. All new employees should be asked to undergo Disclosure at the time of job offer. Existing employees should be asked to undertake Disclosure on a phasing in basis.

Voluntary club coaches should be asked to undertake some form of vetting i.e either CRB Disclosure or the completion of a self declaration form and/or the submission of references. Clubs should decide which is appropriate relative to the total amount of contact time coaches have with young people. See advice on CRB Disclosure and example self declaration form. Guidance available from the BCU Child Protection and Harassment Officer or other appointed person.



Club helpers i.e. drivers and support staff should also be considered as requiring some form of check, again appropriate to the amount of contact time with young people. Self declaration and/or references should be sufficient in these instances.

See reference sheets for further guidance

Communicate all these actions to all your members.

Appointment Procedures in Paddlesport

- Application and interview
- Voluntary declaration
- Inquiry local and national
 - Local References
 - Confidential enquiry - Criminal Records Bureau 'Disclosure' Check
- Discussion – understanding and acceptance of responsibilities
- Agreement and appointment

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Obtaining any form of formal disclosure or check as to a person's suitability to work with young people and children has in the past been difficult and time consuming. The CRB has been established to provide one stop access to data relating to a coach's suitability for full time employment or voluntary work with young people. This information can only be accessed by the individual themselves via a registered body.

The CRB will gain access to information from the Police National Computer, Health Service records and local information providing an option of three levels of disclosure - Basic, Standard or Enhanced.

Coaches and helpers working with under 18 year olds will from the Spring of 2002, should they be required to, be able to register with the Criminal Records Bureau. If you are a bonafide volunteer operating within

a club or the BCU's regional provision you will be able to obtain CRB Disclosure via the BCU who have themselves registered with the CRB as a recognised registered body. **This service will be free of charge as long as you are a volunteer.**

Self employed coaches and coaches assisting groups and clubs on an ad-hock basis should also consider undertaking Disclosure as a means of offering basic assurances as to their suitability to work with Young People. Disclosure on this basis may or may not be free.

Clubs and approved centres employing paid staff and wishing them to be CRB checked, can direct individuals through the BCU.

Further info available from:

Disclosure or its equivalent is available in Scotland and Northern Ireland via the following government department or services:

Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO)

Pre-employment Consultancy Service (PECS)

SCRO: www.scro.police.uk

Disclosure Scotland, PO Box 250,

Glasgow G51 1YU

e-mail info@disclosurescotland.co.uk

**PECS: Pre-employment Consultancy Services
Child Care Unit, Department of Health and Social
Services & PS, Room 508a Dundonald House,
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4.
Tel 02890 524290**

**BCU Coaching Office: tel 0115 9821100
coaching@bcu.org.uk**

**Disclosure Services, CRB, PO Box 110,
Liverpool L3 6ZZ tel 0870 9090 822
www.crb.gov.uk
www.disclosure.gov.uk.**



**Good
practice to
help
prevent
Child Abuse**



What to do if you have concerns about child abuse by a member of staff or volunteer



Are you concerned about child abuse by a member of staff or volunteer ?

If yes - Is It

Poor Practice?

Report concerns to Identified person in club / Union

Local NSPCC Contact

Local Social Services

Identified Person in BCU

Identified Person in club

BCU Child Protection & Harassment Officer

Abuse?

Report concerns to Identified person in club / Union

Identified person must ensure the safety of the child, i.e.stop access of the person causing concern to the child

Refer concern to Social Services who may involve the Police

Report to the BCU Senior Officer

If the concern relates to the identified person in the club / Union refer to the Senior Officer of the BCU

BCU Senior Officer deals with the Allegation

Refer concern to Social Services who may involve the Police

● BCU decides whether to suspend member temporarily pending Police enquires
● Disciplinary / misconduct proceedings ● BCU handle all media enquiries.

© BCU 2002

This document is the copyright of the British Canoe Union. All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any form or by means electronic, mechanical, film or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Update and upgrade material is protected on the same basis.

British Canoe Union
John Dudderidge House
Adbolton Lane
West Bridgford
Notts NG2 5AS
Tel: 0115 9821100
Fax: 0115 9821797
www.bcu.org.uk