

Forest Canoe Club

Child Protection Policy



Policy statement

- The child's welfare is paramount
- All children whatever their age culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- As defined in the Children's Act 1989, anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

Code of Practice and procedures

All Club coaches, committee members and helpers are required to have a Criminal Records Bureau check made.

Prevention of Abuse

What to do if abuse is suspected or alleged to have taken place :

Always

- Stay calm and ensure the child is safe and feels safe
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what he or she says seriously
- Reassure the child and stress that he or she is not to blame
- Be honest to explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse
- Make note of what the child has said as soon possible after the event
- Maintain confidentiality and only tell others if it will protect the child

Never

- Rush into actions that maybe inappropriate
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Ask inappropriate questions which may jeopardise any impending police investigation
- Take sole responsibility and consult someone else(the person in charge or someone you trust if the allegations are about the person in charge) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support yourself



Follow the principle

If I do something, might it make things worse? Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy. It takes courage but it protects a young life.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However one thing is certain you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating especially if the children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can develop behavioural problems at school and home. Their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems if left untreated can persist into adulthood.

Guidelines for recording information

- It is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation into the beginning of an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with the child complaints could cause prejudice and integrity of the evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court.
- There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children with limited communications skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without “leading” the child.
- The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are insight of another adult but that your conversation will not be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the child wants. The rule is to let the child initiate any actions and remain positive and supportive throughout.

Good working practice guidelines for coaches and helpers

- Do not spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Do not take children alone in your car on journeys, however short
- Do not take children to your home
- Where these are unavoidable ensure they occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the Childs parents
- Do not go into the changing room when children are changing unless another adult or Teacher is present
- Do not help children with their clothing in awkward places
- Design programmes that are within the ability of the individual child



Coaches and helpers should never

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games including horse play
- Allow or engage in appropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded so always act
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves

Be Aware

It maybe sometimes necessary for coaches or helpers to do things of a personal nature for children particularly if they are very young or disabled. Where ever possible such tasks should be carried out by a parent or guardian. If a Forest Canoe club coach or helper carries out any such task it should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help parents or guardians should be fully informed. In such situations it is important to ensure all Forest Canoe Club members are sensitive to the child and undertake personal tasks with utmost discretion.

Allegations of child abuse

Any allegation of child abuse against a Forest Canoe Club member must be reported immediately to the Chairman of the Club or, in his absence, the Head Coach who will take appropriate action.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Child Protection or are unsure of your role as a Coach or Helper seek immediate advice from the Chairman or Head Coach.