



Poole Harbour Canoe Club



Poole Harbour Canoe Club believe that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse.

Everyone in the Club can help - the committee, club officials, coaches, parents, friends 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 Club 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 Club'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 Club'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 need to be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice and guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation.

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 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**

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 Club 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 you adhere 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

Child Protection Policy

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 (e.g. 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, 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 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.

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 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

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.

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 e.g. 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.

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 fulfill 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 the Canoe Club you should:

Tell either of the appointed Club Child Protection Officers:

Bev Gowman 01202 777631,

Or alternatively

The Secretary - Steve Hills 07799 082263.

The Chairperson, coach or any committee member, or at an event possibly an event organiser - unless, of course you suspect them of being involved. -

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