

# CHILD PROTECTION AND VULNERABLE PERSONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

North Avon Canoe Club aims to create an environment in which all persons are safe from abuse and harassment and in which concerns and suspicions are dealt with promptly and appropriately. All young persons under the age of 18 years and vulnerable persons have a right to protection, and the welfare and safety of the young or vulnerable person is always paramount. Any action taken will be in the best interest of the young or vulnerable person.

In order to achieve this we will endeavour to:

- Ensure that adults do not put themselves in a position whereby their behaviour could be deemed to be inappropriate
- Build trusting and supportive relationships between all club members and parents/guardians
- Request that club officials and volunteers complete a satisfactory CRB check or self-declaration every 3 years
- Provide opportunities to raise the awareness of guardians and all club members to the signs and symptoms associated with abuse and the procedures to be followed
- Appoint a designated Child Protection and Vulnerable Persons Co-ordinator
- Encourage and enable young and vulnerable persons to develop the self-confidence to articulate their feelings
- Provide support for all club members and parents/guardians throughout any child protection concern

## **PROCEDURE**

Please remember the 'Golden Rule', it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child/vulnerable adult is being abused but it is your responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person. Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information.

### **IF A CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT TELLS YOU THAT HE OR SHE IS BEING ABUSED:**

- Stay calm.
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself.

- Listen to what the child/vulnerable adult says and, please, take it seriously.
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child/vulnerable adult is telling you - don't ask the child/vulnerable adult about explicit details.
  - When
  - Where
  - Who
  - What (not in detail)
- Make a detailed note of what the child/vulnerable adult has told you but, please don't delay passing on the information.

NB Even if reporting your concerns to club appointed persons or club officials or the NSPCC, police or social services you are also required to contact the BCU Child Protection Officer to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it.

#### **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 Adviser. 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 - Nigel Timmins: 017684 80084

#### **CONTACTS**

*North Avon Canoe Club*  
 Child Protection Co-ordinator  
 Theresa Wheatcroft 0117  
 9682240

*BCU Child Protection Lead Officer*  
 British Canoe Union,  
 18 Market Place,  
 Bingham,  
 Nottingham,  
 NG13 8AP  
 Mike Devlin - 0845 370 9503  
 24hr contact - 0777 570 7364

*Local Authority Social  
 Services*  
 Bristol City Council  
 0117 9222000

*NSPCC 24hr Advice Line*  
 0808 800 5000

*Police (emergency use)*  
 999

These policies and procedures have been written in line with the BCU guidelines.

#### **PERSONAL PROTECTION**

Avoid situations where you are alone with one child/vulnerable adult. The BCU acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, where a child/vulnerable adult 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.

If any form of physical support is required ask the paddler's permission, explain what you are doing and why to both the child/vulnerable adult and their parents/carers.

- Where possible ask parents/carers to be responsible for children/vulnerable adults 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/vulnerable adult, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent/carer and if possible the child/vulnerable adult. Let them know what you are doing and why.
- Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child/vulnerable adult 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/vulnerable adult immature growing body and ability.
- Follow the BCU guidelines for photography and video use (see reference sheet '[Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment](#)')
- The BCU say...'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?) You should also explain why and how this is used to the paddler and their parent/carer.'
- Leave yourself open when talking with a group no matter how big or small the group
- Avoid giving transport lifts young people. If there is no other option, get a consent form signed for regular journeys or take more than one young person