Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

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 within 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.

5.01.09

Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

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 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

Vulnerable Adult

"A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"

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

Abuse can occur wherever there are children/vulnerable adult - at home, at school, in the park, at the club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children/vulnerable adult 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 paramount
- 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 and/or social/economic status have a right to be protected from abuse.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- 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.

The BCU recognises that some children and young people have additional vulnerabilities or are disadvantaged by their experiences such as children with disabilities or who come from minority ethnic groups. Bearing in mind that children and young people can be and are disadvantaged by these and other experiences, it is important for all those that work with children to be extra vigilant in creating a safe culture. See our Guidance sheet "Protecting Children with Disabilities".

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/vulnerable adult in our sport and our coaches/helpers from wrongful allegations.

- 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. 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/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').

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

What is 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/vulnerable adult 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

Sexual Abuse
Where young people/vulnerable adults 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/vulnerable adult 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/vulnerable adult is over protected. Abuse can occur where a parent or coach has unrealistic expectations over what a child/vulnerable adult can achieve.

Neglect
Failing to meet childrens'/vulnerable adults' basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, and 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?

You should report 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 asks 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.

Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

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. 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 Officer, British Canoe Union , 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham NG13 8AP. Tel 0845 370 9500.

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.
- Make a detailed note of what the child/vulnerable adult 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 Child Protection Coach Support Officer. 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 Child Protection Coach Support Officer, British Canoe Union Coaching Service, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham. NG13 8AP.

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 basics steps you will also help protect your helpers/ coaches and the club from wrongful allegations. In addition, many funding bodies now require you to have a child protection & vulnerable adults policy and procedures in place.

Adopt a Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults 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/vulnerable adults 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 & Vulnerable Adults 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)

- induction procedures for all helpers
- 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/vulnerable adult issues

Nominate a Club Welfare Officer.

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 BCU Templates and reference sheets for guidance).

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 individuals who work with children should be asked to undertake Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosure (see below).
- All new employees/staff should be asked to undergo Disclosure at the time of job offer. Existing employees/staff should be asked to undertake Disclosure on a phasing in basis.
- Voluntary club coaches should be asked to undertake a CRB Disclosure (best practice) or as a minimum the completion of a self declaration form and the submission of references. See advice on CRB Disclosure and example self declaration form. Guidance available from the BCU Child Protection 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 with young people/vulnerable adult. See guidance sheets for further help.

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
- Induction

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

- What is a CRB Disclosure?
- How do I apply for a Disclosure?
- What sort of Disclosure do I need?
- What information will I be required to show and include on my Disclosure form?
- Who will receive my Disclosure?
- Can I challenge the information on my Disclosure?
- How long will my Disclosure be valid?

What is a CRB Disclosure?

A CRB Disclosure is a document that contains information held by police and government department that can be used by employers and voluntary organisations to make recruitment decisions.

A CRB Disclosure offers the BCU and all those involved in paddlesport the means to check the background of applicants to ensure that they do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for posts.

A CRB Disclosure will provide details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer. It will also contain details from lists held by the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills.

How do I apply for a Disclosure?

The BCU is a Registered Body and therefore able to complete Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosures.

Each club has a nominated representative who is able to obtain CRB forms from the BCU, therefore either obtain a form through your nominated person or contact the BCU direct.

Once you have received your form follow the instructions, showing your identification to your club representative and then returning the completed form to the BCU.

What sort of Disclosure do I need?

The BCU only conducts Enhanced Disclosures. An Enhanced Disclosure includes an additional check against local Police Forces.

Local police records may contain additional information that might be relevant to the position sought.

What information will I be required to show and include on my Disclosure form?
In completing the form you are required to include:

- Your full name, and any other name that you may have been known by
- Details of addresses you have lived at
- Your date and place of birth
- Your national insurance number
- In addition you will be required to provide personal identification documents including items such as your passport and/or driving licence

The identification will be seen by your club/centre representative and returned to you. The club representative will then acknowledge on your Disclosure form that they have seen your identification and send the form back to the BCU CRB Unit for processing.

Who will receive my Disclosure?

You (the applicant) will receive your Disclosure form in the post once the check has been completed.

The turn around time for CRB Disclosures to be returned is around is 6-8 weeks although some can be shorter as well as considerably longer. (The BCU has no control over this)

A copy of your CRB Disclosures will also be returned to the BCU Child Protection Officer or appointed person. The Club will **NOT** receive a copy of your Disclosure although they are advised to ask to see your completed Disclosure.

Can I challenge the information on my Disclosure?

Yes, if you think that any information on your Disclosure is incorrect please contact the CRB Dispute Line on 0870 90 90 778

You should also contact the BCU Child Protection Officer (see contacts) to inform them which aspect of your Disclosure you are disputing.

How long will my Disclosure be valid?

A Disclosure is only valid on the day that it is issued, if however you remain employed or in a permanent role with the same club, organisation then you will not need another CRB check for another 3 years. If however you move you may well be required to complete another CRB.