

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The sport of athletics provides a valuable activity for many adults and young people. Young people gain much from sport not only in advancing their physical skills but also providing many opportunities for social and emotional development. Southport Waterloo athletics club aims to help advance this development and promote athletic achievement within a safe and supportive environment.

Parents place a lot of trust into the club and the club therefore must assure parents that they are providing a safe, wholesome and developmental environment. The Amateur Athletic Association of England (AAA) has recommended that all athletic clubs appoint a Child Protection Officer and have a clear child protection policy set down in writing to give assurance that:

- The club is providing this environment
- The club has procedures in place to deal with any failures of the system.

Principles

- The policy of Southport Waterloo AC is to promote the welfare of all children and young people and protect them from neglect, exploitation and abuse.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is a young person. There is a wide range of maturity and attitude but all are potentially vulnerable
- The child's welfare is paramount but everyone in the sport has the right to protection from abuse whatever his or her age.
- Suspicions and allegations need to be investigated and acted upon by people well qualified to do so.
- To ensure the welfare of young athletes the club must work in partnership with the child's home, school, community and where necessary make use of and fully co-operate with social services and/or the police.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse is caused not only by those who perpetrate it, but also by those who fail to prevent it, or condone, minimise or tolerate it. The main forms of abuse are:

a) Physical Abuse

Occasions where adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. Introduction of inappropriate drugs, alcohol or toxic substances is also physical abuse.

Coaches must always be aware of the nature and intensity of training with due regard to the capacity of developing children.

b) Sexual Abuse

This may occur when an adult or other child uses children to meet their sexual needs. Showing children pornographic material, full sexual or oral intercourse or masturbation, inappropriate touching and witnessing of sexual acts.

c) Emotional Abuse

When adults fail to show due care and attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child causing him or her to lose self confidence, self esteem and become nervous and withdrawn. It may also be a result of bullying. In the area of sport this could result from a parent or coach placing unrealistic pressure on the child to perform to consistently high expectations.

d) Neglect

This is failure by adults to provide the basic needs of food, warm clothing, appropriate care and supervision.

In sport coaches should ensure children and parents are aware of the need for warm clothing and drink as and when necessary.

e) Verbal Abuse

It is not acceptable to swear at or insult a child. It is not acceptable to make any remarks that can be construed as racist or sexist, or make disparaging remarks about physical appearance, disability or sexual preference.

f) Abuse of trust

Where young people are indoctrinated with attitudes to training, drugs and cheating or social, political and religious views that are unacceptable to the young athletes family, community or the rules of the sport.

Recognition of Abuse

There are physical and behavioural signs that might cause concern about the welfare or safety of an athlete. Some examples include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries – i.e. bruises, cuts & burns particularly on areas not prone to this type of injury.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour – becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
- Someone else reporting concerns or changes about the welfare of a child.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Distrust of adults (especially those you would expect the child to be close to)

It should be remembered that these are only POSSIBLE INDICATIONS of abuse; they do not by themselves prove anything.

It is not the responsibility of anyone in the club to prove abuse has taken place – but it is a responsibility to refer on any concerns.

Responsibilities of Southport Waterloo Athletics Club

Southport Waterloo AC will:

- Appoint one Child Protection Officer (CPO) and notify North of England Athletic Association (NoEAA) of their name and contact details.
- Accept that all officers and Committee members have responsibility for upholding the Policy and for responding to any suspected breaches of it
- Ensure that coaches are vetted as to their suitability to perform that role.
- Comply with the legal requirement that all volunteers are screened and anyone known to have been convicted of an offence against a person under the age of 18 will not be allowed to work with young people in the club (see volunteer application form).
- Have a clear method of dealing at committee level with complaints of poor athletic practice as distinct from alleged abuse, in accordance with NoEAA Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.
- Implement recommendations from UKA and NoEAA relating to welfare and/or child protection.
- Through the club CPO, inform the social services without delay if a concern about child abuse is identified. If the CPO is not available, or the concern is about them, then the person with concerns or being informed of them should immediately contact the local social services or the police.
- Ensure that contact details for social services, the police and NSPCC are made available to all club organisers, coaches and officials.
- Maintain confidentiality of those disclosing, those accused of misconduct and any alleged victims.

The role of the Club Child Protection Officer is to:

- Ensure that **all** club helpers/officials/coaches complete a volunteer application form and update the records every 5 years.
- Ensure that all club helpers/officials/coaches receive a copy of the Code of Practice and agree to abide by it.
- Send a copy of any such forms to NoEAA on request.
- Receive and advise on reports or disclosures from club members.
- Initiate action, ensuring that all appropriate persons have been contacted.
- Keep confidential information on any matters referred and make them available to the NoEAA, Social Services or Police as necessary.
- Inform the UKA Welfare Officer of any cases of misconduct by club personnel that involve child abuse.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of welfare and child protection issues with support from the NoEAA and UKA or Social Services.

Complaints Procedure

Reports of possible misconduct should be brought to the attention of the club's Child Protection Officer who will act according to whether the allegation made is abuse or relates to poor athletics practice. The Child Protection Officer appointed by the club committee is Ann Howgego who can be contacted in confidence on 01704 540424.

If the allegation appears to be abuse

The Child Protection Officer will implement the following procedures:

1. Parents/carers should be informed to clarify initial concerns. This must be done carefully and it may be that some personal concerns e.g. a bereavement has caused the unhappiness. However, in circumstances where a child may be placed at greater risk if such concerns were shared with the family, they should not be informed.
2. If the complaint appears to be an allegation of a criminal offence the Police and/or Social services should be contacted immediately. A note of the call and the designation of the official informed should be made in case future contact becomes necessary. If the complaint concerns a club member or someone acting on behalf of the club the complaint should be referred to the club committee who will meet at the earliest opportunity to decide whether the person complained of should continue in their club capacity during or at the conclusion of any subsequent enquiry.
3. Where the complaint is not one that involves the Police, and it can be resolved in an informal manner, then a record should again be made of the complaint and the way in which it was resolved. If the complaint cannot be resolved this should then be referred to the club committee whose decisions on the matter will be final. The Committee reserves the right at all times to dispense with the services of any coach or suspend the membership of any club member.
4. If necessary advice should be sought from the NSPCC free helpline on 0800 800 500 (no names or club details are required).
5. The Child Protection Officer should take any appropriate action with regard to informing the club or NoEAA.

If the allegation relates to poor athletics practice

1. The Child Protection Officer should refer the matter immediately to a special meeting of the appropriate club committee.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved within the club it should be referred to the NoEAA.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN ATHLETICS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

These guidelines are designed to ensure the best possible outcomes and success for children and to protect adults working to assist the athletic development of young people in their care.

- All should respect the rights, dignity and worth of all and treat everyone with equality.
- Place the well-being and safety of the performer above the development of performance.
- Sign up and adhere to a code of conduct for athletics coaches.
- Be a good role model. Display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance (eg do not smoke, drink alcohol or use foul language in the company of young people)
- Always work in an open environment within sight or hearing of others – avoid private locations (eg taking athletes to your home)
- If physical contact is necessary it should be done openly. Do not get close to or have physical contact with a young person without clearly explaining what you are doing (e.g. correcting position of a foot in a throw or a stretching routine etc.).
- Use common sense in selecting subjects to demonstrate skills on.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism. Never use actions or language that may cause a child to lose self-esteem or confidence.
- Always promote the positive aspects of sport e.g. fair play, and never condone rule violations, bad sportsmanship or use of prohibited substances.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Where possible parents should take responsibility for their children in changing rooms. If groups are to be supervised in changing rooms, always ensure that adults work in pairs and that the gender is appropriate.
- Where mixed teams compete at least one male and female adult should always accompany them.
- Do not take children alone on car journeys, however short. But if the situation makes this unavoidable do so only with the full knowledge and consent of the parent/carer and the club.
- On trips away always have separate sleeping accommodation for coaches and children.
- If you accidentally hurt a child, or cause distress in any manner, or the child appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident to a colleague supported by a brief written report of the incident as soon as possible to the CPO. Parents/carers should be informed of the occurrence.

You should never:

Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games
Permit children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
Make sexually suggestive comments or jokes to a child even in fun.
Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves. (However it may be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children if they are very young or disabled. Such tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer)
Agree to meet an athlete on your own

Southport Waterloo AC

All adults coaching, managing teams, helping or coming into contact with children or young people under the aegis of activities of Southport Waterloo AC must comply with the Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice for people working in athletics with young children. As one such person you are required to sign a copy of this document. By signing you agree to comply with the Policy and to follow the Code of Practice. The signed form should be returned to a Child Protection Officer Ann Howgego at 34 Pilkington Road, Southport, PR8 6PD.

Southport Waterloo AC accepts that in matters concerning child protection the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.

It is the policy of Southport Waterloo AC to safeguard the welfare of the children and all others involved in its activities by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Everyone coaching, and helping with children and young people will be required to disclose all convictions, whether spent or not.

Anyone who commits an offence involving abuse or causing harm to children will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include expulsion from Southport Waterloo Athletics Club and prohibition from participating in the activities of the club. Other authorities may be notified including Police or Social Services.

If you suspect a child is being abused:

1. Immediately tell the Child Protection Officer.
2. Record the facts as you know them on a CP report form and give a copy to your Child Protection Officer.
3. Ensure that the child has access to an independent adult.
4. Ensure that no other situation arises which could cause any further concern.

If a child discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Listen carefully, show and tell the child that you are taking seriously what is being said.
- Reassure the child – ensure he/she feels safe and does not feel to blame for what has happened.
- Be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the behaviour that is distressing.
- Proceed as above (steps 1-4). Maintain confidentiality – only share the information on a need to know basis i.e. to CPO.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

- Immediately tell your Child Protection Officer.
- Record the facts as you know them on a CP report form and give a copy to your Child Protection Officer.
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

You must report and refer any abuse; you must not investigate

I agree to adhere to Southport Waterloo Athletic Club Child Protection Policy and to follow the Code of Practice issued.

NAME (Print)

SIGNED DATE

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM (Coach/Team Manager/Official/Helper)

The sport of athletics and this club is conscious of the very valuable part played by volunteers. We are delighted to have the offer of your help. We ask you to complete this form so that we are best able to use your experience and help.

SURNAME.....

FORENAME.....

ADDRESS.....

..... POSTCODE

TELEPHONE: HOME WORK

ATHLETIC COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

.....Grade.....Exp.Date.....

.....Grade.....Exp.Date.....

OTHER INFORMATION

Those who help a club often have experience in their work, recreations, studies and other sports that could be of great help to the club. We would be grateful if you could list any which may assist the club.

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***I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES OF THE SPORT AND THIS CLUB.
*I DECLARE THAT I HAVE NEVER BEEN CONVICTED OF ANY OFFENCE
AGAINST A PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF 18.**

Signed Date

*If you are unable to complete this declaration, please amend as necessary and add an explanation below:

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CHILD PROTECTION REPORT FORM

Name of Person making report.....

Date.....

Name of Child.....Age.....

Parents Name.....

Home Address.....

Telephone No.....

Nature of Concern

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What has prompted the concerns? Are signs physical, behavioural, indirect or a mixture?

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Details of incident/s, giving dates and times.

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Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

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Have the parents/guardian been contacted? If so what was said?

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