

Surf-Lines Ltd

Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

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Next Review:

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Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

I. Introduction

Everyone who participates at Surf-Lines Ltd is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Surf-Lines Ltd has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people/vulnerable adults, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Surf-Lines Ltd is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone involved accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children/vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children/vulnerable adults and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Surf-Lines Ltd and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

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” (Who Decides- Lord Chancellors Department (1997))

2. Policy Statement

Surf-Lines is committed to the following:

- ⇒the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount.
- ⇒all children/vulnerable, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in Outdoor Activities in a fun and safe environment.
- ⇒taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- ⇒all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- ⇒all Surf-Lines employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.
- ⇒working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children.

Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

3. Defining Child Abuse

Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Main different forms of Abuse

Physical Abuse: where adults physically hurt or injure a young person/vulnerable e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving alcohol, inappropriate drugs or sanctions would also constitute abuse.

Psychological (Emotional) Abuse: the persistent emotional ill treatment, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects, certainly on a child's emotional development. It may involve telling a person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be **physical** (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), **verbal** (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), **emotional** (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or **sexual** (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behavior.

Neglect and acts of omission occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect in Outdoor Activities could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- ⇒ unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- ⇒ an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- ⇒ the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- ⇒ another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- ⇒ unexplained changes in a young person's behavior e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- ⇒ inappropriate sexual awareness
- ⇒ engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- ⇒ distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- ⇒ difficulty in making friends
- ⇒ being prevented from socialising with others
- ⇒ displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- ⇒ losing weight for no apparent reason
- ⇒ becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

⇒ behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions

⇒ an unexplained drop off in performance

⇒ physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes

⇒ a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in Surf-Lines Ltd to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Surf-Lines Ltd

Surf-Lines Ltd has occasionally been requested by Group Leaders/Parents or Guardians to take photographs which are used for their marketing/memento purposes. If a Surf-Lines camera is used will keep the images for the shortest period possible until they have been transferred to the customer. Surf-Lines Ltd may occasionally request use of images that enhance the activity and could be used for marketing. Permission will be sought from Group Leaders/Parents or Guardians before this takes place.

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All staff should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported.

All parents and performers should be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid.

4. Promoting Good Practice

Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in Outdoor Activities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct. (BCU)

It is **NOT** the responsibility of employees or participants in Outdoor Activities to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

⇒ always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)

⇒ make the experience of Outdoor Activities fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying

⇒ treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity

⇒ always put the welfare of the young person first

⇒ maintain a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)

⇒ avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given

⇒ involve leaders/parents/guardians wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs

⇒ request written parental consent if Coaches are required to transport young people in their cars

⇒ gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements

⇒ ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, where possible they should be accompanied by a male and female member of staff

⇒ be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people

⇒ always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

⇒ recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for personal achievements.

⇒ keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

⇒ unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others

⇒ taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short

⇒ taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you

⇒ sharing a room with a young person

⇒ engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay

⇒ allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form

⇒ allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged

⇒ making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun

⇒ reducing a young person to tears as a form of control

⇒ allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

⇒ do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person on your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/guardian and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

5. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Surf-Lines Ltd in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Surf-Lines Ltd and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

stay calm so as not to frighten the young person

reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell

listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously

keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify

inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you.

Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.

safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue

record all information

report the incident to senior staff/director

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC Wales Hour help line (Mon – Fri 10.00am – 6.00pm). Tel No: 08081002524 or the NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0808005000

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- ⇒the child's name, age and date of birth
- ⇒the child's home address and telephone number
- ⇒whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- ⇒the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- ⇒a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- ⇒details of witnesses to the incidents
- ⇒the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- ⇒have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- ⇒has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- ⇒has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

6. Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Surf-Lines Ltd expects it's staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child **immediately with the person in charge** and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If a nominated welfare officer is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved

Child protection in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved

Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Surf-Lines Ltd will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document Surf-Lines Staff are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the Surf-Lines Ltd who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- ⇒ Surf-Lines Ltd will refer the matter to social services department
- ⇒ the parent/guardian of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- ⇒ the Welfare Officer should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- ⇒ the Welfare Officer should also notify the relevant sport governing body
- ⇒ if the Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the next in command who will refer the matter to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser.

Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

7. Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

The Welfare Officer
The parents of the child

The person making the allegation
Social Services/police
The Regional Development Manager and your Sport Governing Body welfare officer
The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Internal Inquiries and Suspension

The Surf-Lines Ltd Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries Surf-Lines Ltd will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases Surf-Lines Ltd must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

8. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children

Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

Controlling Access to Children

All staff and volunteers should complete a Criminal Records Bureau form. The form will elicit information about the applicants past and any criminal record. If a CRB form has not already been completed, then a Self-Declaration form (see attached) should be completed, until a CRB have been received. Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures.

Their qualifications should be substantiated.

The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.

Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness.

9. Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.

Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.

Respond to concerns expressed by a child.

Work safely and effectively with children.

Surf-Lines Ltd requires:

All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a CRB check.

All employees, volunteers, coaches and welfare officers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

All coaches, trainee coaches and leaders should have an up to date first aid qualification.

Declaration

On behalf of **Surf-Lines Ltd** we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of this Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

(n.b. One of the signatories should be the Welfare Officer)

Name:	Name:
Position:	Position:
Date:	Date: