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# Safeguarding Policy

Addlestone Canoe Club is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members, this is especially true for children and adults identified as being at risk. Safeguarding children and adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

## Scope

This policy is applicable to all members, volunteers, guests and observers. It covers all activity the club undertakes, including non paddlesport, social and fundraising activities. It is applicable at all venues the club operates from, as well as accommodation used for trips.

This policy is aimed at promoting the rights and wellbeing of all individuals, including children and adults at risk. In the context of this policy:

- A 'child' is defined as: 'Any person who is aged under 18 years of age'
- An 'adult at risk' is defined as: 'Any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care, and or support, by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, which means that they are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.'

The principles of both the policy and the guidance documents are based on our moral and ethical duty to ensure that all people can enjoy canoeing in a safe environment and as such they reflect current best practice and the legislative framework of each home nation. To take account of legal variation and social policy, national association bodies will, where necessary, establish guidelines to take account of home nation government, law and social work practices.

## Duty of Care

Addlestone Canoe Club is committed to ensuring that all those taking part in canoeing are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm. This is particularly true in respect of children and adults at risk.

We all have a duty with respect to safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk to ensure they can participate and enjoy our sport with the highest possible standards of care.

All coaches, volunteers and providers 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. All coaches have current DBS certificates which are checked regularly.

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. Coaches, volunteers, referees, officials 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 journeys to and from the activity, during sessions and events, team training events and camps etc.

The content of this document provides specific information in respect of safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk in order that everyone can appreciate their 'duty of care' with regard to these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.

## Paddlesafe

The welfare of children and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting a child from abuse. Everyone in Paddlesport can help – administrator, club official, coach, parent, friend 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 Paddlesport has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after the children with whom we are working. Whilst the welfare of children is our first consideration in establishing child protection policies and procedures, we have also taken account of the needs of coaches, particularly where falsely accused. A feature of our policy on safeguarding children is to ensure that we provide individuals with access to confidential advice, guidance and support, provided separately to that provided for those with concerns that abuse may be taking place.

These safeguarding and safeguarding procedures stem from the following principles:

- The child's or adult at risk's welfare is paramount.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child.
- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, marital status and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse.
- To respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

PaddleUK recognises that some children and adults at risk may have additional vulnerabilities or are disadvantaged by their experiences. It is important that all those who work with children and adults at risk are vigilant in creating a safe culture and are aware of those who may have additional vulnerabilities. We know that if procedures are to help protect children and adults at risk, everyone involved in Paddlesport needs to see and discuss them.



## Indications of abuse

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child or adult at risk. They are only indicators - not confirmation.

Some examples are where the child or adult at risk:

- says that she/ 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 sometimes 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 some children or adults at risk can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

## What to do if you have a concern

If you have concerns about the welfare of a child or adult at risk please remember the golden rule:

- it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child or adult at risk is being abused - but it is your responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person.

Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but do not 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:

- For club activities:
  - inform the Club Welfare Officer (contact details shown on the noticeboard in the clubhouse corridor); or
  - fill in the online reporting form that will be forwarded to the Club Welfare Officer here: <https://forms.gle/pfkmqwsQzd5zRRXr5>.
- At an event:
  - tell the person responsible for safeguarding (Event Welfare Officer) or the event organiser - unless, of course you suspect them of being involved.

As an alternative, you could

- Contact the Home Nation Safeguarding/ Child Protection Lead Officer (<https://paddleuk.org.uk/report-a-safeguarding-concern/>)
- Contact Surrey County Council safeguarding team: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/adults/getting-support/concerns>
- OR if you need urgent advice contact the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hours Helpline: 0808 800 5000,



The Club Welfare Officer or Chair who are responsible for safeguarding children at Addlestone Canoe Club could:

- 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 hours Help Line.
- Contact your local social services department or, in an emergency, the Police.
- If you are away from home with paddlers, at a training camp, perhaps, or a national/ regional competition – tell the Team Leader or the designated Welfare Officer.
- If you are volunteering for a school session – inform the Head Teacher.
- If you are volunteering for a Local Authority canoeing lessons or youth organisation sessions – refer to their child protection procedures.

Please note, that when you have reported your concerns to the NSPCC, police or social services you are also required to contact your home nation Safeguarding Officer to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. Our web form is a copy of the PaddleUK reporting form, and the information may be forwarded to PaddleUK:

<https://forms.gle/pfkmqwsQzd5zRRXr5>.

You may wish to report concerns directly to PaddleUK using their form:

<https://paddleuk.org.uk/report-a-safeguarding-concern/>.

If a child tells you that he or she is being abused

- Stay calm.
- Do not 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 – do not ask about explicit details.
- Make a detailed note of what the child has told you but, as advised in the previous section, please do not delay passing on the information.

## What should you do if you have allegations made against you?

If, as a coach or volunteer, you have had allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial adviser you could contact your PaddleUK Safeguarding Officer who will advise you of what support may be available

(<https://paddleuk.org.uk/report-a-safeguarding-concern/>).



## Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse

It's generally acknowledged that there are five main types of abuse - Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect and Bullying.

### 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.

### Sexual Abuse

Where young people are used by their peers or adults to meet their own sexual needs. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse and includes the use of pornographic material, and taking and sharing inappropriate sexual images of each other.

### 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 over protected. 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, 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 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. For further guidance on bullying refer to the relevant Anti Bullying Policy.



## Appendix 2: 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.

PaddleUK 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.

### Coaching Code of Ethics

- 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.
- Where possible, there should not be a time when one adult is alone in a changing room when U18's are present and vice versa.
- Where there are mixed teams/groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by an adult male and female coach/helper.
- Do not allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.
- If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for a child, 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 growing body and ability.
- Follow the recognised club Social Media Policy for photography and video.
- What if you accidentally hurt a child? - You should report such an incident immediately to another club Coach/Official and make a 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. (See PaddleUK or home nation guidelines for physical contact:  
<https://paddleuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/shared-files/british-canoeing-central-documents/G11-Physical-Contact-and-Young-People-Guidelines-Apr21.pdf>). Touching can be OK and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing or for the wrong reason.