

WELLINGTON BOWLS CLUB

POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

The Protection of Children and the Vulnerable is everybody's business

The safety and welfare of children - or child protection - is everybody's business. You could be a neighbour, friend, parent, relative, childminder, teacher or doctor - or working for any organisation which has contact with children and young people.

Child protection means protecting children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. It also means helping children to grow up into confident, healthy and happy adults.

Child abuse hits the headlines on a regular basis. We read and hear horrendous stories about neglect and cruelty, about 'the system' letting children down and about professionals who got it wrong - either by getting involved too late or 'interfering' too early. But it's always the bad news which makes the headlines and these cases are actually very few and far between. In the majority of cases, we make sure that children are protected and safe from harm.

So what do child protection and child abuse actually mean?

What's the truth about child protection?

Who's involved?

And what happens when people have concerns about child abuse?

To this end the following Safeguarding and Protecting Children and the Vulnerable Policy has been written.

WELLINGTON BOWLS CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff paid or unpaid and all members working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Policy Statement

Wellington Bowls Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in or with Wellington Bowls Club from harm. All children have a right to protection and the need of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Wellington Bowls Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable persons involved at Wellington Bowls Club through adherence to the Bowls England Child Protection Guidelines.

A Child is defined as a person **under the age of 18** (The Child Protection Act 1989)

Policy Aims

The aim of the Wellington Bowls Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Wellington Bowls Club;
- Allow all staff, members and volunteers to make informed and confident response to specific protection issues.

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young

people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the Club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encourage open communications with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players. (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).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust enabling children to share in the decision making process.
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Keeping up to date with technical skill, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible
- Always ensure parents, carers, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away they are always accompanied by male and female adults.
- Being an excellent role model. This includes not smoking or drinking alcohol or using bad or abusive language in the company of young children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults. Avoid excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent to act *in loco parentis*, if need arises to administer first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practises to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in an emergency. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's parents. For example a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child at the end of a session.

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should **never**;

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed;

- If you accidentally hurt a player
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Use of photographic/video equipment

Videoining/ photography are a very useful coaching aid, however, it has been known that some people have used a sporting occasion to take inappropriate photographs or videos of young people. Therefore you must be vigilant and any concerns reported to the clubs Child Protection Officer. Therefore before using such equipment;

You must

- Obtain parental consent of the child before using such equipment
- Explain to the child why and what the video/picture will be used for

You must never

- Use such equipment without the parents consent
- Use such equipment unless other people are present
- Use such equipment without explaining what you are trying to achieve by use of this equipment both to the child and parent.

REMEMBER HE OR SHE IS STILL A CHILD UNTILL THEY ARE 18

Recruitment and training of volunteers

Wellington Bowls Club recognises that anyone has the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

- All volunteers should complete an application form which will elicit information about the applicants past and a self disclosure about any criminal past.
- Consent should be obtained to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau or evidence of CRB certificate obtained through the British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA).
- A confidential reference of character should be obtained.
- Evidence of identity (i.e. passport or picture driving licence)

Induction

All volunteers will be required to undergo an interview to ascertain their suitability and qualifications to coach and work with children and disabled adults.

Checks to be made

- Does the applicant have a the appropriate coaching certificate and license to coach
- Has the applicant had Child Protection training
- Has the applicant had first aid training
- Does the applicant carry the required insurance

Training

In addition, Wellington Bowls Club will aim to give volunteers any additional training required to;

- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person
- Work safely and effectively with children
- Ensure their own practise is likely to protect them from false allegations.

Wellington Bowls Club further requires that:

- Instructors and coaching volunteers attend a recognised, good practice and child protection awareness course, to ensure their practice is exemplary. This will develop a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Other volunteers to complete an awareness training course on child protection.
- Volunteers should attend a course in Emergency First Aid.
- Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from the your NGB, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Sports Council.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working on behalf of Wellington Bowls Club, 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.

Wellington Bowls Club will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police or child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice: the Club Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child Protection Officer, or a matter handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant NGB Officer who will deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out of hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.
- The Club Child Protection Officer should also inform the relevant NGB Officer who in turn will inform the NGB Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of any suspicion or allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Officer or the NGB Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social services.

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 Club Child Protection Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services and police
- Wellington Bowls Club Chairman and the NGB Child Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek Social Services/NSPCC advice on who should approach the alleged abuser

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with Data Protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Club Child Protection 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 police or Social Services inquiries the Club disciplinary committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Club disciplinary committee must reach a decision based on the available information. The welfare of the child being of paramount importance in any such decisions.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration must be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may require. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings can maintain an open culture and help the healing process. Advice may be obtained from The British Association for Counselling at www.bacp.co.uk.
- Consideration must be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (i.e. by an adult who was abused as a child).
- Where such allegations are made the above procedures must be followed and reported to Social Services or the police as the alleged perpetrator may still be working with children and thereby putting them at risk.

Action if bullying is suspected

- If bullying is suspected the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share any concerns. (It is believed that up to 12 children a year commit suicide because of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide professional help must be sought immediately).
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure that the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and bullies separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom and when).
- Report any concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer or school, whenever the bullying is occurring.

Action to be taken towards the bullies

- Talk to the bully, explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim.
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully compensates the victim.
- Provide support for the victims coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report progress
- Inform all members of the action taken.
- Keep a written record of the action taken.

3. Concerns outside Wellington Bowls Club control (i.e. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer who should contact Social Services and or the police as soon as possible.
- If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services and or the police immediately.
- Social Services and the Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents or carers.
- The Club Child Protection Officer should also inform the NGB Child Protection Officer. The NGB will then ascertain whether or not the persons involved play a role in Wellington Bowls Club and take appropriate action.

Information required for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible a detailed record should always be made at the time of disclosure or concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation including dates, times and any other factors or relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, and what is opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries, or behavioural changes.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened. (On no account push the child into giving information).
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record any details.
- If the child was not the person reporting the incident has the child been spoken to and what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?

Where possible a referral to the police or social services should be confirmed, in writing, within 24 hours. The name of the person who took the referral should be recorded. The NGB Child Protection Officer should also be informed of the incident and action taken. The NGB will then take responsibility for any Press involvement.

Use of the NGB forms will guide you through the task of recording of the incident.

Useful contacts

- NGB Child Protection Officer (CPO) see www.bowlschildprotect.co.uk
- NSPCC help line 0808 800 500

This ten page document is derived from various sources including:

NGB Child Protection Policy

CPSU guidelines

Every Child Matters

Keeping Children Safe

The Joint Panel for Safeguarding and Protecting Children and the Vulnerable

It is in 'word' so can be adopted by Counties, Clubs, Junior Leagues and teams. It can also be amended to suit individual situations.