



Child Protection Policy 2008 Quick Guide



Introduction

Child Protection is everyone's job and this quick guide should help all those in SSAC understand their role and know where to find out further information. This guide is intended only as a short reference and we advise Members to refer to the full policy for further information. Within our sport, we have opportunities for child participation and a variety of levels and every child should have the opportunity to take part in the sport in the knowledge that he or she will be safe, secure and respected. Above all, taking part in the sport should be enjoyable and fun.

Child protection in sport is not just about protecting children from others who may seek to harm them through sport. A trusted instructor may be the person a child chooses to tell about something that is happening at home or out with sport. In either case, we all have a responsibility to act on concerns. These guidelines apply to all children and young people under the age of **18** years, and apply across all Branches and Members of SSAC.

Child Protection Policy

SSAC is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people. Our code of conduct outlines our aims to promote the health and welfare of children taking part in our sport, respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children, promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well being of children and protect them from abuse, recruit, train, support and supervise its staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.

Good Practice Guidelines

- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Treat all children equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- Involve parents wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower and include children in the decision-making process.
- Always work in an open environment. Avoid private or unobserved situations.
- Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and avoid excessive training and competition, pushing them against their will and putting undue pressure on them.

Practices to be Avoided

- Having 'favourites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could be misinterpreted by others.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Entering children's bedrooms on trips away from home, unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, alert the occupants by knocking and announcing your intention to enter. The door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Practices never to be sanctioned

- Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

- Engaging in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the sport.
- Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with children.
- Allowing or engaging in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home.
- Coaches and other leaders sharing a room alone with a child for sleeping accommodation.

Appointment of Staff and Volunteers to Child Care Positions

- SSAC will take all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working, or volunteering, with children. Further, we have a legal duty to ensure that individuals who are fully listed on the *Disqualified from Working with Children List* (DWCL) are not engaged (either paid or unpaid) in child care positions within SSAC.
- Within SSAC the roles of Branch Instructor, Regional Instructor, Examiner, Regional Coach (Child Care) are currently identified as Child Care Roles. Members who have held any of these positions prior to 2003 may continue to in post without the need for an enhanced disclosure (i.e there is no current requirement for retrospective checking). The above posts are based on existing guidance and legislation. Further changes are anticipated in 2008/2009 following changes in legislation and the implementation of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Disclosure information is handled in accordance with our policy on the secure handling, use, storage and retention of disclosure information.

Responding To Concerns

It takes considerable courage for a child or adult to disclose abuse. Disclosures need to be handled very carefully and sensitively to avoid causing further distress to the child. All concerns must be responded to in a way that ensures that a child receives appropriate help and support and to ensure that appropriate action is taken against those who pose a risk to children and to protect not only the child involved but all other children. ***It is not the job of anyone in SSAC to decide whether or not a child has been abused. It is however, everyone's responsibility to report concerns.*** If a child tells you about abuse, you are concerned about the safety of a child or are concerned about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer, consult the Section 4 of the SSAC Child Protection Policy. ***No member of SSAC shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused.*** Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the procedure in section 4 of the full policy. .

What Are We Protecting Children Against?

Child abuse can take many forms including emotional abuse, physical injury, physical neglect, sexual abuse or non-organic failure to thrive. The official definition includes placing children at risk through something a person has done to them or something a person is failing to do for them. Although the physical and behavioural signs listed may be symptomatic of abuse, they may not always be an indicator and, conversely, children experiencing abuse may not demonstrate any of these signs. Child abuse is often difficult to recognise. It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in sport to decide whether or not a child has been abused. This is the role of trained professionals. We all however, have a duty to act on any concerns about abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities in Child Protection

Within Branches of SSAC, the Child Protection Officer will:

- Be supported by SSAC and the Branch and be appropriately trained.
- Implement and promote SSAC Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

- Regularly report to the **Club Committee**.
- Act as the main contact within the Club for the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Communicate with SSAC Child Protection Officer.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Report cases, concerns and action taken to SSAC Child Protection Officer.
 - Attend training on the protection of children and organise appropriate training for other members.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work services.
- Monitor and review the Child Protection Policy and Procedures for their club.
- Ensure there are mechanisms in place for quality assurance.

Training

It is recommended that all Branch Child Protection Officers attend the 'In Safe Hands' workshop from the Child Protection in Sport Service. We also recommend anyone working in a childcare role attends a 'Safeguard and Protecting Children', a 3 hour workshop from sportscoachUK. Details on both courses are available from www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk/training_events.html

Safe in Care Guidelines

Our safe in care guidelines have been introduced to provide practical guidance for those working and/ or volunteering directly with children on practices to keep the child safe and to promote a safe operating environment for the member of staff/volunteer. Below is a brief summary of the key points included in the guidelines. Sports organisations have a *duty of care* towards all children involved in activities.

- **Adult to Child Ratios** - All activities should be planned to involve *at least* two adults, preferably one male and one female, where the maximum adult to child ratio does not exceed 1:10.
- **Physical Contact** - All forms of physical contact should respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child and should take place in a culture of dignity and respect for all children. Children should be encouraged to express their views on physical contact. In the first instance, coaching techniques should be delivered by demonstration. Educational instruction should be clearly explained with a description of how it is proposed to handle or have contact with the child before doing so. This should be accompanied by checking if the child is comfortable. Manual support should be provided openly and must always be proportionate to the circumstances. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained e.g. manual assistance for a child with a physical disability. Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Significant Incident Form and passed to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.
- **First Aid** - All staff/ volunteers must ensure that where practicable all parents of children under 16 have completed a Partnership with Parents form before their child participates in SSAC activities, there is an accessible and well-resourced first aid kit at the venue, they are aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required, only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification treat injuries. In more serious cases assistance should be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible. A Significant Incident Form must be completed if a child sustains a significant injury along with the details of any treatment given. Common sense should be applied when determining which injuries are significant.
- **Managing Challenging Behaviour** - Volunteers who deliver activities to children may, from time to time, have to deal with a child's challenging behaviour. Our guidelines promote good practice and encourage a proactive response to supporting

children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must *never* be used by staff or volunteers. The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration; a risk assessment should be completed for all activities which take in to consideration the needs of the all children involved in the activity; children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading and should always be able to maintain their respect and dignity; no member of staff should attempt to respond to challenging behaviour by using techniques for which they have not been trained.

- **Transporting Children** - Where it is necessary to transport children, the following good practice is required: Their parents make arrangements for the transportation of children to and from the activity, *outwith* the knowledge of SSAC it will be the responsibility of the parents to satisfy themselves about the appropriateness and safety of the arrangements. Where SSAC makes arrangements for the transportation of children the members of staff/volunteers involved will undertake a risk assessment of the transportation required. This will include an assessment of the following areas: Ensuring that all vehicles are correctly insured for the purpose; Ensuring the driver has a valid and appropriate license for the vehicle being used; All reasonable safety measures are available i.e. fitted, working seatbelts; An appropriate ratio of adults per child; Ensuring drivers have adequate breaks. When transporting children, wherever possible they should be in the back seat of the car for health and safety reasons. Where practicable and planned, written parental consent will be requested if staff/volunteers are required to transport children. To safeguard the member of staff/volunteer the following good practice is required: Agree a collection policy with parents which will include a clear and shared understanding of arrangements for collection at the end of a session; Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey; Take all reasonable safety measures e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts worn; Where possible, have another adult accompany you on the journey; Call ahead to inform the child's parents that you are giving them a lift and inform them when you expect to arrive.
- **Trips away from home, including overnight stays**
 1. **Designate a Child Protection Officer for the Trip** - Those in charge of the group will be responsible for the safety and well being of children in their care. It is recommended that one of the group leaders co-ordinates the arrangements to safeguard the safety and welfare of children during the trip. The Child Protection Officer should ensure all practical arrangements have been addressed and act as the main contact for dealing with any concerns about the safety and welfare of children whilst away from home. A detailed itinerary will be prepared and copies provided to the designated contact for SSAC and parents.
 2. **Risk Assessment** - Potential area of risk should be identified at the planning stage through a risk assessment, which is legally required, and which should be recorded in writing. Safeguards should be put in place to manage the risks, where appropriate. Risk assessment should be an on-going process throughout the trip as groups can often find themselves in unexpected situations despite the best laid plans!
 3. **Travel Arrangements** - See page 30 Guidelines on Transporting Children. Organisers must ensure there is adequate and relevant insurance cover (including travel and medical insurance). If the trip involves travel abroad, organisers shall ensure they are aware of local procedures for dealing with concerns about the welfare of children and are familiar with the details of the emergency services in the location of the visit. Children should be informed of local custom regulations
 4. **Adult to Child Ratios** - All trips away should be planned to involve *at least* two adults, preferably one male and one female where possible. The guidelines on adult to child ratios (see page 6) will inform an assessment of the numbers of adults required to safely supervise the group. Those involved should be recruited and selected in accordance with the procedure for recruiting child care positions. Group leaders should be familiar with and agree to abide by SSAC Child Protection Policy, procedures and Code of Conduct.
 5. **Accommodation** - Organisers should find out as much as possible about the accommodation and the surroundings at the planning stage. *Where possible*, an

initial visit to the venue/ accommodation should take place to help those organising the trip identify all practical issues and allow time to address them in advance, in consultation with children and parents where appropriate.

6. Involving Parents - Where possible, a meeting should be held with parents before departure to share information about the trip, answer their questions and make joint decisions about arrangements where appropriate. A Code of Conduct shall be agreed with children and parents in advance of the trip along with sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Parents must complete a SSAC Partnership with Parents Form and provide emergency contact details. In the event of an emergency at home during the trip, parents should be encouraged to make contact with the group leaders in the first instance so that arrangements can be put in to place to support the child on hearing any distressing news.

7. During the Trip - Organisers must ensure arrangements are in place for the supervision and risk assessment of activities during free time. Children shall not be allowed to wander alone in unfamiliar places. Group leaders should have clear roles and responsibilities for the duration of the trip. They must not be over familiar with or fraternise with children during the trip and remember that they are in a position of trust at all times. The use of alcohol and/ or drugs or engaging in sexual relationships (between two young people) should not be condoned during the trip, even if the legislation relating to any of these behaviours is more lenient than in Scotland. Group leaders should maintain an overview of the well being of all children during the trip. This can help to identify issues at an early stage and resolve them as quickly as possible. Children can participate in this process by, for example, taking turns to complete a daily diary about the trip. This can be an overt or discreet way for them to communicate things (both positive and negative) that they want you to know.

8. After the Trip - Where appropriate, a debrief will take place with all those involved in the trip, including children. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on what went well, not so well and what could have been done differently. Feedback will be used to inform future trips.

- **Information and Communications Technology** - The aim is not to prevent bona fide persons from recording footage for genuine reasons or the recording of achievements. They aim to ensure that children are protected from the misuse of opportunities to take or manipulate film and video footage in a way that harms children or places them at risk of harm. Some sports take place in areas where organisers have little or no control over the environment such as public pools or areas to which the public have general rights of access e.g. the open countryside. In these circumstances, organisers should take all reasonable steps to promote the safe use of photographing and filming and to respond to any concerns raised.
- **Photographs, Film And Video** - SSAC and Branches will take all reasonable steps to promote the safe use of photographing and filming at all events and activities with which it is associated. However, SSAC has no power to prevent individuals photographing or filming in public places. SSAC reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated. Parents and children will be informed they may, from time to time, be photographed or filmed whilst participating in snorkelling and diving. Materials promoting events will state, where possible, photography and filming will take place. Those who have sought and obtained permission to photograph or film will be formally identifiable e.g. a badge or sticker will be issued, after production of the letter of approval and identification. Parents will be offered the opportunity to withhold their permission to photographing and filming. In the absence of any expressed objection, parental agreement will be assumed. SSAC will do everything reasonable in the individual circumstances to give effect to the wishes of parents and children. All actions by SSAC will be based on the best interests of the child.
- **Use of Images and Information** - No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions will be allowed unless this has been explicitly agreed with the child and parent. No photographing or filming will be permitted in changing areas. All images and accompanying information will comply with SSAC Safe in Care Guidelines, where this is within the control of SSAC. SSAC will ensure that all negatives, copies of videos and digital photograph files are stored in a secure place. These will not be kept for any longer than is necessary having regard to the purposes for which they were

taken. Images will not be shared with external agencies unless express permission is obtained from the child and parent.

- *Concerns* - Anyone behaving in a way which could reasonably be construed as inappropriate in relation to filming or photographing should be reported to the person in charge on the day. They should be approached for an explanation. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided, the circumstances should be reported to the person in charge on the day or SSAC Child Protection Officer. Where appropriate concerns should also be reported to the police.
- **INTERNET** - Written consent must be obtained from the child's parent before publishing any information about a child. If the material is changed from the time of consent, the parents must be informed and consent provided for the changes. Special care must be taken in relation to vulnerable children e.g. child fleeing domestic violence or a child with a disability, and consideration given to whether publication would place the child at risk.
- *Use of Images and Information* - Information published on the websites must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child. All contact must be directed to SSAC. Children must never be portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or a provocative manner. Children should never be portrayed in a state of partial undress, other than when depicting an action shot within the context of the sport. Information about specific events or meetings e.g. coaching sessions must not be distributed to any individuals other than to those directly concerned.
- **Mobile Phones** – Text messaging is a quick and easy way to communicate with others and is a popular and often preferred means of communication with children. Staff and volunteers must be aware that intimidating, bullying or even abusive messages can be discreetly sent by text. Information sent in this way, even where well-meaning, could be misinterpreted. Further, the risks presented by developments in modern technology are becoming increasingly recognised. Adults who seek to harm children have been known to use text messaging and internet chat rooms to “groom” children. This area is now specifically addressed by the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005. Staff/volunteers must consider whether it is necessary and appropriate to hold the mobile phone numbers of children. The general principle is that all communications with children should be open, transparent and appropriate to the nature of the relationship. In the first instance contact should always be made at the phone number the parent has provided on the child's behalf. Good practice would include agreeing with children and parents what kind of information will be communicated directly to children by text message. This information should only be “need to know” information such as the last minute cancellation of a training session.
- **Cameras/ Videos** - There have already been a number of cases where children have been placed at risk as a result of the ability to discreetly record and transmit images through mobile phones. The use of mobile phones in this way can be very difficult to monitor. The Procedure for the use of Photographs, Film and Video should be observed in relation to the use of mobile phones as cameras/videos. Particular care is required in areas where personal privacy is important e.g. changing rooms, bathrooms and sleeping quarters. No photographs or video footage should ever be permitted in such areas of personal privacy.

Parental Permission

Where practicable all parents of children under 16 should be asked to complete a Partnership with Parents form before their child participates in snorkelling or diving. A copy of this form is available from www.scotsac.com

Further Information

This is a very brief guide to the SSAC Child Protection Policy. The full policy, associated forms and documents are available from www.scotsac.com

If you have any questions on the implementation of Child Protection within your Branch please contact the SSAC Lead Child Protection Officer childprotection@scotsac.com or 0141 425 1025