

Eastbourne Sovereign Sailing Club Welfare Policy and Procedures (April 2009)

Policy Statement

The RYA and ESSC actively seek to create a safe and welcoming environment, both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence. It is important to develop a culture within ESSC, where both children and adults feel able to raise concerns, knowing that they will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, and will not make the situation worse for themselves or others. For the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child. All members of the Club should be aware of the policy.

Club Welfare Officer

The Club Welfare Officer is Henry Kiernan:
henry.kiernan@yahoo.co.uk, 01323-721991

Volunteers

All Club volunteers involved with training and the Club Welfare Officer will be asked to apply for an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure. Any issues that arise will be dealt with in accordance with the RYA Child Protection Guidelines (Jan 2009).

Good Practice

All members of the Club should follow the good practice guidelines attached (*Appendix 1*). Those working with young people should be aware of the guidance on recognising abuse (*Appendix 2*).

It is preferable for adults to stay away from the changing rooms whilst children are there. However, if this is unavoidable which it will be at times, it is advised that where possible they are accompanied by another adult.

Parents and Guardians are required to accompany on site any child under 14. They are also asked to be aware of the possibility that, during general Club activities, images of their charges may be captured and used by third parties. If the Club publishes images of children, no identifying information other than names will be included. Any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography or the inappropriate use of images should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer.

Concerns

Anyone who is concerned about a young member's welfare, either outside the sport or within the Club, should inform the Club Welfare Officer immediately, in strict confidence. The Club Welfare Officer will follow procedures in accordance with the recommendations of the RYA Child Protection Guidelines (Jan 2009).

Any member of the Club failing to comply with the Child Protection policy may be subject to disciplinary action under Club Rule 12.

Agreed by the executive committee of ESSC 7th April 2009

Appendix 1

Good Practice Guide

This guide only covers the essential points of good practice when working with children and young people. You should also read the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures which are available for reference at all times.

- Avoid spending any significant time working with children in isolation
- Do not take children alone in a car, however short the journey
- Do not take children to your home as part of your organisation's activity
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure that they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the child's parents
- Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child
- If a child is having difficulty with a wetsuit or buoyancy aid, ask them to ask a friend to help if at all possible
- If you do have to help a child, make sure you are in full view of others, preferably another adult

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use such language yourself when with children
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- fail to respond to an allegation made by a child; always act
- do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child (where possible) and their parents/carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Appendix 2 – What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

- physically hurt or injure children (eg. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning)
- give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- attempt to suffocate or drown children
- in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (eg. for food, water, warm clothing, essential medication)
- consistently leave children alone and unsupervised
- fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention
- neglect in a sailing situation might also occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that children are safe, or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse. Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (of the same or opposite sex) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling
- showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes
- sport situations which involve physical contact (eg. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:

- there is persistent lack of love or affection
- there is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising
- children are frequently shouted at or taunted
- there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse
- emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve.

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person. Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or

insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Recognising Abuse

It is not always easy, even for the most experienced carers, to spot when a child has been abused. However, some of the more typical symptoms which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- 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
- sexually explicit language or actions
- a sudden change in behaviour (eg. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- a change observed over a long period of time (eg. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)
- a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- an unexpected reaction to normal physical contact
- difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

It is important to note that a child could be displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, without this necessarily meaning that the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, but you may just feel that something is wrong. If you have noticed a change in the child's behaviour, first talk to the parents or carers. It may be that something has happened, such as a bereavement, which has caused the child to be unhappy.

If you are concerned

If there are concerns about sexual abuse or violence in the home, talking to the parents or carers might put the child at greater risk. If you cannot talk to the parents/carers, consult your organisation's designated Child Protection/Welfare Officer or the person in charge. It is this person's responsibility to make the decision to contact Children's Social Care Services or the Police. It is NOT their responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, BUT it is their responsibility to act on your concerns.