



# Canoe Avon

## Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Issue 1, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023



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## Document History

Policy Owner:	Andrew Hains
Policy approved by:	Canoe Avon Committee
Date policy approved:	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Date policy reaffirmed:	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Next review date:	January 2025

## Distribution

Committee  
Membership  
Website

# **SECTION 1: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## Policy Statement

Canoe Avon acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people<sup>1</sup> and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, British Canoeing requirements and best practice.

Canoe Avon recognises that the welfare and interests of children and young people are paramount in all circumstances. This policy aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, socio-economic background or marital status, all children:

- ✓ have a positive and enjoyable experience of paddlesport with Canoe Avon in a safe and friendly environment, where they will be listened to and where they feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution;
- ✓ are protected from bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse.

Canoe Avon acknowledges that some children and young people, including those disadvantaged by their experiences, dependency or communication needs, or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

## Scope

This child protection policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved with Canoe Avon including committee members, coaches, leaders, members and volunteers and to all concerns about the safety of children and young people participating in the club's activities. Safeguarding is a collective responsibility – we all have a duty of care to safeguard and protect children, both inside and outside our sport.

This policy and associated procedures will be widely promoted. Failure to comply will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in exclusion from the club.

## Our Commitments

In order to implement this policy, Canoe Avon will:

- ✓ promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- ✓ value, listen to and respect children;
- ✓ ensure that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation;
- ✓ adopt safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and Code of Conduct;
- ✓ ensure club coaches, volunteers and officials understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all club coaches and leaders and the club will provide appropriate learning opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> The terms 'child' and 'young person' when used in this document describe any person under the age of 18 (in English law a child is a person under the age of 18 and a young person is a person who has reached age 14 and is under 18). References to 'parents' should be read as parents and carers inclusively.

- to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- ✓ appoint a Welfare Officer and deputy to oversee safeguarding matters and communicate his/her details to all members;
  - ✓ ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern;
  - ✓ ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
  - ✓ record and store information securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance;
  - ✓ use safe recruitment practices and continually assess the suitability of individuals by recruiting and selecting coaches, leaders and volunteers to prevent the deployment of unsuitable individuals;
  - ✓ share information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people and their parents;
  - ✓ make sure that children, young people and their parents know where to go for help if they have a concern.

## Other Relevant Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with other Canoe Avon policies, including:

- ✓ Code of Conduct
- ✓ Showers & Changing Room Policy (see Section 4 of this document)
- ✓ Photography & Filming Policy Statement
- ✓ The disciplinary procedure set out in the Canoe Avon constitution

Other policies will be added to this list in the future.

## Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually and in the following circumstances:

- ✓ whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance,
- ✓ as required by the Local Safeguarding Partnership (Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership), UK Sport or British Canoeing;
- ✓ as a result of any other significant change or event.

# **SECTION 2: REPORTING CONCERNS**

## How to Report Concerns

**IF YOU OR ANYONE ELSE IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM OR IN NEED OF MEDICAL ATTENTION CALL 999**

If you have a safeguarding concern or worry about a child, whether it relates directly you, is something you have witnessed, or is something that someone has reported or disclosed to you, even if it does not relate to paddlesports – don't keep it to yourself.

Even if you think that it is a lower-level concern or are not sure - **REPORT IT**. Small pieces of information can help to create a big picture. **IF IN DOUBT – PASS IT ON.**

### **REPORTING A CONCERN**

Tell the Club Welfare Officer, Deputy Welfare Officer, Event Welfare Officer or trip organiser and follow up by completing a Concerns Form within 24 hours where possible.<sup>2</sup> Hard copies of the form are kept at the Salford Rowing Centre. It can also be found [here](#).

If you are **unable** to speak to a Club or Event Welfare Officer or trip organiser or **there may be a conflict of interest**, please contact the British Canoeing Safeguarding Team.

### **EXTERNAL HELP**

If you are unable to contact the appropriate person(s) and need urgent advice, you can contact Bath & North East Somerset Council's dedicated children's social work team on 01225 396111 or 01225 477929 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 5:00pm, Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm) or 01454 615165 (out of office hours) OR contact The NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 (Mon to Fri 10am - 4pm). In these instances, document the advice given and any action taken and complete a British Canoeing [Concerns Form](#) within 24 hours.

To contact the British Canoeing Safeguarding Team you can use the [Concerns Form](#), call **0115 8655354**<sup>3</sup> or email [safeguarding@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@britishcanoeing.org.uk). Visit the British Canoeing Website [here](#) for further contact details, including the Lead Safeguarding Officer's details.

<sup>2</sup> Welfare Officers shall notify the British Canoeing Safeguarding Team **as soon as possible** and within 24 hours if a statutory referral has been made.

<sup>3</sup> If calling out of office hours, leave a message and British Canoeing will respond to your call as soon as possible the next working day.

## Support

### **SELF-CARE**

Dealing with difficult situations and listening to disclosures can be difficult. It is important to make sure you look after your own emotional well-being and mental health. If you are struggling with something you have seen or heard, please talk to someone without disclosing any sensitive information or you can contact The Samaritans: 116 123

### **ALLEGATIONS**

If you have allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial person, please contact British Canoeing Safeguarding Team. They will arrange contact with a Safeguarding Support Officer who can inform you of the investigation process and what you can expect, as well as provide signposting for support and advice.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Canoe Avon and British Canoeing will take seriously and respond to all safeguarding concerns reported in good faith. All information reported to the Club Welfare Officers or British Canoeing will be treated confidentially and will only be shared with others where there is a need to do so, such as for the safety of others or for the prevention or detection of a crime.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you are unhappy with how a safeguarding concern has been responded to, in the first instance please contact the British Canoeing Safeguarding Team (see also British Canoeing's [Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy](#)) or you can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on **0800 028 0285** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk**.



# **SECTION 3: POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE & TYPES OF ABUSE**

## Possible Signs of Abuse

The signs of child abuse are not always obvious, and a child might not feel able to tell anyone what's happening to them. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening to them is abuse.

There are different types of child abuse and the signs that a child is being abused may depend on the type. For example, the signs that a child is being neglected may be different from the signs that a child is being abused sexually.

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing from home or care
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body
- not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, they are only indications. There could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

## Types of Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

The NSPCC ([What is Child Abuse?](#)) identifies thirteen types of abuse that may affect children, namely: bullying and cyberbullying, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, criminal exploitation and gangs, domestic abuse, emotional abuse, female genital mutilation, grooming, neglect, non-recent abuse, online abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Some of these are explained below:

**NEGLECT** – the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. The four main types of neglect are physical, educational, emotional and medical. Each type of neglect can have a long-lasting impact on a child's health and development. Examples may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failing to protect a child from physical/emotional harm/danger (e.g. forcing a child to train when injured or in adverse/unsafe conditions).

**PHYSICAL ABUSE** – intentionally hurting or causing physical harm to a child. Examples include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

There may be signs of harm, such as bruises or marks that can't easily be explained or for which there is no consistent explanation. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. A child may show fear/dislike of a coach or parent, where a positive relationship could be assumed.

**SEXUAL ABUSE** - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. There are two types of sexual abuse – contact abuse (such as sexual touching and rape) and non-contact abuse (forcing or encouraging children to watch sexual content, or involving them in its production). It can happen in person or online. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by males and females and by adults and other children.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. This could include a parent or coach ridiculing or punishing a child for not achieving or performing well, or using threats or aggressive/inappropriate language as an attempt to motivate them.

**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)** - is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited, they are given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship (this is called grooming). They may trust their abuser and not understand that they are being abused. Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race.

**CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION** – is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes by individuals or by criminal gangs. They may start missing coaching sessions or competitions, or go missing from home; they may have money/possessions they did not have previously; they may gain new ideologies/beliefs.

**GROOMING** – is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. They can be groomed online or in the real world. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

**BULLYING** - is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, undermining or criticising someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Within the world of sport, the word 'banter' can be used to disguise or excuse bullying behaviour or practices. If the social exchange is hurtful, repeated, scapegoated, shaming, upsetting, belittling, or offending, then it is not 'banter', it is bullying.

**DOMESTIC ABUSE** –is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended. It can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or

suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). It can happen inside and outside the home, over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

### **POOR PRACTICE**

The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit ([Child Protection in a Sports Setting – Poor Practice](#)) describes poor practice as the behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility that falls below the organisation's required standard, usually as described in the organisation's Code of Conduct. The behaviour may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child, but it is likely to set a poor example. Often a poor practice issue is seen as a lower-level concern, but it still needs to be challenged and responded to appropriately by the club. Failing to manage lower-level concerns can lead to an environment where more serious abuse can take place.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you're worried about a child, it can be hard to know what to do. More information and advice on different types of child abuse, how to spot the signs and what you can do to help keep children safe can be found on the NSPCC website [here](#) or in British Canoeing's Safeguarding Children Policy [here](#).

# **SECTION 4: SUPPORTING CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES**

## Showers & Changing Room Policy

The Saltford Rowing Centre changing rooms and shower facilities are available for all members to use, but they are also used by the other groups that are on the site. Parents bringing children under the age of 18 (U18) are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately supervised in the changing rooms both before and after a club session. Canoe Avon can only accept responsibility for children once they have changed and are ready to commence a session. On completion of a session, children will be returned to parents who must ensure they are available to take responsibility for supervising showering and changing.

Please note that if children are uncomfortable changing or showering at the Centre, no pressure should be placed on them to do so and they should be encouraged to do this at home. However, we do insist that hands and face are washed before handling any food or drinks after a session.

It is recommended that there should not be a time when one adult is alone in a changing room when U18's are present. Similarly, there should not be a time when an U18 is alone in a changing room when there are adults present (unless when the U18 is accompanied by their parent).

Coaches should shower and change at a different time or in a different changing facility to the group they are coaching.

Mobile phones, cameras and any other recording devices must not be used in changing rooms at any time.