

SECTION 2 - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SPORT

Why this is important

A Code of Conduct has a number of important functions. It:

- sets out what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable
- defines standards of practice expected from those to whom it applies
- forms the basis for challenging and improving practice
- helps to safeguard staff by encouraging them to adhere to agreed standards of practice
- sets out for children and parents the standards of practice which they and the organisation should expect from those who work/volunteer with children

The Scottish Sub Aqua Club supports and requires ***all*** members to observe the following standards of practice, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with children.

All concerns about breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with *The Scottish Sub Aqua Club* Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns about Child Abuse.

GOOD PRACTICE

- 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.

PRACTICE TO BE AVOIDED

In the context of your role within ***The Scottish Sub Aqua Club***, the following practice should 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.

PRACTICE NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

In the context of your role within *The Scottish Sub Aqua Club*, the following practices will never 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.

Some residential facilities offer dormitory sleeping arrangements where leaders may be required to share with children. In such circumstances organisers must ensure that at least two adults who have been recruited and selected using the recommended procedure are present, preferably one male and one female, and that such arrangements have been discussed and agreed with children and parents in advance.

In some circumstances older children may be required to share rooms with senior team mates (i.e. over 18s). If this is necessary, it should be discussed and agreed in advance with the young person and the parents (where appropriate and practicable). The young people involved should also be aware of whom they should speak to if they have any worries or concerns during this time.

SAFE in CARE GUIDELINES

Why this is important

These 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. These guidelines compliment and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children in Sport. Breach of these guidelines may be dealt with under **The Scottish Sub Aqua Clubs** Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns About a Child (page 20).

Sports organisations have a *duty of care* towards all children involved in activities. Children under the age of 16 years should not be placed in positions of responsibility in relation to other children. These guidelines apply to all children and young people under the age of 18 years. Common sense should be applied when considering the circumstances of older children and all children should have the opportunity to express their views on matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.

As sport takes place in many different structures, locations, environments and formats, it is impossible to provide specific guidance on many of the issues covered. The following guidelines are therefore based on generally recognised good practice and common sense. Ultimately, most practical situations will require a judgment to be made about what is practicable and reasonable in the circumstances.

ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS

As a *guide*, the following ratios are recommended in the National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (Scottish Executive, 2005):

Age: 3 and over 1:8
If all children are over 8 1:10

All activities should be planned to involve at least two adults, preferably one male and one female. As a general guide, the following factors will also be taken in to consideration in deciding how many adults are required to safely supervise children:

- The number of children involved in the activity.
- The age, maturity and experience of the children.
- Whether any of the group leaders or children has a learning or physical disability or special requirements.
- Whether any of the children have challenging behaviour.
- The particular hazards associated with the activity.
- The particular hazards associated with the environment.
- The level of qualification and experience of the leaders.
- The programme of activities.

There may be other considerations which are specific to the sport or environment in which the sport takes place.

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 (either by the coach or an athlete who can display the technique being taught).

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.

If it is necessary to help a child with personal tasks e.g. toileting or changing, the child and parents should be encouraged to express a preference regarding the support and should be encouraged to speak out about methods of support with which they are uncomfortable. Staff/volunteers should work with parents and children to develop practiced routines for personal care so that parents and children know what to expect.

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.

FIRST AID and THE TREATMENT OF INJURIES

All staff/ volunteers must ensure:

- Where practicable all parents of children under 16 have completed a Partnership with Parents form before their child participates in Sub Aqua (see page 65 Safe in Care-The Scottish Sub Aqua Club Partnership with Parents).
- 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 (see page 68) is 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.
- Where possible, access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- A child's parents are informed of any injury and action taken as soon as possible.
- The circumstances in which any accidents occur are reviewed to avoid future repetitions.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR¹

Staff/volunteers who deliver activities to children may, from time to time, require to deal with a child's challenging behaviour.

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to 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.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- 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.

¹ Adapted from CHILDREN 1ST's Safe Care and Child Protection Standards, Policy and Procedures.

Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group as a whole but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. As part of a risk assessment, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have presented in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to either, the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where staff/volunteers identify any potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The risk assessment should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the staff/volunteers involved.

All those delivering activities to children should receive training on these guidelines and should be supported to address issues of challenging behaviour through regular supervision.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children and parents should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour. This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a welcome session at a residential camp.

Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are specifically asked, as a group, to draw up a 'List of Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours and Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour' that will govern their participation in the group/team, they tend to arrive at a very sensible and working set of 'rules'. If and when such a list is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

In dealing with children who display risk-taking or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out- from the activity, group or individual work.
- Reparation- the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution- the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement- rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation- talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing.

Adults and children shall never be permitted to use any of the following as a means of managing a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- The withdrawal of communication with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water or access to changing facilities or toilets.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Staff and volunteers should review the needs of any child for whom sanctions are frequently necessary. This review should involve the child and parents to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation in the group or activity. Whilst it

would always be against the wishes of everyone involved Sub Aqua, ultimately, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be debarred from activity in the sport.

Physical Interventions

The use of physical interventions should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child injuring themselves, injuring others or causing serious damage to property. All forms of physical intervention shall form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, 'Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?'

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- Staff/volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force – the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property – applied for the shortest period of time.
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.

Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Significant Incident Form (see pages 68) and passed to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

A timely debrief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Where it is necessary to transport children, the following good practice is required:

- Where parents make arrangements for the transportation of children to and from the activity, *out with* the knowledge of **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** it will be the responsibility of the parents to satisfy themselves about the appropriateness and safety of the arrangements.
- Where **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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 (INVOLVING 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 **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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 **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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.

The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of some of the practical things which should be considered in advance about the arrangements for accommodation:

- Location: central and remote locations both present different challenges.
- Sleeping arrangements. These will enable suitable sharing in terms of age and gender and appropriately located staff/volunteer bedrooms for both supervision and ease of access in case of emergency. Parents and children should be consulted in advance about arrangements for sharing where possible and appropriate.
- Appropriate safeguards where others have access to the sleeping quarters.
- Special access or adaptive aids required by group leaders or children.
- Environmental factors.
- Personal safety issues.

Exchange Visits/ Hosting

Before departure, organisers should ensure there is a shared understanding of the standards expected during home stays between them, host organisation/ families, parents and children themselves. These standards should include arrangements for the supervision of children during the visit.

Host families should be appropriately Disclosure Scotland Checked where possible or equivalent police checks undertaken and references thoroughly checked. Organisers, parents and children should all be provided with a copy of emergency contact numbers.

Children should be aware of who they should talk to if problems arise during the visit. Daily contact should be made with all children to ensure they are safe and well.

Residential at a Facility/Centre

Organisers should ensure the facility is appropriately licensed and has adequate and relevant insurance cover in place. The facility should have a policy on the protection of children and Health and Safety. Adequate security arrangements should be in place and facility staff should have been Disclosure Scotland checked where appropriate. Facility staff involved in the training or instruction of children must be appropriately qualified and trained.

Organisers should ensure there is adequate supervision of the group for the duration of the stay, particularly when the facility is being shared with other groups.

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 Safe in Care – The Scottish Sub Aqua Club Partnership with Parents Form (see page 65) 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 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 (ICT)

The aim of these guidelines is to not to prevent bona fide persons from recording footage for performance development 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 an open river 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.

1. PHOTOGRAPHS, FILM and VIDEO

Scope

- **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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, **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** has no power to prevent individuals photographing or filming in public places.
- **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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.

Notification

- Parents and children will be informed they may, from time to time, be photographed or filmed whilst participating in snorkelling and diving. This could be for one of the following reasons:
 - (i) Video footage for performance development.
 - (ii) Media coverage of an event or achievement.

- (iii) Promotional purposes e.g. website or publication.
- 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 (see page 67: Request for Permission to Use Camera and Video Equipment)
- Information about what to do if concerned about photographing and filming will be available at all events.
- Registration of intention to photograph will be required on the day. This enables tracking of the equipment and operator should concerns arise in the future.

Permission

- 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.
- Where appropriate, children will be asked their views. Where a child is able to provide an informed view, this will be taken into consideration by the Child Protection Officer.
- **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** will do everything reasonable in the individual circumstances to give effect to the wishes of parents and children. All actions by **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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 **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** Safe in Care Guidelines, where this is within the control of **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club**.
- **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** 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 **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** Child Protection Officer.
- Where appropriate concerns should also be reported to the police.

2. INTERNET

Permission

- 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.
- Young athletes who have a public profile as a result of their achievements are entitled to the same protection as all other children. In these cases, common sense is

required when implementing these guidelines. All decisions should reflect the best interests of the child.

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 **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club**. Credit for achievements by a child should be restricted to first names e.g. Tracey was Player of the Year 2002.
- 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. Attire such as tracksuits or t-shirts may be more appropriate.
- Information about specific events or meetings e.g. coaching sessions must not be distributed to any individuals other than to those directly concerned.

Concerns

- Any concerns or enquiries about publications or the internet should be reported to **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** Child Protection Officer.

3. MOBILE PHONES

Short Message Service (SMS) 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.

3.1 TEXTING

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.

The following good practice is also required:

- the mobile phone numbers of children will be carefully stored (in accordance with data protection principles) and access will only be provided to those who need access for a legitimate reason.
- staff/volunteers must never engage in personal or sensitive communications with children via text message.
- all concerns about the inappropriate use of text messaging will be dealt with in line with **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns about Child Abuse.

3.2 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.

All concerns about the inappropriate use of mobile phones to record photographs or video footage will be dealt with in line with **The Scottish Sub Aqua Club** Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns about Child Abuse. This may include the concerns being reported to the police.