



What is child abuse? A Handout For Those Volunteering Rev: 2/18

(Based on the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children')

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger (including via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children causing physical harm:

- by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning
- giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- attempting 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

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs
- neglect in a sailing situation might 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

Sexual abuse involves an individual forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, to meet their own sexual needs. The activities may involve:

- physical contact (eg. full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling)
- involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images.
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or watch sexual activities
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
- 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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- imposing expectations which are beyond the child's age or developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- allowing a child to see or hear the ill-treatment of another person

- serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- the exploitation or corruption of children
- 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.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs and wants (eg. attention, money or material possessions, alcohol or drugs), and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation can also occur online without involving physical contact.

Extremism

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to: sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination eg. towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Bullying

Bullying (including cyberbullying) 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. If required the RTRC has an anti bullying policy available in the Appendices of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Bullying can include:

- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals
- posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites
- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism
- sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour
- unwanted physical contact.

The acronym STOP – Several Times On Purpose - can help you to identify bullying behaviour.

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 a member has 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 the Club 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.

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

Children/young people who are being abused will almost always tell someone they trust and feel safe with i.e. Coach/Cox or trainer. By disclosing abuse they are placing their trust in you, and want the abuse to stop. It will have taken a great deal of courage for a child to disclose abuse to you and you should respond accordingly.

What to do if a disclosure is made

DO's

- Stay Calm
- Believe what you are being told
- Reassure the child/young person that they are doing the right thing in telling someone
- Give them time to say what they want to say
- Clarify your understanding of the conversation
- Be honest and tell them you cannot keep the conversation a secret
- Explain to them what you are going to do now
- Make notes as soon as possible
- Contact the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible
- Ensure maximum confidentiality

DONT'S

- Panic
- Appear shocked
- Doubt
- Promise to keep a secret
- Ask leading questions or ask specific details about the abuse
- Make assumptions, always clarify your understanding of the disclosure with the child
- Do nothing, Not acting is not an option
- Make comments or judgements, other than show sympathy or concern
- Discuss with parents/carer prior to gaining advice from the Club Welfare Officer/Social Services/Police
- Re-question the child/young person or allow any other club member to do so
- Question or contact the alleged perpetrator(s)
- Include your own opinions other than those relating to the child's demeanour

Recording a disclosure

The disclosure must be recorded immediately after the child has left. You must ensure that you only record what the child/young person has said and any questions you asked verbatim. You must also record the time and date and where the disclosure took place, who was present and what you were doing at the time. Also, try and record the child's demeanour at the time of the disclosure, i.e. were they crying, tearful, timid, anxious etc. Once completed you must sign and date it. Please note this information might be used in the event of a prosecution.

This information is highly sensitive and confidential and therefore should ONLY be made available to those who need to see it, namely the club Welfare Officer, Social Service's the original should be sent to them, with a copy to the clubs Welfare Officer. Do not delay in passing this on.

Passing on information

Any disclosure should be immediately discussed with the club's Welfare Officer to enable them to pass on the information according to the procedure. If the club's Welfare Officer is not available contact should be made with Social Service's or Police. If the club Welfare Officer is implicated talk to the Club Chair and proceed with contact outside agencies.

Useful Contacts Rev: 02/18

RTRC Club Welfare Officer

Mandy Davis
07909772032
gophervw@yahoo.co.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

England
NSPCC
Tel: 0116 3665590
E-mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
Website: www.thecpsu.org.uk

British Rowing

British Rowing Safeguarding Lead
Tel: 020 8237 6700
E-Mail: iso@britishrowing.org

Social Services

Local Tel: Tel. 01392 386000 National Tel: 0345 155 1071

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – Mash

For URGENT issues e.g. if you believe a child is in immediate danger.
Tel: 0345 155 1071
E-Mail: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

NSPCC 24 hour free helpline

0808 800 5000
E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline 24hr free helpline

0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

UK Coaching – Provide Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Training

Website: www.ukcoaching.org

Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB)

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
Tel: 0870 90 90 811