

Child Protection / Safeguarding RTRC

Guidelines and information for Coxes of Junior Crews

Guidance issued in accordance with British Rowing

Introduction

Abuse can and does occur within the family setting, as well as in other organisations and settings. Abuse can be the action or inaction by e.g. a Cox, coach, club member, family member or other child/ young person.

To enable the club to act appropriately in such situations they must have an appointed Welfare Officer who will have an increased awareness of Child Protection and of the procedures that must be followed. It is NOT the responsibility of the Welfare Officer to investigate allegations of abuse, but it is their responsibility to seek advice and guidance including Police / Social Services in more serious situations. (Social Services are known as Children & Young People Services, but will be referred to as Social Services throughout this document.)

This applies to abuse that may occur within a rowing context, but also to abuse that may be occurring elsewhere. Members of the club may become aware of abuse happening by witnessing it, recognising signs of abuse as listed and also by a child/ young person disclosing abuse.

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.

If any club member should bring concerns about a child's welfare to the attention of the club Welfare Officer it would be appropriate for the Welfare Officer to discuss the concerns with the child's parents. **However**, in some circumstances concerns should not be shared with the parent /carer.

These could include:

- The child could be placed at greater risk
- Other children/young people could be placed at risk
- Other club members could be placed at risk
- Inability to contact parents could cause delay in making a referral
- Sexual abuse is suspected

If there is any doubt as to whether to parents should be contacted the Welfare Officer should seek advice from Social Services or NSPCC Helpline.

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 (see attached)
- Contact club Welfare Officer immediately for advice and guidance or your area Social Services or Police
- Ensure maximum confidentiality

DONT'S

- Panic
- Appear shocked
- Doubt
- Promise to keep it a secret
- Ask leading questions or ask specific details of the abuse
- Make assumptions, always clarify your understanding of the disclosure with the young person
- Do nothing. Not acting is not an option
- Make comments or judgements, other than to show sympathy or concern
- Discuss with parents/carers prior to gaining advice from club W.O /Social Services/Police/ NSPCC
- 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/young person'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 said and any questions that you asked VERBATIM. (Word for word.) You must also record the time 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 you have completed your recording 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 W.O., Social Services etc. It should be kept somewhere secure, and should the decision be made to refer to Social Services the original should be sent to them, with a copy kept for the club W.O. Do not delay in passing on information.

Passing on information

Any disclosure should be immediately discussed with the club W.O to enable them to pass the information on according to the procedure. If the club W.O isn't available contact should be made with Social Services/ NSPCC or Police. If the club W.O is implicated talk to the club Chair and proceed with contact outside agencies.

What is child abuse?

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that without appropriate intervention, they may continue to negatively impact upon any individual to adulthood.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

(In rowing this could include: inappropriate training programme disregarding child's needs)

Emotional Abuse: Where constant lack of love & affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting and shouting can lead to a loss of confidence & self esteem, making a child become nervous and withdrawn.

(In rowing this could include: a parent or Cox subjecting a rower to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying or racism or putting a rower under unrealistic pressure)

Sexual Abuse: Where children (boys & girls) are sexually abused by adults or others who use them to meet their own sexual needs. This might be sexual intercourse, and also includes fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal sex or exposing / involving children in pornographic material.

(In rowing that could include)

- *A Cox engaging in unnecessary and inappropriate physical contact, e.g massaging the shoulders of a junior rower in a suggestive manner.*
- *A Cox making suggestive comments*
- *An inappropriately close relationship developing between Cox & junior rower*

Neglect: Where parents/carers fail to meet the basic needs of their children, to have food, clothes warmth and medical care. Leaving children alone and unsupervised is also an example. Parents refusing to give love and affection to their children are examples of emotional neglect.

(In rowing that may include a Cox not keeping children safe by exposing them to undue cold/heat or the unnecessary risk of injury. E.g. allowing children to row in inappropriate clothing)

Bullying: Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can be:

- Emotional (*being unfriendly, excluding a child, sending hurtful texts or tormenting a child*)
- Physical (*pushing ,kicking, hitting, or any use of violence*)
- Verbal (*name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours*)
- Racist (*racial taunts or gestures*)
- Sexual (*unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments*)
- Homophobic (*because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality*)

The River Teign Rowing Club is committed to the following:

- To respect and actively promote the inclusion of all people regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, culture, disability, religion or culture.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all young people and children and those responsible for their care within the club
- To protect people from discrimination, degrading treatment, harm, bullying or harassment of any form and to respect their differences, feelings, wishes and rights

- Responding quickly and appropriately to any allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour
- To provide all members involved in the coaching of young people with good Practice and Child Protection in Sport Training
- To undertake Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on these same people to ensure their suitability for these positions within the club

Contacts in regard to Child Protection

RTRC Child Welfare Officer: Patricia Atkins 07759304973

Club Chairman Andy Darkin 01626 872911

Local Social services: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 155 1071 or email mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of Hours Social Services Dept: 0845 600 0388 (low call rate)

NSPCC 24hr helpline 0808 800 5000

Police Station 0845 2777444

Torbay Hospital 01803 614567

Child Protection Officer British Rowing: Anne-Marie Phelps Tel: 02082376700