

Blyth Kayak Club

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Child Protection Policy



The mandatory policy makes clear Blyth Kayak Club on the child protection. It applies to all children, committee members, coaches, members and anybody else in Blyth Kayak Club venues.

It is essential that all coaches, members, international organisations, beneficiaries, donors and the general public are aware of its central messages and any duties / responsibilities it places on them.

All Blyth Kayak Club training venues will be expected to translate this policy into local languages and adapt the policy and procedures to ensure it is made relevant to their work. Children and young people need protection and safeguarding for many reasons.

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PROTECTION

Blyth Kayak Club is committed to the following principles regarding child protection:

It is recognised that abuse can and does occur in society, and that this may take the following forms:

- Verbal abuse / threats
- Racial / sectarian abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse

It is not Blyth Kayak Clubs task to decide whether a child has been abused. Blyth Kayak Club's task is to refer concerns to the correct authorities, if they exist. If they do not, organisations dealing with children's rights need to be contacted.

- The term 'children' will be used to refer to those individuals who are under 18 years of age
- Representative' means any person presenting themselves to a child because of their relationship with Blyth Kayak Club. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, consultants and supporters.

Blyth Kayak Club's Vision is a world where every child has the right to grow up and develop to their full potential in a secure, safe, family environment, free from poverty and exploitation.

Blyth Kayak Club's Mission is to empower families, communities and their governments to provide the best environment for children to thrive and develop. We work to ensure that all children, particularly those that are most marginalise and vulnerable, are empowered to realise their rights through all our work.

With respect to sources of abuse, Blyth Kayak Club recognises the following:

Blyth Kayak Club procedures and arrangements are designed so that all possible measures are taken to ensure that abuse of a child does not occur as a result, either directly or indirectly, of any of the activities provided by Blyth Kayak Club.

Where it is suspected that a child has suffered abuse at the hands of a third party the Blyth Kayak Club has a duty to report these suspicions to the Local Authority, and will follow procedures set down in the Local Authority Child Protection Policies.

Blyth Kayak Club's policy states that all children have a right to protection: "...from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent (s), legal guardian (s), or any other person who has

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the care of the child.” Children may be abused in a family, institution or community setting, by those known and trusted to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

It is the underlying policy of Blyth Kayak Club that the safety, well-being and protection of the child is paramount. Where there is serious concern, for example where abuse is suspected, this will be reported immediately to the Child Welfare Officer, who will review the evidence and take the appropriate action. Such action may include the involvement of Social Services Child Protection Team, and in all cases issues and concerns are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

It is the policy of Blyth Kayak Club to involve the child’s family / guardians / carers at all stages unless it is considered, at the discretion of the Child Welfare Officer, that this is not in the child’s best interests and the child could be exposed to further risk.

Where suspected abuse is linked with allegations of malpractice by members, the Whistle-Blowing Policy will be invoked.

Physical Injury:

Signs and symptoms will include:

- Scratches / cuts / bite marks / pinch marks inconsistent with normal leisure activities
- Burns / scalds inconsistent with explanations offered
- Bruises in body areas not usually harmed through normal leisure activities
- Bruises indicative of slaps, punches, being squeezed or violently shaken
- Bruises suggesting the use of straps or sticks
- Nervous / fearful watchfulness; fear of physical contact by adults
- Unexplained fractures

Action to be taken:

Any sign of a mark or injury noticed on the child will be recorded, and discussed with the main parent / guardian / carer. These discussions will also be recorded, ensuring that the parent / guardian / carer is provided access to the records. If explanations are judged to be unsatisfactory, the Local Authority Child Welfare Officer will be informed.

Sexual Abuse:

Signs and symptoms will include:

- Scratching / soreness / unexplained rashes in genital areas
- Stained / bloodstained underclothes
- Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks
- Discomfort when sitting or walking
- Constant wetting or soiling of clothing
- Suggestion of undue sexual awareness through play, drawings or the use of inappropriate words

Action to be taken:

All observations will be reported initially to the Child Welfare Officer.

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Emotional Abuse:

Signs and symptoms will include:

- Undue aggression or withdrawal
- Constant wetting or soiling of clothing
- Poor language development / speech disorders such as stammering or stuttering
- Inability to relate to adults and other children
- Telling lies
- Tantrums beyond the age where they would be expected as normal development

Action to be taken:

Any concerns will be discussed with the main parent / guardian / carer. These discussions will be recorded, ensuring that the parent / guardian / carer is provided with access to these records. If explanations are judged to be unsatisfactory, the Child Welfare Officer will be informed.

Neglect:

Signs and symptoms will include:

- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- Poor standards of personal hygiene / unwashed, dirty clothing
- Constant hunger
- Underweight for their age / emaciation
- Constant tiredness / listlessness
- Untreated medical condition
- BABIES – Constant soreness / rash from infrequent changing of nappies

Action to be taken:

Any concerns will be discussed with the main parent / guardian / carer. These discussions will be recorded, ensuring that the parent / guardian / carer is provided access to these records. If explanations are judged to be unsatisfactory, the Child Welfare Officer will be informed.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handed and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Welfare Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegations
- Social services / police

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. the information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

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Internal enquiries and suspension

The Blyth Kayak Club Child Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or people inquiries the Blyth Kayak Club Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child remains of paramount importance throughout.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, wither within or outside the sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction of offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedures should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately)
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority
- Create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take actions to ensure the victim is safe
- Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (What happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Club Child Welfare Officer

Action towards the bully (ies):

- Talk with the bully (ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- Seek an apology to the victim (s)
- Inform the bully's parents

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- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- Inform all organisation members of action taken
- Keep written record of action taken

Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated / Club Child Welfare Officer as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. parent or carer):

Report your concerns to the Club Child Welfare Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

The information that social services or the police will need:

- If the Club Child Welfare Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or police immediately.
- Social Services and the Club Child Welfare Officer will decide how to involve the parents / carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

Information for the social services or the police about the suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of disclosure / concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Make clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what was said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

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- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If you are worried about sharing concerns you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Helpline on 080 800 5000, or Child line on 0800 1111.