



Child Welfare / safeguarding

Policy Statement

Rugby Fencing Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club from harm. All children have a right to protection and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Rugby Fencing Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club through adherence to the Child Welfare guidelines adopted by Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of the Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club Child Welfare Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

- Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.
- A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.
- When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good practice guidelines

- All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate positive behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (eg it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).

- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Program. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving, young people should always be consulted, and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (eg the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

NB It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a player
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Child Welfare Officer.

Video as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching program and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- An up to date British Fencing DBS check must have been completed (this will be visible through the British Fencing register)
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity should be provided (eg passport or driving licence with photo).

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club requires:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete recognised awareness training on child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attendance of update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from sports coach UK, the NSPCC and Sport England.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

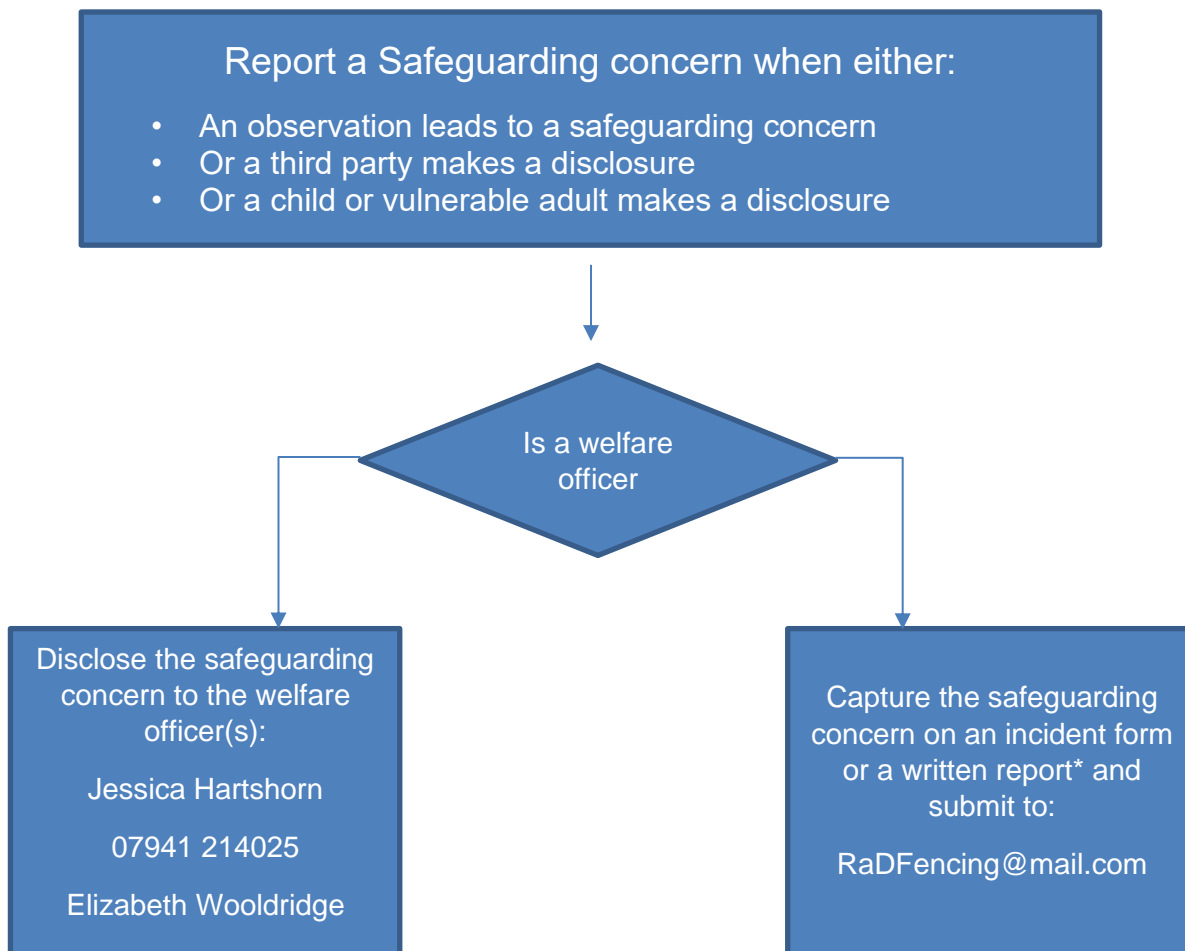
The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action

1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Welfare Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Safeguarding reporting



Note: In a safeguarding emergency where a person is at immediate risk of harm call 999

*Incident reporting should include: Date, Time, location, name of accused, nature of abuse, any injuries, name of witnesses, name & signature of person reporting the incident

All incidents will be reported to the British Fencing Welfare Officer

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- the Child Welfare Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club Regional Development Manager and British Fencing Association Child **Welfare Officer**
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (eg that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Rugby and Daventry Fencing 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 police inquiries the Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer 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 Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club Disciplinary 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 should remain of paramount importance throughout. Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (eg by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff 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, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for 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 procedure 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.
- Investigate all allegations and take action 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 Child Welfare Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

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 parents of the bully(ies).
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- 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 a written record of action taken.

3. Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (eg a parent or carer):

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

4. below for the information social services or the police will need.

- If the Child Welfare Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- Social services and the Child Welfare Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Child Welfare Officer should also report the incident to the Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club governing body.

The governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident play a role in Rugby and Daventry Fencing Club. And act accordingly.

- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- See 4. below regarding information needed for social services.

4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

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

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- 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 a 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 has been 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.
- 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 about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

Parents and Chaperones

1. What follows are guidelines, not rules cast in stone. Exceptions may be made, but there must be careful consideration to ensure that the children remain safe.
2. These guidelines apply to RaDFC organised trips. For BFA organised trips (or the BFA part of an organised trip), BFA rules and guidelines shall apply.
2. For what follows, "Parent" includes legal guardian or person who has been appointed by the parent to act as parent, as part of an arrangement that RaDFC is not party to.
3. The existing RaDFC CP policy still applies, particularly with respect to overnight accommodation.
4. In general, our preferred method is for children to be accompanied by parents, particularly for U14, with no exceptions for U12. We recognise that from the age of 14, there are times when it is appropriate and/or necessary for children to travel without parents.
5. Parents travelling with children will remain responsible for those children.
6. For trips with up to three children without parents, a single individual may act as coach and chaperone, while taking into account the gender of the coach and children.

7. For trips with more than three children without parents, a chaperone is required for every eight children of each gender or part thereof, coaches may not be chaperones for more than three children. For large trips, one individual should be assigned as trip manager (this may be a coach).
8. All chaperones must have full CRB clearance. Their responsibility on a trip is to all the children without parents, not just their own offspring.
9. The chaperone(s) have a full set of personal details, contacts, medical information, and medical emergency authorisation for children without parents.
10. The parents of these children have full details of the chaperone's contacts and itinerary.
11. At the trip end, the chaperone(s) ensure there is a clear handover of children without parents to their parents or BFA trip officials as applicable.

If you become aware of or suspect that abuse or poor practice is taking place you must report it. Information about reporting a concern can be found online here: [REPORT A CONCERN - BRITISH FENCING](#) Lead Safeguarding Officer Name: Liz Behnke Tel: Emergency 24hr safeguarding number: 07526 003030, Non Emergency - 077177 40125. Email: Safeguarding@britishfencing.com In a safeguarding emergency, where a person is at immediate risk of harm, call 999. Otherwise your normal first point of contact will be your club's Welfare Officer. You can also get advice from British Fencing's Lead Safeguarding Officer (see details above) You should also record your concerns using the British Fencing Incident Report Form here: [REPORT A CONCERN - BRITISH FENCING](#) Individuals reporting concerns will be supported by British Fencing.



Incident Reporting Form

This form should be used when a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses something to someone in the club that they or another young person is suffering or is at risk of abuse. Once this form is completed it should be marked Strictly Confidential and forwarded to: Equality and Safeguarding Officer, British Fencing, 1 Baron's Court, 33 Rothschild Road, London W4 5HT)

Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by them
- If you have to ask questions then limit them to "neutral" questions such as "can you tell me what happened?"
- Accept what they have told you and do not ask for further detail
- Acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing
- Explain that you will have to tell the CWO and why

Don't:

- Burden them with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"
- Interrogate or pressure them to provide information
- Ask any questions that start with the words how, what, when, where and why
- Undress them to examine clothed parts of their body
- Criticise the perpetrator
- Promise confidentiality or make promises that you can't keep such as "it will be alright now"

1. You

Your name..... Position in club.....

2. The Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

Name..... Date of Birth.....

Name of Parent/Carer.....

3. The Alleged Perpetrator

If they have named or described the alleged perpetrator, note the details here:

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4. The Disclosure

Record of conversation (use continuation sheet if necessary):

- Record what was said by them and by you
- Use exact words and phrases that they used
- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion

- Note the non-verbal behaviour and key words in the language that they used

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Did they name any witnesses? If so, note them here

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Was anyone else present during the disclosure? If so, note them here

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5. Consent to share

Were they able to provide informed consent Yes No

If so how did you seek consent?

- Specifically, what did you explain, what questions did you ask and what were the responses?

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Did they provide consent to share? Yes No

If yes, what did they say?

- Note their exact words

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If no, did you explain that you would have to share this information with the CWO and who else might receive this information and why Yes No

If yes, what did they say?

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6. Additional Information
Any other comments

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SignedTime & date.....