
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidance

Introduction

The Crouch Kayak Club (CKC) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care.

“The welfare of the child is paramount” (Children Act 1989).

CKC is committed to having a formal child protection policy.

In the context of this document, ‘child’ refers to any young person under the age of 18. This policy also covers ‘vulnerable adults’, such as people with learning disabilities, or who have difficulty communicating, or who rely on others to provide personal care.

It is the policy of CKC to safeguard children and young people taking part in boating from physical, sexual or emotional harm. CKC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, children participating in CKC activities do so in a safe environment. We recognise that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have a right to protection from abuse.

The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard children, both on and off the water.
- To assure parents that their children are as safe as they are when taking part in any other sport or leisure activity.
- To raise awareness amongst all of our members, volunteers so that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child, whether the concern relates to the child’s welfare at our club or outside the sport.
- To protect coaches, instructors, officials, members or volunteers by giving them some practical, common sense guidelines to avoid placing themselves in situations where they are open to allegations which could seriously damage their lives and careers.
- To protect CKC, by showing that we have taken ‘all reasonable steps’ to provide a safe environment.



CKC actively seek to:

- Create a safe and welcoming environment, both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence.
- Support and encourage recognised training centres, affiliated clubs and class associations to implement similar policies.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.
- Ensure that CKC organised training and events are run to the highest possible safety standards.
- Be prepared to review its ways of working to incorporate best practice.

We will:

- Treat all children with respect and celebrate their achievements.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse.

This policy relates to volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their CKC duties. It will be kept under annual review.

All relevant concerns, allegations, complaints and their outcome should be notified to the CKC Welfare Officer.

Procedures

Although everyone has a role to play in ensuring that children are safe, the CKC has recommended that the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) has specific responsibility for implementing our policy, and acts as the point of contact to receive information and advice.

The CWO's name is on the back of this policy. As we are a club reliant on volunteers we aim to ensure that our CWO is someone with relevant knowledge and experience, which is perceived as being approachable and having a child focused approach. He/she will be provided with training where appropriate.



The CWO's roles are to:

- Maintain this policy and procedures.
- Ensure that relevant staff and/or volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures.
- Advise the CKC Committee on safeguarding and child protection issues.
- Maintain contact details for local Children's Services and Police.
- Be the first point of contact for any concerns or allegations, from children or adults, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained in all cases.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken, in line with the organisation's procedures and in conjunction with the Chairperson.
- The CKC will check: volunteers with specific responsibilities (e.g. instructor, welfare officer, coach) or anyone who regularly helps with junior/youth activity.
- Provide appropriate induction, training, mentoring or supervision to cover any areas where a member or volunteer may lack experience or confidence and familiarise them with the CKC operating procedures.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A club member/volunteer must never guarantee confidentiality to a child nor should they agree with a child to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the CWO and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

Members/volunteers will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

Records and monitoring of all personal information should be treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to see it in the course of their duties or to protect children.

When data is no longer relevant it should be destroyed securely, e.g. by shredding. Anyone receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

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Good Practice

CKC aims to have a culture where both children and adults feel able to raise concerns, knowing that they will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and will not make the situation worse for themselves or others.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse or find it more difficult to express their concerns. A child who has experienced racism may find it difficult to trust an adult from a different ethnic background.

Minimising Risk

CKC aims to plan and promote good practice to minimise situations where adults are working unobserved or could take advantage of their position of trust. Good practice protects everyone – children, members and volunteers.

It is important those adults:

- Avoid spending any significant time working with children in isolation.
- Do not take children alone in a car, however short the journey.
- Do not take children to your home.
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure that they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the child's parents.

You should never

Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games - allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form - allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use such language yourself when with children - make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun - **fail to respond to an allegation made by a child; always act** - do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Responsibilities of members and volunteers

It is the CWO's responsibility to ensure members and volunteers read and understand this policy

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along with procedures relating to child protection including recognising signs of abuse.

CKC coaches and instructors are expected to comply with CKC Code of Conduct.

Organised activities

When children are attending an organised session or activity, the organisers have a duty of care for their safety and welfare at all times. We do, however, require a parent (or designated responsible adult) to be in the vicinity of the club during such events.

Changing rooms and shower areas

Allow both adults and children to shower and dress in reasonable privacy. There are separate male and female changing rooms but disabled access is limited. Parents should be made aware that adult club members and/or members of the public may be in the changing rooms.

Bullying can be an issue in changing rooms and showers. If a child alleges bullying or shows signs of being bullied, this must be investigated. If it is essential, in an emergency situation, for a male to enter a female changing area or vice versa, it is advised that they are accompanied by another adult of the opposite gender.

Photography

Publishing articles and photos in CKC or Burnham Sailing Club (BSC) newsletters, website, local newspapers etc. is an excellent way of recognising young people's achievements as well as promoting the clubs and the sport as a whole. However, it is important to minimise the risk of anyone using images of children in an inappropriate way. Digital technology makes it easy to take, store, send, manipulate and publish images.

There are two key principles to bear in mind:

- Any photographer or member of the press or media attending an event should wear identification at all times and should be fully briefed in advance on your expectations regarding his/her behaviour and the issues covered by these guidelines.
- CKC does not allow a photographer to have unsupervised access to young people at the event or to arrange photo sessions outside the event.

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- Care must be taken in the storage of and access to images. When publishing images, it is vital to make sure they are appropriate and that CKC and BSC does not include any information that might enable someone to contact the child.
 - It is preferable to use a general shot showing participants on the water or a group shot without identifying them by name.
 - If CKC is recognising the achievement of an individual and wish to publish their name with their photo, we will NOT publish any other information (e.g. where they live, name of school, other hobbies and interests) that would enable someone to contact, befriend or start to 'groom' the child.
 - Young people pictured are suitably dressed, to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

Most activity takes place in areas that are open to the public and it is, therefore, not possible to control all photography but any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography or about the inappropriate use of images, should be reported to CKC or BSC's CWO and treated in the same way as any other child protection concern. Parents and spectators should be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state their purpose for photography/filming. The use of cameras or camera phones in changing areas is not permitted in any circumstances. Such use by young people should be regarded as a form of bullying.

Website and social media

CKC promotes the club and encourages members to interact through the website and social media. However, there are a few issues to bear in mind in relation to children and young people:

- Guidance on the use of images of children (see Photography section above).
- Ensure that the content and language is appropriate for younger visitors.
- Provide a clear process for parents and others to report inappropriate content or online bullying and to request that content is removed.
- Have a robust procedure for handling and assessing such a report or request and acting promptly to remove the offending content.

CKC uses social media as a means of communicating directly with its members; however, CKC will **never** contact a young person or vulnerable adult directly through "private messaging" or leave any messages on their personal Facebook page. Handling concerns, reports or allegations a complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, their parents, someone else who uses the club. It may involve the behaviour of one of its members or volunteers, or something that has happened to the child outside the sport, perhaps at home or at school.

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Children may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel at ease.

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If you are concerned that a child may be being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to act on these concerns and report them to the CWO who will take the appropriate action.

Handling an allegation from a child always:

- Stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what he/she says seriously.
- Reassure that child and stress that he/she is not to blame.
- Be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the child wants.
- Be honest - explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Make a record of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event.
- Follow your organisation's child protection procedures.

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep (e.g. you won't tell anyone).
- Ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act.
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally the CWO or the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain – you cannot ignore it.

Recording and handling information

If you suspect that a child may have been the subject of any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, the allegation must be referred as soon as possible by the CWO to Children's Social Care or the Police who have trained experts to handle such cases.



Do not start asking questions which may jeopardise any formal investigation. Listen to and keep a record of anything the child tells you or that you have observed and pass the information on to the CWO. All information must be treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know. Confidential information must be stored securely. Information will be retained for at least 3 years and then destroyed by secure means, e.g. by shredding or burning.

Useful Contacts

CKC Welfare Officer

Andy Coppin

M: 07768 152260

E: secretary@crouchkayak.club

Paddle UK Safeguarding Officer

Enquiries: 0115 896 8853 Incident: 0115 865 5354

E: safeguarding@paddleuk.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) England

E- mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk Website: www.thecpsu.org.uk

NSPCC Tel: 0116 366 5580

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

ChildLine: 0800 1111 Website: www.childline.org.uk

Police

To report an emergency call: 999

To report a non-emergency call: 101

- The CKC will adopt and regularly review a Health and Safety Policy.
- The CKC will review this policy annually.

Reviewed Date: 11.03.2026

Next Review: 11.03.2027