

Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy

***Last approved by Board:
15th February 2022***

Purpose of policy: The principles of both the Policy and the Guidance documents are based on our moral and ethical duty to ensure children can enjoy paddlesport in a safe environment and as such they reflect current best practice and the legislative framework. This document sets out our commitment to safeguarding and the roles and responsibilities for Paddle Scotland and Affiliated Clubs.

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Policy Statement

Paddle Scotland is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and protection of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote wellbeing and safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Within The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 – a child is defined as anyone who has not reached the age of 18.

For the purposes of this policy, "children", "child" and "young person" refer to persons under the age of 18

Paddle Scotland values a rights-based approach within our sport and our safeguarding policy takes into account the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 and the principals of "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) and we recognise the general principals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect the rights of children and young people.

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Principles

Our commitment to protecting children is based on the following principles:

- The wellbeing of children and young people is the primary concern.
- All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child wellbeing and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children and young people have the right to express views on all matters which affect them
- Paddle Scotland will work in partnership together with children and young people and parents/carers to promote the wellbeing, health and development of children and young people participating in the sport.

Roles and Responsibilities

Paddle Scotland will:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in sport safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse and to reduce risk.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy Statement and associated procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children and young people in line with the Child Wellbeing and Protection Responding to Concerns Procedure as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and these procedures.

Paddle Scotland Affiliated Clubs with under 18s will:

- Have a suitable Club Wellbeing & Child Protection Policy in place, either by adopting this Paddle Scotland policy or an suitable alternative
- Adhere to the Paddle Scotland guidelines and procedures
- Appoint a Wellbeing & Protection Officer
- Accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for safeguarding, wellbeing and child protection and be prepared to respond to any indication of abuse or poor practice
- Safely appoint/recruit club volunteers/staff in accordance with the recruitment policy
- Have all volunteers, coaches, paddlers and parents agree to and sign a suitable code of conduct
- Be prepared to challenge and alter poor practice
- Implement any recommendations of Paddle Scotland relating to this area
- Promote an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised
- without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- Require all those working with children to complete the minimum level of training

Policy Review

We will regularly review this policy and associated procedures:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and young people.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the wellbeing and protection of children and young people within Paddle Scotland.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

Duty of Care

Paddle Scotland is committed to ensuring that all those taking part in paddlesport are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm. This is particularly true in respect of children.

We all have a duty with respect to safeguarding and protecting children to ensure they can participate and enjoy our sport with the highest possible standards of care. All coaches, volunteers and providers should have a clear understanding of operating within an appropriate code of ethics, aware of what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position in providing activities and being responsible for others.

A good definition of 'duty of care' is:

"The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible"

In an activity such as paddlesport, safety and keeping people safe is all about risk assessment and minimising the risks involved at all levels of participation. While all taking part in activity have a duty to their neighbours, in organised activity we all have a heightened duty of care and as such we should be aware that the principal risks extend to the quality of control exercised by those in charge. Coaches, volunteers, referees, officials or administrators should all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those directly taking part in activities and at any time they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge - in vehicles, during journeys to and from the activity, during events, team training events and camps etc.

The content of this document provides specific information in respect of safeguarding and protecting children in order that everyone can appreciate their 'duty of care' with regard to these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.

Indications of Abuse

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child. They are only indicators - not confirmation. Some

examples are: **Where the child,**

- Says that they are being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring.
- Has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.
- Appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom they would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship.
- Shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/ her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.
- Becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.

Bear in mind that some children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Abuse

It's generally acknowledged that there are now five main types of abuse - Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect and Bullying.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting them. In sport this might result if the nature or intensity of training is inappropriate for the capacity of the performer or where drugs are tolerated or advocated. Bullying is likely to come into this category - see below.

Sexual Abuse

Where young people are used by adults to meet their own sexual needs. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse and includes the use of pornographic material.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed e.g. racial or sexual remarks.

It can also occur if a child is over protected. Abuse can occur where a parent or coach has unrealistic expectations over what a child can achieve.

Neglect

Failing to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, and medical attention or constantly leaving them alone. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm or injury.

Bullying

The bully in Paddlesport can be an adult - the parent/carer who pushes too hard, the coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy or adult paddlers who attempt to assert unacceptable behaviour on younger paddlers to make them unwelcome or prevent them using club equipment. Bullying can also occur between young people. For further guidance on Bullying refer to the relevant Anti Bullying Policy.