



London Broncos Foundation

Child Protection Policy

London Broncos Foundation consider that they have a moral obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children and young players, all coaches, team representatives and officials provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Through the implementation of a child and young player protection policy, and with the support of its coaches, officials, and a growing number of governing bodies, we will maintain the professionalism and safeguards of good practice, which are associated with our game of Rugby League.

In order to achieve this we have developed the following guidelines.

The policy outlines the following key areas:

Recognising the responsibility of those involved in junior rugby league, to safeguard and promote the interests and well being of the children and young players with whom they are working. The value of working closely with other coaches, parents, professionals, officials, and volunteers to protect children and young players from harm and discrimination.

Recognising that abuse DOES take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the children, young players, coaches and all other working within our club structure.

This policy has been designed to be used along side the Foundation's Safeguarding Policy, and the Rugby Football League's Safeguarding Policy and is not intended to replace the policy itself.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children and young people from abuse. Child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. Everyone working in the Rugby League, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse. All adult club members, coaches, and officials may have regular contact with children and can be a very important link in identifying cases where protection is required.

When establishing guidelines concerning the protection of children, it is important to recognise that the organisation has both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure that when it is given responsibility for children, it provides them with the highest possible standard of care.

All persons involved in London Broncos Foundation should recognise that they have a responsibility:

To safeguard and promote the interest and well being of children with whom they are working.

To take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment.

Child protection procedures will:

Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work, and to our coaches representatives and volunteers alike.

Help to maintain the professionalism and the safe guards of good practice which are associated with our club.

It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. London Broncos Foundation is committed therefore to the sound recruitment, provision of support, and appropriate training for all their coaches, officials, and volunteers. This will enable them to work together with Parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of your children are paramount.

Statement of Principles

The young players welfare is paramount All young players whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a young player for the purposes of this document.

The Main Forms of Abuse

Abuse is a powerful and emotional term. Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. The coach often holds this trust and may be at risk of misusing his/her power over the young players. It is widely recognised that there are four main areas of abuse of which coaches, officials and volunteers should be aware. There may, however, be an increased risk within many sports, including rugby league, for abuse to occur which does not necessarily fit into these categories. The unique culture and traditions of rugby league, along side so-called stereotypical behaviour, whilst common to many team sports, may give rise to unacceptable behaviour leading to situations where abuse may occur or coaches and/or young players are at increased risk.

Emotional Abuse

In general terms, emotional abuse occurs when adults persistently fail to show children due care, love or affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, or be subject to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. There may also be over-protection, preventing children from socialising, or bullying to perform high expectations. The child may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous.

In a coaching situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches provide repeated negative feedback, repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress, repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young player is capable over emphasise the winning ethic.

Neglect

In general terms, neglect as a form of abuse occurs when a child's essential needs for food, warmth and care fail to be met. Failing to or refusing to provide love and affection could also be deemed as neglect.

In a coaching situation, neglect may occur when young players are left alone without proper supervision, a young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection, a young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

Physical Abuse

In general terms, this occurs when adults, or even children, deliberately inflict injury on a child, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when an adult gives children alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or fails to supervise their access to these substances.

In a coaching situation, physical abuse may occur when coaches expose young players to exercise/training, which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body. Coaches expose young players to injury due to overplaying, over training or fatigue, coaches expose young players to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the drinking age, coaches expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.

Sexual Abuse

In general terms, girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, oral intercourse, masturbation, or oral sex or showing children pornographic material or making suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal hinder) a sporting career.

Bullying

Any body can be the target of bullying, children and young people who are perceived as different from the majority may be at greater risk of bullying. Bullying can be defined as physical: hitting, kicking and theft. Verbal: name calling, teasing, sarcasm, racist, treats and gestures. Emotional: tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring. Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Other categories include child trafficking, forced marriage, honour based violence and radicalisation. More details of these categories can be found within the Rugby Football League safeguarding policy.

Abuse taking place within a rugby environment

This would include anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. For example, volunteer coaches in clubs, club helpers, tutors on training camps and coaches.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and within other settings, for example, sport or other social activities. Recent research indicates that abuse, which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in sport are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action pursued.

The person in charge may be informed of situations where the reporter is unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and is therefore unclear about what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse but those responsible should always consult with professional organisations, and seek advice from social

services, or the NSPCC where there is any doubt. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which taken together cause concern. It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or maybe, abusing a child, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers, including the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment by any volunteer should be reported immediately.

The committee of Orrell St James want to assure all staff, coaches and volunteers that they will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

Allegations of abuse against representatives, coaches and other volunteers

Where there is a complaint of abuse against any representatives, coaches or volunteer, there may be any one of the types of investigation:

A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

A child protection investigation

A criminal investigation

The results of the Police and social services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation. London Broncos Foundation recognises that young players are coached in a variety of environments and by any number of coaches. Thus the term "person in charge" will refer to the senior/head coach or club official responsible for the event.

If, following consideration the allegation is clearly about poor practice then the Child Welfare Officer and another Trustee will deal with it as an internal issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the "person in charge", or where the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, then this should be referred to another Trustee. It will then be decided how this will be dealt with and whether or not to initiate a formal course of action.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of the London Broncos Foundation structure it must be reported to a person in charge who will contact the Lead CWO who will take such steps as he or she considers necessary to ensure the safety of the person in question and any other child/ person who may be at risk. The CWO will, after consultation with the Rugby Football League, refer the allegations to social services department who may involve the police. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following

Responding to Suspicions

It is understandable that people who are well-motivated, loving and caring individuals, with a deep commitment to their sport are reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm in the sporting environment or at home.

It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way the organisation is being run and the attitudes of those involved.

Levels of awareness need not be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion. However a basic principle should be that if you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable you should talk to someone else about it. This means being aware of the attitudes of all members of our structure and of the interaction between them and the children and with each other. You should be alert to any unusual incidents or activities which take place where you feel that members of our structure are putting them selves in a vulnerable position.

Promoting good practice within the rugby club environment

All young players have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect.

1) DATA PROTECTION

Information collected by London Broncos Foundation, or by affiliated clubs on behalf of the governing body, with particular reference to person details relating to young players, is subject to the data protection act.

2) POLICY AND PROCEDURE

To help prevent abuse of children the Foundation should have a policy, which ensures that children are protected and kept safe from harm. Everyone involved in the care of children should be aware of the procedures if there are any concerns about abuse.

3) TRAINING

It should be clearly recognised that checks are only part of the process to protect children from possible abuse. These must be operated in conjunction with appropriate training of staff, coaches and volunteers so that they are aware of, and sensitive to possible situations of abuse.

4) SUPERVISION

Coaches and volunteers should be sensitive to any concerns about abuse, and act on them at an early stage; they should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns.

5) COMPLAINTS

The Foundation Board will ensure that there is a well-established complaints procedure in operation and that parents and their children have the relevant information that will allow easy access to this procedure. We can reduce situations for the abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers by promoting good practice..

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