Farnham Common Sports Club

Child Protection Policy

All sports organisations that receive statutory funding must now have an active child protection policy. This Child Protection Policy has been reviewed and adopted by Farnham Common Sports Club.

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Introduction

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred**.**

Policy statement/aims

Farnham Common Sports Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Farnham Common Sports Club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Farnham Common Sports Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Farnham Common Sports Club through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Farnham Common Sports Club.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims
The aim of the Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Farnham Common Sports Club
- allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate 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 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 activity 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 activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Further Information: Please visit CPSU examples of good practice and sample policies and procedures .

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. 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 which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- 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 Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- 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, 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 cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a 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:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

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
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- 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.

N.B. 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 the appropriate officer 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 to be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Videoing 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 programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Farnham Common Sports 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. Preselection 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.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction
All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.

- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct and Child Protection policy.

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 not likely to result in allegations being made.
- 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 effectively with children.

Farnham Common Sports 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 a 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 gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from Sports Coach UK, the NSPCC, and the Sport Council.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Farnham Common Sports 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 by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Farnham Common Sports Club will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or 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 and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated/Club Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by Farnham Common Sports Club's Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant Governing Body officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

- The Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant the Governing Body officer who in turn will inform the Governing Body Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Governing Body Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

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 Club Child Protection Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Farnham Common Sports Club Regional Development Manager and the Governing Body Child Protection Officer

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. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Farnham Common Sports Club Child Protection 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 Farnham Common Sports 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 Farnham Common Sports 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, E-mail: 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 (e.g. 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. Create an open environment.
- 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 Club Child Protection 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 bully's parents.
- 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.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated/Club Child Protection Officer as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

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

- Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. **See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need** :
- If the Club Child Protection 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 Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Club Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Farnham Common Sports Club Governing Body. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in Farnham Common Sports 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 Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.