

Poole Sailability Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy

Formulated September 2006 (amended February 2010)

Introduction

In the context of this document, 'child' refers to any young person under the age of 18 and 'vulnerable adult' includes any person with learning disabilities, or who has difficulty communicating, or who relies upon others to provide personal care.

The Policy

It is the policy of Poole Sailability to safeguard Children and Vulnerable Adults (CVAs) who take part in our boating and social activities from physical, sexual or emotional harm. Poole Sailability will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, CVAs who participate in our activities do so in a safe environment. We recognise safety and welfare of the CVA is paramount and that all such members, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse. It is a condition of membership of a CVA that their legal guardian or carer also becomes a member and is present during the activities of Poole Sailability. The minimum age to join Poole Sailability is 10 years

We will:

- 1 Treat all CVAs with respect and celebrate their achievements.**
- 2 Carefully recruit and select volunteers.**
- 3 Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual abuse.**
- 4 Consult the RYA Child Protection Co-ordinator with all relevant concerns, allegations, complaints and outcomes.**
- 5 Keep this document and best practice under review.**
- 6 Recognise that safeguarding CVAs is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with them.**
- 7 Ensure that Poole Sailability organized events run to the highest possible safety standards.**

This policy relates to all volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their Poole Sailability activities. All relevant concerns, allegations, complaints and their outcome should be notified to the Poole Sailability Welfare Officer.

Poole Sailability Welfare Officer
Mike Bartlett
Tel: 01202 885160
Mobile: 07897 271198
Email: mikebartlett49@talktalk.net

The Designated Person

. The Welfare Officer will be appointed by the Committee and act as the point of contact to receive information, safely and securely record that information, and act upon it.

Poole Sailability Welfare Officer' will:

- 1 Obtain CVA protection awareness training.
- 2 Keep this policy and the procedures up to date.
- 3 Liaise with the RYA to ensure the policy and procedures meet their standards.
- 4 Publish this policy and procedures and make a copy publicly available for reference.
- 5 Ensure members are aware of the procedures and who to contact.
- 6 Deal efficiently with all allegations and issues arising.
- 7 Advise the management committee on child protection issues.
- 8 Maintain contact details for the RYA, Social Services and the Police.
- 9 Decide on the appropriate action to be taken in line with procedures and in conjunction with the Chair or Vice Chair.
- 10 Keep the RYA informed of allegations, concerns and resolutions.

VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE:

1. Provided a job description listing qualifications, skills, experience and the qualities we are looking for so they understand what is expected of them.
2. Made aware of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy, and informed the full policy is available for inspection on the web site and notice board. They must acknowledge being so informed by signing the membership form.
3. Competent in their role, e.g. they hold an appropriate and valid RYA instructor certificate qualification, or have experience, and they have been assessed by the Sailing Captain or Senior Instructor.
4. Asked to provide information about their past career or relevant experience.
5. Questioned about their experience of working with CVA's.
6. Assessed by at least two committee members who will observe the potential recruit's attitude toward CVAs ashore and afloat before allowing them to be used as a skipper or instructor.

All volunteers who have contact with CVAs, and all Trustees will go through the Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure process. All volunteers should follow the Good Practice guidelines attached at Annex A. They should be aware of the guidance on recognizing abuse and handling concerns attached at Annex B and C

List of Annexes

- A. Poole Sailability Good Practice Guide
- B. Recognising Child Abuse
- C. Handling Concerns, Reports or allegations.

Poole Sailability Good Practice Guide

This guide covers only the essential points of good practice

Minimise risk

- 1 Avoid spending any significant time working with CVAs in isolation.
- 2 If a CVA requires assistance to fit a buoyancy aid, do so with another responsible adult present.
- 3 Ensure all CVAs are appropriately dressed for the prevailing weather conditions
- 4 Ensure there are always two responsible adults in every sailing vessel.
- 5 Do not take CVAs alone in a car, however short the journey
- 6 Do not take CVAs to your home as part of Poole Sailability's activity
- 7 Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the CVA's legal guardian or carer.
- 8 Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual.

Poole Sailability will seek written consent from a child and their guardian or carer before taking photographs or publishing their image. If their image is published no identifying information other than names will be included

You should never:

- 1 Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- 2 Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- 3 Allow anyone to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use such language yourself
- 4 Make sexually suggestive comments to anyone, even in fun
- 5 Fail to respond to an allegation made by a CVA or by another member on their behalf; always act
- 6 Do things of a personal nature when the CVA can do it themselves. If they cannot, ask the legal guardian or carer to do so.

Although Poole Sailability has a duty of care to its members, and particularly to CVAs who cannot take full responsibility for their own safety, legal guardians and carers must retain ultimate responsibility for their charges' welfare

Changing rooms and showers

In general it is better if one volunteer is not alone in this area.

Extra vigilance may be required if there is public access to the venue. 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.

First aid and medical treatment

First aid is part of your normal duty of care but obtain consent prior to any treatment. Prescribed medication must not be administered by general members. If a CVA may require medication and are unable to administer it themselves, they must have their carer or guardian present to do so. If a non CVA requires medication and are unable to administer it themselves contact the emergency medical services. Skippers should make themselves aware who in their charge may require medication and ensure it is on board.

ANNEX B

Recognising Abuse

Abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children or vulnerable adults are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Abuse can take many forms.

Physical abuse where adults or other children:

- 1 cause physical hurt or injury (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning)
- 2 give alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- 3 attempt to suffocate or drown children
- 4 in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the CVA.

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- 5 fail to meet a CVA's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, water, warm clothing, essential medication)
- 6 consistently leave CVA's alone and unsupervised
- 7 in a sailing situation when acting as an instructor, skipper or crew failing to ensure CVA's are safe, or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse is when other people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This includes:

- 8 full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling
- 9 showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes
- 10 sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed

Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:

11 there is persistent lack of parental love or affection

12 there is constant overprotection preventing a CVA's healthy development

13 they are frequently shouted at or taunted

14 there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse

15 in sport it might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level the CVA cannot realistically be expected to achieve.

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person. Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Recognising Abuse

It is not always easy, even for the most experienced carers, to spot when a CVA has been abused. However, some of the more typical symptoms which should trigger your suspicions would include:

1 unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries

2 sexually explicit language or actions

3 a sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)

4 the CVA describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her

5 a change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)

6 a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would be expected

7 an unexpected reaction to normal physical contact

8 Difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

It is important to note that a CVA could be displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, without this necessarily meaning they are being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, but you may just feel that something is wrong. If you have noticed a change in the CVA's behaviour, first talk to the parents or carers. It may be that something has happened, such as a bereavement, which has caused the child to be unhappy.

If there are concerns about sexual abuse or violence in the home, talking to the parents or carers might put the child at greater risk. If you cannot talk to the parents or carers consult the Welfare Officer, the Chair or Vice Chair. It is this person's responsibility to make the decision to contact Social Services or the Police.

ANNEX C

Handling concerns

A concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the CVA, their parents or carers, or another member.. It may involve the behaviour of one of our volunteers during our activities, or it may be something that has happened to the CVA outside our activities.

CVAs 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 suspect a CVA is being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and report the matter to the Welfare Officer, Chair or Vice Chair or a Trustee.

When dealing with an allegation:

- 1 Stay calm and ensure the CVA is safe and feels safe
- 2 Show and tell them you are taking their concern seriously
- 3 Reassure them and stress they are not to blame
- 4 Be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the CVA wants
- 5 Be honest, explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse
- 6 Make a record of what the CVA has said as soon as possible after the event
- 7 Follow the procedures detailed in the CVA Policy Document.

Never:

- 1 Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- 2 Make promises you cannot keep (e.g. you won't tell anyone)
- 3 Ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act
- 4 Take sole responsibility, always consult someone else, ideally the Welfare Officer, Chair or Vice-Chair, so we can begin to protect the CVA and obtain support yourself.

You may be upset about what the CVA has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about a CVA 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 CVA 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 to Social Services 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 CVA or person reporting the matter tells you, or that you have observed, and pass the information on to the Welfare Officer, Chair or Vice Chair who will complete an Incident Report Form.

All information must be treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to know. If the allegation or suspicion concerns someone within Poole Sailability only the CVA's parents or carer, the Welfare Officer, Chair or Vice Chair, the relevant authorities and the RYA Child Protection Co-ordinator should be informed. If the alleged abuse took place outside Poole Sailability activities, the Police or Social Services will decide who else needs to be informed, including the CVA's legal guardian or carer. It should not be discussed by anyone within the organisation other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the person in charge

Handling the media

If there is an incident which attracts media interest, or if you are contacted by the media with an allegation concerning one of our members, do not give any response until you have had an opportunity to check the facts and seek advice. You may wish to contact the RYA's Communications department on 023 8060 4215 for professional advice on handling the media.

Are you concerned a CVA is being abused outside Poole Sailability activities but you identified the concern through the child's involvement with us?

If you are uncertain what to do at any stage, contact the RYA's Child Protection Coordinator on 023 8060 4104 or the NSPCC free 24 hour helpline 0808 800 5000.

Are you concerned about the behaviour of any Poole Sailability member, or anyone who is working for the RYA?

If you are uncertain what to do at any stage, contact the RYA's Child Protection Coordinator on 023 8060 4104 or the NSPCC free 24 hour helpline 0808 800 5000.

Incident report form

Day date and time of incident

Place of incident

Day date and time complaint made

Person making complaint

Person to whom complaint made

Name and age of child or vulnerable adult involved

Details of person against whom report is made

Is this person a Poole Sailability member YES/NO

Nature of incident, complaint or allegation (continue on separate page if necessary)

Action taken (continue on separate page if necessary)

If Police or Social Services contacted supply name, position and telephone number of person dealing with complaint (include any reference number)

Name and position of person completing this form

Signature of person completing form

Date and time form completed

USEFUL ADDRESSES:

Royal Yachting Association Child Protection Co-ordinator

Jackie Reid, Personnel and Administration Manager

RYA House, Ensign Way, Hamble, SO31 4YA

Tel: 023 8060 4104

Fax: 023 8060 4298

E-mail: jackie.reid@rya.org.uk

Website: www.rya.org.uk

If Jackie is unavailable and the matter is urgent, contact

Jackie Bennetts, Volunteer Development Officer

Tel. 023 8060 4199

E-mail jackie.bennetts@rya.org.uk.

Social Services

The Civic Centre, Poole

Children 01202 261900 or out of hours 657279

Vulnerable adults 01202 633902 or out of hours 657279

Police

Dorset Police Headquarters at Winfrith 01202 222222

If urgent 999