

Foreword

Doncaster Fencing Club has drawn up these guidelines using British Fencing's guidance and we will update them routinely in line with British Fencing's Child Protection and Procedures.

Doncaster Fencing Club believes that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in fencing - administrators, club officials, coaches, parents, friends, children themselves, everyone - can help.

Abuse can occur anywhere there are children eg - at home, at school, in the park, or even the fencing club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone at Doncaster Fencing Club has a part to play in looking after the children who attend our club. This is both a moral and arguably a legal obligation. The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has the care of children/vulnerable adults should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's /vulnerable adult's welfare."

These child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

- the child's welfare is the first consideration
- all children, regardless of age, any disability they have, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse.

We know that if the procedures are to help to protect children, everyone involved in fencing needs to see and discuss them. We are, therefore, asking all parents and officials to make sure that they are addressed and discussed at general meetings. A full copy of British Fencing's guidelines and procedures can be found on their website www.britishfencing.com and is available from BF Headquarters. Please note that these guidelines and procedures are also applicable to dealings with such vulnerable adults.

Finally, please remember Doncaster Fencing Club will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a child is at risk of, or is actually, being abused.

Policy Aims

The aim of our Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice. Doncaster Fencing Club do this by a number of means including:

- providing children, young people with appropriate safety and protection
- allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific issues
- promoting good practice

Welfare Office Details

The Doncaster Fencing Club Welfare officer is:

Mark Atkins

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What is Child Abuse?

It is generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse —Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

Physical Abuse this may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when a child is forced into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body; or where a child is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non- penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

In sport, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with children can potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name calling, and sarcasm or bullying. Putting them under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

Neglect the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical harm and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care – givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

Indications of Child Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not always easy - even for experts. The examples listed below are not a complete list and they are only indicators - not confirmation;

- the child says that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring
- the child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- the child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes quiet and withdrawn, or alternatively becomes aggressive.
- the child appears not to trust adults, eg. a parent or coach with whom she or he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends
- he or she becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason
- the child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.

Bear in mind that physically disabled children and children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Procedures to follow if you have concerns about the welfare of a child

Please remember, it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused but we are asking you to act on your concerns. Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information.

If you are a member, the parent/carer or friend of a member, of the fencing club you should:

- tell a club official such as the club's Child Welfare Officer, club secretary, chairperson, coach or any committee member – unless, of course you suspect them of being involved.
- Contact the BF Child Protection Officer via British Fencing headquarters

Alternatively you call one of the following:

- NSPCC Help Line (Tel: 0800 800 500) – Telephone Help Line for adults who are concerned that a child has been abused, and counselling for adults and children who have been abused.
- Ring ChildLine (Tel: 0800 1111) – Confidential telephone advice for children/vulnerable adults who are being abused or are at risk.
- Ring your local Social Services tel. number available from local phone book including out of hours Duty Social Worker.

As a **club officer** or **organiser** you can:

- Talk to the child's parents/carers about the concerns if you think there may be an obvious explanation such as a bereavement or pressure from their studies/exams.
- Ring any of the above numbers
- Contact your local **Social Service** Department or, in an emergency, the **Police**.

Guidance on responding to a child who tells you that he or she is being abused:

- Do not panic - react calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult, but that they are right to confide in you.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame.
- Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying.
- Be honest straight away and tell the child you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep.
- Do not promise that you will keep the conversation a secret. Explain that, in order to help them, you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down.
- Listen carefully to the child; take them seriously.
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Keep any questions to the minimum required for you to clarify any facts or words that you do not understand - do not speculate or make assumptions.
- Do not probe for more information than is offered as this may affect any future investigation by statutory agencies.
- Encourage the child to use their own words.
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- At the end of the conversation, ensure that the child is either being collected or is capable of going home on their own.
- Do not approach the alleged abuser.

Good practice which can help to prevent Child Abuse

Avoid situations where teacher/coach/club official and child are alone. Doncaster Fencing Club acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative - for example, a child may fall ill and have to be taken home. We would stress, however, that one-to-one contact must never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Further guidance on this issue is contained in the BRITISH FENCING Code of Ethics.

If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for children who are young or disabled, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the child's consent if at all possible and certainly get consent from the parent/carer. Let the child or adult know what you are doing and why.

A parents/carer and/or nominated club official will be responsible for children in changing rooms and equipment store. Teachers/coaches/club officials should work in pairs if classes or groups of children have to be supervised in the changing room.

Ensure that mixed groups are always accompanied by male and female teachers/coaches/club officials. Don't allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility.

At competitions, be aware of people who don't appear to be relatives or friends of children who are fencing but, nevertheless, seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them, particularly if they are not authorised. Report these incidents to the organisers or the venue management/Organisers immediately.

When organising a competition all parents/relatives and friends and bona fide press photographers are required to register with the organisers, the organisers are responsible for monitoring all photography to ensure compliance with British Fencing's guidance.

Doncaster Fencing Club adheres to the BRITISH FENCING best practice with particular reference to:

- the Code of Ethics
- this abridged guidance on child protection which has been adapted from the full version of BF Child Protection Policy which is available from BF Headquarters and on BF website www.britishfencing.com
- the requirements for coaches and helpers to be registered with BRITISH FENCING We publicise phone numbers for the NSPCC Helpline (0800 800 500) and Childline (0800 11111) and FINALLY

If the procedures and guidance contained here are implemented properly, they can offer safeguards to all Club officials and those who help at Doncaster Fencing Club. Most of all though, they can help to prevent children being abused.