

The Scottish Surfing Federation

Good practice guidelines



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SAFE IN SPORT – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

This organisation has a duty of care towards all children involved in its activities. Although it is not possible to give guidance for all possible circumstances, the Good Practice Guidelines are based on best practice and cover some of the most common situations.

They apply to all young people under the age of 18, but common sense should be applied when considering the circumstances of older children.

GENERAL GOOD PRACTICE

- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Treat all children equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust.
- Include children in the decision-making process wherever possible.
- Always work in an open environment, wherever possible. Avoid private or unobserved situations.
- Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children.
- Avoid excessive training and competition, pushing children against their will and putting undue pressure on them.

PRACTICE TO BE AVOIDED

In the context of your role within the SSF the following should be avoided:

- Having 'favourites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could be misinterpreted by others.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.



- Entering children’s bedrooms on trips away from home, unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, knock and say that you are coming in. The door should remain open, if appropriate.

- Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE

In the context of your role within the Scottish Surfing Federation, the following practices are unacceptable:

- Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Engaging in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
- Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with children.
- Allowing or engaging in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home.
- A Coach and/or other leader sharing a room alone with a child.

ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS

As a general guide a ratio of 1:10 is recommended in the National Care Standards for children 8 – 16 years (The SSF ratio is 1:8). Activities should be planned to involve at least two adults, preferably one male and one female. As a general guide, the following factors will also be taken into consideration in deciding how many adults are required to safely supervise children:

- The number of children involved in the activity
- The age, maturity and experience of the children.
- Whether any of the group leaders or children has a disability or special requirements.
- Whether any of the children have challenging behaviour.
- The particular hazards associated with the activity.
- The particular hazards associated with the environment.
- The level of qualification and experience of the leaders.
- The programme of activities.



- Whether there are volunteers under the age 18.

FIRST AID AND THE TREATMENT OF INJURIES

Parents/carers must follow their Code of Conduct strictly. This ensures that sports coach/staff running an event or activity are made aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, or medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.

- Have an accessible and well-resourced first aid kit and a working telephone at the venue.
- Where possible, access to medical advice and/or assistance should be made available.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should treat injuries.
- Inform parents/carers as soon as possible of any injury and action taken.
- A Concern Recording Form should be completed if a child sustains a significant injury and the details of any treatment given recorded. Good sense or sport specific guidance should be used to determine which injuries are significant.
- The circumstances of any accidents that occur should be recorded and reviewed to avoid it happening again.

VOLUNTEERS AGED 17 OR UNDER

While some children under the age of 16 may be in activity with children they should not be placed in positions of sole responsibility for other children. They should be supervised by a more senior qualified coach or volunteer who has been appropriately vetted.

Volunteers aged 17 and under should be assessed for their suitability to work with children. There is no lower age limit for PVG membership. Where the post meets the 'regulated work' criteria, membership of the PVG Scheme should be considered.

Young volunteers may come under different pressures (e.g. lack of respect from peers) and closeness in age could lead to the development of friendships or romantic/sexual relationships. Regular supervision, training and extra support is recommended. Supervision ratios should also be reassessed, as a young volunteer may not be as capable of overseeing a group of children and young people as an adult in the same position.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Any necessary physical contact during sport sessions should respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child and should take place in a culture of dignity and respect. Children should be encouraged to speak out if they feel uncomfortable.

Demonstrating a Technique



In the first instance, techniques should be delivered by demonstration by the coach or who can display the technique safely. If physical contact is necessary, for example to provide support, this should be clearly explained to the child in advance and he/she should be given the chance to opt out. Physical support should be provided openly and must always be proportionate to the circumstances.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY & GROOMING

Within sport intimate relationships can occur. This section looks at both sexual activity among young people and that between adults and young people.

A person in a legally defined 'position of trust' who takes advantage of their position to develop an intimate relationship with a child/young person may be committing a criminal offence known as 'abuse of trust'. Sports coaching is not currently defined in law as a 'position of trust', but the principle of the law should be followed and captured in your organisation's policies. The notion of 'positions of trust' applies as much to young people in leadership roles as it does to adults.

Young people

Sexual activity between children/young people at organisation events, in sports facilities and at social activities organised by the SSF should be discouraged.

Criminal sexual behaviour committed by a young person should be referred to the police or social services. This may also lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the sport and organisation's disciplinary procedure.

For more information see the National Guidance on 'Under-age Sexual Activity: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People and Identifying Child Protection Concerns':

<http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/333495/0108880.pdf>

Adults

Sexual activity between adults and children under the age of 16 is illegal and must be reported to the police.

Sexual activity between adults and young people (aged 16+) involved in sport raise serious issues given the power imbalance in the relationship. Even if a young person is of the age of consent, the power of the adult over that young person may influence their ability to genuinely consent to sexual activity. For example, a coach may have significant power or influence over a young person's sporting career.

Sexual activity between adults and young people (16+) involved in sport should therefore be prohibited when the adult is in a position of trust or authority (coach, trainer, official). This should be communicated clearly to adults in such positions at the outset and clear procedures drawn up to deal with such a situation promptly, fairly and consistently.



Grooming

Most adults involved in sport with children participate with the aim of providing a fun and positive experience for the children taking part. However, some may use sport as a way of gaining access to children with the purpose of developing inappropriate intimate relationships.

People who commit sexual offences against children often first gain the trust of people around the child, such as their family and friends and those involved in sport. Those who commit offences work hard to portray themselves as caring and trustworthy and they befriend their victims to break down barriers before an offence may be committed.

This is referred to as 'grooming'. This predatory behaviour is an offence and may be prosecuted separately to direct sexual abuse. Any suspicions of grooming should be reported to police.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Planning

Sessions should be planned around the group and take into consideration the needs of each child. Sports volunteers/coaches should consider previous and likely behaviour. There should be strategies to manage risks agreed in advance. This should identify the appropriate number of adults required to manage and support the session safely, including being able to respond adequately to safeguard the group.

From time to time sports volunteers/coaches delivering sport to children may have to deal with challenging behaviour.

The following principles should be applied:

- The wellbeing of all children is the paramount consideration.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading and should always be able to maintain their respect and dignity.
- No member of staff should attempt to respond to challenging behaviour by using techniques for which they have not been trained.
- None of the following should be used as a means of managing a child's behaviour:
 - Physical punishment or the threat of such.
 - Withdrawal of communication.
 - Being deprived of food, water or access to changing facilities or toilets.
 - Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.



Physical Interventions

Physical interventions should only be used as a last resort to prevent a child from injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. Only the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property should be used and applied for the shortest period of time. Physical intervention must not ever be used as a form of punishment.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

- Fill in SSF Young Surfers Trip Form.
- All vehicles and drivers are correctly insured.
- The driver has a valid and appropriate license.
- All reasonable safety measures are available e.g. fitted, working seatbelts or booster seats.
- There is an appropriate ratio of adults per child.
- Drivers take adequate breaks.
- If an adult is regularly transporting children on behalf of the club this may be regulated work with children as such it should be assessed whether or not this person requires a PVG check.
- Sports volunteers/staff should be discouraged from transporting children to activities by car. However, when this situation cannot be avoided the following guidelines should be followed:
 - Request parent/carer consent in advance and provide details of the journey.
 - Take all reasonable safety measures e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts worn.
 - Where possible, have another adult accompany you on the journey.

COLLECTION BY PARENTS/CARERS

Make sure that start and finish times are clear and that the arrangements for collection are understood by all. Parents/carers who wish children to go home unaccompanied (according to their age and stage) should give consent in writing. Notify parents/carers that they should not drop children off too early and that they are expected to collect children promptly.

Under no circumstance a surfer is left alone by his/her own.

Dealing with the situation

If parents/carers are late when picking up their child, the wellbeing of the child will take precedence, and he/she must not be left alone. The volunteers and coaches have a duty of care to the children in their charge and this continues when the activity has finished. However, it is not the responsibility of coaches/volunteers to transport children home. If attempts to contact an adult who is responsible for the child fail, the CWPO and social work should be informed.



Where possible have more than one adult/leader to lock up at the end of an activity. If an adult is left in sole charge in these circumstances, they should record any actions taken and inform the CWPO and parents/carers as soon as possible.

PROCEDURE FOR THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS, FILM, VIDEO

Children must be protected from those who would seek to use photos and videos to place them at risk of harm. Written consent must be obtained from the child's parents/carers before any photography or filming takes place.

Management of photography

Reasonable steps must be taken to promote the safe use of photography and filming at events and activities. It is not possible to prevent individuals photographing or filming in public places, but the SSF does have the right to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at its own events or activities at a private venue.

Where photography or filming is permitted, (and consent has been granted from parents/carers), the following guidelines should be followed:

- Put a system in place to allow easy tracking of photographers and their equipment. For example use a badge or sticker to identify those with permission to photograph or film.
- Children must never be portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or a provocative manner. Children should never be shown in a state of partial undress, other than when depicting an action shot within the context of the sport. Attire such as tracksuits or t-shirts may be more appropriate.
- No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions will be allowed unless this has been explicitly agreed with the child and parents/carers.
- Decisions about publishing images should reflect the best interests of the child and should consider whether they might place the child at risk. Special care must be taken in relation to vulnerable children such as those in care, fleeing domestic violence or a child with a disability.
- All negatives, copies of videos and digital images will be stored in a secure place. These will not be kept for any longer than is necessary having regard to the purposes for which they were taken.
- Indecent images of young people under 18 years of age are classified as child abuse imagery and must be reported immediately to the police.

Mobile phone cameras

A number of children have been placed at risk as a result of the ability to discreetly record and transmit images through mobile phones. Particular care is required in areas where personal privacy is important e.g. changing rooms, bathrooms and sleeping quarters. No photographs or filming should ever be permitted in such areas.



Concerns

Anyone behaving in a way which could reasonably be viewed as inappropriate in relation to filming or photographing should be reported to the Club Child Wellbeing & Protection Officer, or the police.

Communication technology & social media

Communication technology and social media developments advance extremely quickly, meaning ways in which we communicate and receive and absorb information are changing all the time. This provides a great opportunity for organisations to promote their activities and communicate easily with members. But it can also put children and young people at considerable risk, which is why safeguards must be put in place.

Adults who seek to harm children have been known to use technology and social media to “groom” children. This area is now specifically addressed by the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005. It is also widely acknowledged that children can be harmed by the behaviours and actions of their peers for example, on-line bullying and sexting.

The following guidelines should be met in order to safeguard all parties when communicating using texting/social media:

- All communications from the organisation with children should be open, transparent and appropriate.
- Messages should only be sent to communicate details of meeting points, training, match details, competition results etc. The same message should be sent to every member of the group/team.
- It should always be clear that it is the organisation who is communicating information – one-to-one messaging arrangements between sports volunteers/coaches should be strongly discouraged and safeguards should be in place and settings adjusted to prevent this happening.
- Messages should never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language. They should not be open to misinterpretation.
- Written permission must be sought from parents/carers to communicate with children under 16 years via technology/social media.
- Parents should be offered the option to be copied in to any messages their child will be sent.
- Consent to communicate via technology/social media should be sought directly from young people aged 16 to 18. Though consent from parents/carers is not required for this age group it is recommended that parents/carers are informed of the intention to communicate with their children.
- Children and young people should be informed about the means of communication at the organisation. They should also be given information on how to keep themselves safe and who to report any concerns to in the SSF.



- All concerns about the inappropriate use of technology and social media will be dealt with in line with the Procedure for Responding to Concerns about a Child. This may include the concerns being reported to police.
- All phone numbers/email addresses of children and young people should be recorded and kept securely in a locked cabinet or password-protected electronic file or database.
- The number of people with access to children and young people's details should be kept to a practical minimum. A record should be kept of their numbers/addresses by the Child Wellbeing & Protection Officer.

Use of Images and Information

- Information published on the websites/social networking sites must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, email address, telephone number of a child. All contact must be directed to the SSF. Credit for achievements by a child should be restricted to first names e.g. Tracey was Player of the Year 2002.
- Children must never be portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or a provocative manner. Children should never be portrayed in a state of partial undress, other than when depicting an action shot within the context of the sport. Attire such as tracksuits or t-shirts may be more appropriate.
- Information about specific events or meetings e.g. coaching sessions must not be distributed to any individuals other than to those directly concerned.

CLUBHOUSES AND CHANGING ROOMS

Children are particularly vulnerable in the changing area of sports facilities.

Bullying can occur where children are left unsupervised in changing areas. It is recommended that particular attention is given to the supervision of children aged 10 and under in changing rooms.

Adults should avoid changing or showering at the same time as children. If limited changing facilities mean that adults and children must share, adults must take care to protect the modesty and privacy of themselves and the children. Parents/carers should be made aware if this is likely to be the case.

An adult should not be alone with a child in the changing areas. If possible more than one adult should supervise changing areas. Extra vigilance may also be required if there is public access to the venue.

If children are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, do not pressure them to do so.

If you need to use a changing room for another purpose, such as a team talk, wait until all children are fully dressed.



No photography or filming should be allowed in changing areas.

SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Any adult who regularly works with children in sport may be the person that a child chooses to tell about abuse, or other things that are worrying them. It is vital that adults know how to respond and know how to share information with those who can help.

Those people working with or making decisions about children should be suitably trained, qualified and supported. They should:

- Know the contact name and details of the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (CWPO)
- Have signed the code of conduct for working with children
- Know and understand the good practice guidelines
- Know and understand the responding to concerns procedures
- Be aware of other relevant policies
- Attend Safeguarding & Protecting Children in Sport, (or another basic child protection awareness workshop) within 1 year of commencing work with children and young players.

Consider the roles at the organisation that need specific training and the type of training required. Attendance by individuals holding the positions with responsibility for children should be recorded carefully to keep skills and knowledge up to date. A set procedure for responding to a wellbeing or protection concern about a child makes sure that everyone is clear on what action to take in the event of a concern being raised. The procedure is based on three steps: Respond, Record, Report.

The following principles underpin the procedure:

- The wellbeing of the child is the paramount consideration.
- Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children and where possible the club should work in partnership with parents/carers when there are concerns about a child.
- Children have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously (Article 12, UNCRC). It is important therefore to seek the views of the child, where relevant and appropriate, and to seek their consent for further reporting of the concern.
- Where the concern about a child's wellbeing suggests that they are in need of protection, the information must be passed on to police/social work with or without the child's consent for the purposes of their protection. Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. **No member of the club shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused.**