



Renfrewshire Leisure

Child Protection Policy

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Scottish Football Association

Amateur Swimming Association

The Scouts

Children 1st

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Strathclyde Police – Child Protection Unit.

Renfrewshire Council – Social Work Department.

Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee

Foreword

Renfrewshire Leisure believes that Child Protection is everyone's responsibility staff, coaches and customers alike. Every child should have the opportunity to take part in sport at all levels in the knowledge that he or she will be safe, secure and respected. Above all, taking part in sport should be enjoyable and fun.

Since the first version of our Child Protection Policy produced in 2003/4, progress has been made towards making sport and leisure participation in our centres safer and in a more secure environment for children. Many partner organisations and clubs have acknowledged their responsibility for child protection, and have demonstrated their commitment by developing child protection policies and procedures of their own.

However, there is no room for complacency. We know that more needs to be done to make sure that sport is safe for all children that take part. We need to make sure that all our staff, sports clubs, customers and visiting organisations are aware of their role and responsibilities to protect children.

That is why Renfrewshire Leisure has updated our policy and guidelines. The new guidelines take account of the feedback that we have received from partners agencies. They are designed to be easier to use and they also reflect requirements in relation to new child protection legislation and guidance.

As a result of these revised guidelines, we hope you will find it even easier to understand and take action that will ensure children can take part in sport within Renfrewshire Leisure Centres in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the updated policy and procedures

Joyce McKellar

Chief Executive – Renfrewshire Leisure Limited

In creating this policy several things had to be taken into consideration significant changes in legislation, guidance and the Scottish Governments National Reform Programme for Child Protection, in particular:

- "It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright", Report on the National Audit and Review, Scottish Executive (2002)
- Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards, Scottish Executive (2004)
- Children's Charter, Scottish Executive (2004)
- Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005

Renfrewshire Leisure Child Protection Policy

Responsibilities

Renfrewshire Leisure will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children and officers by providing opportunities for them to take part in **Leisure** safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children, and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff or others to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
- Require staff or others to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Review and evaluate this Policy and these Procedures on a regular basis.

Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children and officers have a lot to gain from sport. Their natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in a positive environment created by sports organisations. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse and the responsibility of the Social Work Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or any changes within **Renfrewshire Leisure**.
- Following any issues or concerns rose about the protection of children within **Renfrewshire Leisure**.
- In all other circumstances, at least annually.

Renfrewshire Leisure Child Protection Procedures

1 Recruitment and Employment

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

For all positions that require regular contact with children the following recruitment procedures must be completed.

1.1 Advertising

All forms of advertising used to recruit staff or others for positions involving regular contact with children will include the following:

- The aims of **Renfrewshire Leisure** and, where appropriate, details of the particular programme involved.
- The responsibilities of the role.
- The level of experience or qualifications required (e.g. experience of working with children is an advantage).
- Details of **Renfrewshire Leisure's** open and positive stance on child protection.

1.2 Pre-application Information

Pre-application information for positions involving regular contact with children will be sent to applicants and will include:

- A job description including roles and responsibilities.
- A candidate specification (e.g. stating qualifications or experience of working with children required).
- An application form and self-declaration form.
- Information on **Renfrewshire Leisure** and related topics.

1.3 Application and Self-Declaration Form

All applicants will be requested to complete an application and self-declaration form. The purpose of the application form is to obtain relevant details from the applicant for the position. The purpose of the self-declaration form is to collect information on criminal behaviour that is relevant to the position e.g. criminal records or investigations. The self-declaration form is requested in a separate sealed envelope and is not opened until the applicant is selected for an interview. If the applicant is not selected the form is returned unopened to the applicant.

1.4 References

References will be sought as required. Where possible at least one of these references will be from an employer or a voluntary organisation where the position required working with children in any of the following capacities: employee; volunteer; or work experience. If the person has no experience of working with children or officers, specific training requirements will be agreed before appointment.

1.5 Checks

Renfrewshire Leisure is registered with **Disclosure Scotland** and prior to appointment a Disclosure Scotland check and/or equivalent international check will be completed. This will require the prospective position holder to complete and submit a Disclosure Scotland form, with the results returning to **RL Chief Executive**.

As recommended by Disclosure Scotland (Protecting the Vulnerable by Safer Recruitment, 2002) the following types of checks are to be requested for positions requiring contact with children:

Standard Disclosure

Standard disclosures will be requested from those applying for positions listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) (Exceptions) Order 1975. These categories include occupations with duties that involve regular contact with children and young people under the age of 18; and the elderly, sick and handicapped people.

Enhanced Disclosure

Enhanced Disclosures will be requested for positions that involve a greater degree of contact with children. For example positions that require regular contact with, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children and young people. (RL have decided that this is the level of disclosure they will use)

1.6 Interview

For positions that require regular contact with children, interviews will be carried out. An interview will include requests for additional information to support the application.

1.7 Offer of Position

Once a decision has been made to appoint an individual, an offer letter will be presented to the applicant including the details of the position, any special requirements and the obligations e.g. agreement to the policies and procedures of the organisation, the probation period and responsibilities of the role. Confirmation of the position being accepted will require the offer letter to be formally accepted and agreed to in writing e.g. by the individual signing and dating their agreement on the offer letter and returning it to the organisation.

1.8 Induction

The induction process for the newly appointed employee will include the following:

- An assessment of training, individual aids and any other needs and aspirations.
- Clarification, agreement and signing up to the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Clarification of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the position.

1.9 Training

Newly appointed staff or others will complete the following training over an agreed period:

- Protecting children.
- Working effectively with children (including presentation skills, developing child friendly resources and activities).
- Any other identified training needs.

1.10 Probation

Newly appointed staff or others will complete an agreed period of probation on commencement of their role.

1.11 Monitoring and Performance Appraisal

All staff or others who have contact with children will be monitored and their performance appraised. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress, set new goals, identify training needs and address any concerns of poor practice.

Documents for Reference

Appendix A ; Forms and Guidelines

2 Staff with Specific Responsibility for the Protection of Children

2.1 Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer has the main responsibility for managing child protection issues within Renfrewshire Leisure Limited. The role and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer are detailed below. Specific responsibilities in relation to allegations against staff or others are detailed in the Procedure for Managing Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse of a Child against Staff or others (Section 7.5).

2.2 Role and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer

Within **Renfrewshire Leisure** the Child and Officer will:

- Implement and promote **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the **Chief Executive or Leisure Operations and Development Manager**
- Act as the main contact within **Renfrewshire Leisure** for the protection of children.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children.
- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children.
- Communicate with staff or others on issues of child protection.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work Department.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Organise training for staff or others.
- Regularly monitor and review the **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Child and Officer Protection Policy and Procedures.

With regard to clubs operating within premises of **Renfrewshire Leisure**, the Child Protection Officer will:

- Implement and promote **Renfrewshire Leisure** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the **Leisure Operations and Development Manager**.
- Act as the main contact within the Company for the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- To work with the clubs to report cases, concerns and decide what if any action should be taken.
- Attend training on the protection of children.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work Department.
- Monitor and review the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

3 Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all staff employed by **Renfrewshire Leisure** when in contact with children or officers. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by an employee will be dealt with through the **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Disciplinary Procedure for misconduct or through Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against an Employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure** (Section 7.5).

3.1 Good Practice

Renfrewshire Leisure supports and requires the following good practice by staff or others when in contact with children.

When working with children:

- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child or officer 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.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child, it is provided openly, the child is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- Deliver educational instruction first verbally; secondly role-modelled; and thirdly, and only if necessary, with hands on - which must be accompanied by telling the child or officer where you are putting your hands and why it is necessary and obtaining their consent.
- Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children to share in the decision-making process.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and avoid excessive training or competition and either pushing them against their will or putting undue pressure on them.

First Aid and Treatment of Injuries:

If, in your capacity as an employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure**, a child requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practicable all parents/guardians of children under 16 must complete a **Renfrewshire Leisure** Medical Consent Form before participating in **Leisure**.(Appendix G)
- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The child's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's interests and on professional advice not to do so.

- A Notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the organisation as soon as possible.

For taking and transporting children away from home:

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children away from home the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practicable request written parental/guardian consent if staff or others are required to transport children.
- Always tell another employee that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn.
- Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other staff or others and parents/guardians.

3.2 Practice to Be Avoided

In the context of your role within **Renfrewshire Leisure**, the following practice should be avoided:

- Avoid having 'favourites' - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could lead to false allegations.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Ensure that when children are taken away from home adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Never take children to your home.
- Avoid, where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Important Note:

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or others to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child and where possible their parents/guardians. It is important to respect their views. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible, 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. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

3.3 Practice never to be sanctioned

In the context of your role within **Renfrewshire Leisure**, the following practices should never be sanctioned:

- Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children.
- Never allow or engage in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Never allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share a room with a child for sleeping accommodation.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

Important Note:

In special cases sharing may be required for health and safety reasons or if the child is very young or particularly vulnerable. If so, explain why this is necessary to the child and their parent or guardian and seek their consent. Where possible ensure that at least two adults, preferably male and female are in the room.

3.4 Reporting

If staff or others have concerns about an incident involving a child that seems untoward or unusual they must report their concerns as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer. Parents should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible unless it is not in the child’s interests to tell them (refer to Section 8, Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers). Appendix J

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child needs to be restrained.

Documents for Reference

Appendix A ; Forms and Guidelines

4 Identifying and Managing Bullying

The lives of many people are made miserable by bullying. Victims of bullying can feel lonely, isolated and deeply unhappy. It can have a devastating effect on a child’s self-esteem and destroy their self-confidence and concentration. They may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk. They may feel it is somehow their fault or that there is something wrong with them and at worst cause depression and/or feelings of worthlessness that lead to suicide.

To ensure **Renfrewshire Leisure** creates an atmosphere where bullying of children is unacceptable and to help staff or others manage bullying issues, guidelines for identifying and managing bullying have been developed.

Any suspicions or allegations of bullying of a child against a employee will be dealt with through the **Renfrewshire Leisure** Disciplinary Procedures and/or Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure** (Section 7.5).

5 Photographing, Videoing and Filming of Children

There is evidence that some people have used sporting venues and activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. The following procedures have been developed to protect children.

The following is required for **Renfrewshire Leisure** activities or events where children are participating:

- Where appropriate all materials promoting **Renfrewshire Leisure** events or activities shall state that accredited photographers will be present.
- Where possible consent from the parent/guardian for photographing, videoing and/or filming of a child must be obtained prior to the event or activity.

- Where possible anyone wishing to use photographic/film/video equipment at a venue must obtain the approval of **Renfrewshire Leisure**.
- An activity or event specific identification badge/sticker must be provided to and clearly displayed at all times by accredited photographers, film and video operators on the day of the activity or event.
- No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions are to be permitted unless this has been approved in advance by the child Protection Officer, parent/guardian and the organisation, and appropriate vetting has occurred e.g. Disclosure Scotland check of individual wanting to photograph, film or video.
- **Renfrewshire Leisure** reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated.
- The requirements above are publicly promoted to ensure all people present at the event or activity understand the procedure and are aware of whom to contact if concerned.

5.1 Concerns about Photographers, Video or Film Operators

Any concerns with photographers or video or film operators are to be reported to **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Child Protection Officer and where relevant, the Police.

5.2 MOBILE PHONES

Short Message Service (SMS) messaging is a quick and easy way to communicate with others and is a popular and often preferred means of communication with children. Staff and volunteers must be aware that intimidating, bullying or even abusive messages can be discreetly sent by text. Information sent in this way, even where well-meaning, could be misinterpreted.

Further, the risks presented by developments in modern technology are becoming increasingly recognised. Adults who seek to harm children have been known to use text messaging and internet chat rooms to "groom" children. This area is now specifically addressed by the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005.

5.3 TEXTING

Staff/volunteers must consider whether it is necessary and appropriate to hold the mobile phone numbers of children. The general principle is that all communications with children should be open, transparent and appropriate to the nature of the relationship.

In the first instance contact should always be made at the phone number the parent has provided on the child's behalf. Good practice would include agreeing with children and parents what kind of information will be communicated directly to children by text message. This information should only be "need to know" information such as the last minute cancellation of a training session.

The following good practice is also required:

- the mobile phone numbers of children will be carefully stored (in accordance with data protection principles) and access will only be provided to those who need access for a legitimate reason.
- staff/volunteers must never engage in personal or sensitive communications with children via text message.
- all concerns about the inappropriate use of text messaging will be dealt with in line with RLL's Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns about Child Abuse.

5.4 CAMERAS/ VIDEOS

There have already been a number of cases where children have been placed at risk as a result of the ability to discreetly record and transmit images through mobile phones. The use of mobile phones in this way can be very difficult to monitor.

The Procedure for the use of Photographs, Film and Video should be observed in relation to the use of mobile phones as cameras/videos. Particular care is required in areas where personal privacy is important e.g. changing rooms, bathrooms and sleeping quarters. No photographs or video footage should ever be permitted in such areas of personal privacy.

All concerns about the inappropriate use of mobile phones to record photographs or video footage will be dealt with in line with RLL's Complaints Policy, Performance Management, Disciplinary Procedure and/or Procedure for Responding to Concerns about Child Abuse. This may include the concerns being reported to the police.

6 Children in Publications and on the Internet

Sport websites and publications provide excellent opportunities to broadcast achievements of individuals to the world and to provide a showcase for the activities of young people. In some cases, however, displaying certain information about children could place them at risk. The following procedure must be followed to ensure **Renfrewshire Leisure** publications and **Renfrewshire Leisure** information on the Internet do not place children at risk.

Renfrewshire Leisure publications and **Renfrewshire Leisure** information on the Internet must adhere to the following:

- Publications or information on an Internet site must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child. Any contact information must be directed to either **Renfrewshire Leisure** or another relevant organisation's address, for example another governing body or club.
- Before publishing any information about a child, written consent must be obtained from the child's parent/guardian. If the material is changed from the time of consent, the parents/guardians must be informed and consent provided for the changes.
- The content of photographs or videos must not depict a child in a provocative pose or in a state of partial undress other than when depicting a sporting activity. Where relevant, a tracksuit may be more appropriate attire. Children must never be portrayed in a demeaning or tasteless manner.
- For photographs or videos of groups or teams of children ensure that only the group or team is referred to, not individual staff or others. Credit for achievements by a child are to be restricted to first names e.g. Tracey was Player of the Year 2002.
- All published events involving children must be reviewed to ensure the information will not put children at risk. Any publications of specific meetings or child events e.g. team coaching sessions, must not be distributed to any individuals other than to those directly concerned.
- Particular care must be taken in publishing photographs, film or videos of children who are considered particularly vulnerable e.g. the subject of a child protection issue or a custody dispute.
- Particular care is to be taken in publishing photographs, films or videos of children with physical, learning and/or communication or language disabilities, as they could be particularly vulnerable to abuse (Morgan, 1979; Watson, 1984).

Important Note: Any concerns or enquiries about publications or Internet information should be reported to **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Child Protection Officer.

Documents for Reference

For further information about bullying, see:

- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.children1st.org.uk

Appendix A: Forms and Guidelines

7 Responding to Disclosures

Information you receive about or from a child may fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 Suspicion or allegation of misconduct against an employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure**
- 2 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against an employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure**
- 3 Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour against someone who is not an employee
- 4 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is not an employee

If unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from the Child Protection Officer or the Police or Social Work Department.

It is not the responsibility of anyone from **Renfrewshire Leisure** to decide whether or not a child has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

It is very important that **Renfrewshire Leisure** staff or others understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

- Physical Injury – Being hit, kicked, or punched
- Physical Neglect – Not being properly fed, clothed, cared for or poor hygiene
- Sexual Abuse – Inappropriate sexual behaviour or language by an adult towards a child
- Emotional Abuse – Constantly criticised, ignored or humiliated
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family, staff or others; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)

The definitions for the types of abuse and signs that may suggest abuse are detailed in Appendix A. It is very important that this appendix is read and understood.

7.1 How to Listen to a Disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to the child.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/officer says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.
- Reassure the child or officer.

Actions to Avoid

When receiving a disclosure:

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

7.2 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against Someone who is Not a Employee of Renfrewshire Leisure

In the course of your role within **Renfrewshire Leisure** a child may disclose information to you about a person who is not an employee that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

If the disclosure is about an incident that occurred during a **Renfrewshire Leisure** event or activity:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass the information to both the manager of the event or activity and the Child Protection Officer and if appropriate the parents/guardians/carers of the child (refer to Section 8 Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers).
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child Protection Officer.

7.3 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against a Employee of Renfrewshire Leisure

If you receive a disclosure that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against an employee:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass to the Child Protection Officer.
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass to the Child Protection Officer.

Establishing the Basic Facts

The Child Protection Officer must clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that misconduct has occurred. If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of misconduct by an employee, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Disciplinary Procedure.

7.4 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against Someone who is Not a Employee of Renfrewshire Leisure

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are less than usual. If a child says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child or officer is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Child Protection Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Child Protection Officer is unavailable, external agencies such as the Police and Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

On receiving information about a non-employee that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child as detailed in section 7.1 How to Listen to Disclosures.
- Pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell the Child Protection Officer about the action taken.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/officer's own words. The information must, where known, include the following:
- Name of child.
- Age, date of birth of child.
- Home address and telephone number of the child.
- The nature of the allegation in the child's own words.
- Note any times, dates or other relevant information.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.
- The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident).
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine the child).
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.
- Whether the child's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
- If it is not the child making the report, whether the child has been spoken to, if so what was said.
- Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print off the record, sign and date, then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Social Work Department or the Police.

Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record

7.5 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Employee of Renfrewshire Leisure

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse by an employee will raise different issues, e.g. disbelief that an employee would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of an employee to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child has been abused. However, as with allegations against non-staff or others, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of an employee towards a child must be passed on as soon as possible that day, in accordance with these procedures. No employee in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against an employee are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. They must be read in conjunction with the **Renfrewshire Leisure Limited's** Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.1 on receiving information about an employee that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child or officer as detailed in section 7.1 How to Listen to Disclosures.
- Pass your concerns to the Child Protection Officer on the day or if not available, the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/officer's own words.
- Sign and date the record including what you have seen, heard or been told, that day.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print the record, sign and date, then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Child Protection Officer or the Social Work Department or Police.

Important Note: Where the concern is about the Child Protection Officer it must be reported to the **Chief Executive or equivalent**.

7.5.2 Actions for the Child Protection Officer when Concerns are reported

Before taking any action the Child Protection Officer must always seek advice from the Police or Social Work Department. Thereafter:

- **Establish Basic Facts** - the Child Protection Officer must initially clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an employee may have abused a child and/or officer.

Important Note:

- This may necessitate the child(ren) involved being asked some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other children, or other appropriate individuals e.g. coaches. After seeking advice from the Police and/or Social Work Department, the parents/guardians may be approached to provide consent to speak to a child.
- Advice must be sought from the Police and/or Social Work Department as to whether the employee about whom the allegation has been made may be approached as part of the initial enquiry.
- This process will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.

Making a Referral in Cases of Suspected and/or Alleged Abuse – If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- The Child Protection Officer will refer the suspicion and/or allegation to the Social Work Department and the Police, as soon as possible that day.
- Appropriate steps may be required to ensure the safety of the child(ren) who may be at risk.
- A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Work Department employee of staff or the Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.

- Following advice from the Social Work Department and/or Police, the parent/guardian of the child should be contacted as soon as possible.

Important Note:

- Reporting of the matter to the Police or Social Work Department must not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. A Referral for Reporting Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse against an Employee of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited Form must be completed as soon as possible that day. Where possible, a copy of this form must be sent to the Police and Social Work Department within 24 hours.

Possible Outcomes following advice from Police

Where the initial enquiry reveals that there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an employee has abused a child there will be an investigation. There are three types of investigation that can result:

- A disciplinary investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A criminal investigation

Following advice from the Police, disciplinary action may be taken in cases where a criminal investigation is ongoing provided sufficient information is available to enable a decision to be made and doing so does not jeopardise the criminal investigation.

Procedures 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 are summarised in Flowchart 1.

7.5.3 Managing the Employee against Whom the Allegation has been Made

Following advice from the Police, if the decision is made that the employee against whom the allegation has been made is to be informed, the employee should be told an allegation has been made which suggests abuse. It is essential to preserve evidence for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the employee.

7.5.4 Suspension

- Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The employee may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.
- Suspension will be carried out by **Regional Manager** in accordance with **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Disciplinary Procedures.
- At the suspension interview the employee will be informed of the reason suspension is taking place and given the opportunity to give a statement should he/she wish. Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the employee in accordance with **Renfrewshire Leisure's** Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.5 Managing False or Malicious Allegations

- Where after investigation, the allegation is found to be false or malicious the employee will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. The employee involved may wish to seek legal advice.
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation will be destroyed.
- Where this involves an employee of **Renfrewshire Leisure**, they will be advised of the appropriate counselling services available.

7.5.6 Managing Allegations of Historical Abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a child by an employee who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made the procedures for managing allegations of abuse, detailed in Sections 7.4 and 7.5, must be followed.

8 Sharing concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers

8.1 Where it is Not Abuse

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers where there are concerns about a child. Therefore in most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child, it would be important to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations however advice should be sought from the Child Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

8.2 Allegations of Abuse

There are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. **In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents.**

9 Legal Framework

The legislation and guidance on which this policy and supporting procedures is based is located in Appendix O.

Documents for Reference

Appendix A: Forms and Guidelines

Appendix B: Model Policy and Procedures Legal Framework

Bibliography

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Flowchart 1: Procedure for Responding to Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse of a Child

