

Blackburn Community Sports Club

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Blackburn Community Sports Club is an organisation committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people.

There is a national system for responding to child abuse, which is regulated by guidance and law. Collaboration for child protection is the responsibility of a multi-agency body called the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). It is made up of representatives from the relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. The area that ACPC's cover is determined by Local Authority boundaries (England) Health and Social Services Boards boundaries (Northern Ireland).

Blackburn Community Sports Club Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that this scheme develops effective child protection procedures. (Child for the purposes of these procedures is anyone under the age of 18 years of age).

The focus of child protection work has changed in recent years as the evidence base has grown. Now the majority of children on child protection registers are there because of neglect. This reflects a trend which has been growing since the mid 1990's. It marks a shift in concern in child protection work, not just to focus on incidents or injury but to concentrate also on the damaging long term effects to children / young people of living in emotional and neglectful environments.

Everybody shares some responsibility for promoting the welfare of children/ren and young person/s, as a parent, a family member, concerned friend or volunteer. Members of the community can help to safeguard children / young people if they act if they have concern about a child / young persons welfare.

All personal information about Children, young people and their families should be treated as confidential, to be discussed only as necessary in the circumstances outlined below.

Any disclosure of the confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the **expressed permission of the parents** of the children and young people for the purpose of assisting them. Except where it is considered necessary (I.e. where concerns are more serious and/or may impact on the safety of a child or young person) for the welfare and protection of a child or young person when information shall be shared with the appropriate authority.

Blackburn Community Sports Club has developed this position statement in order to provide clarity about how Blackburn Community Sports Club carries out its commitment to protecting the welfare and safety of all children and young people supported.

Where there are concerns for the welfare of children and young people Blackburn Community Sports Club will support and encourage the parents of the children and young people to seek additional support from relevant agencies to meet those needs.

Blackburn Community Sports Club Management Committee and the Child Welfare Officer will ensure that all volunteers and other adults who have substantial access to children / young persons will be assessed for their suitability, including enhanced criminal record checks and references.

Should there be any concerns about the results of the enhanced criminal record checks, the Child Welfare Officer will inform Blackburn Community Sports Club Management Committee immediately. A meeting will then be arranged to address these concerns within 7 days, and any appropriate action taken as necessary. The meeting will be documented accordingly.

The scheme should consider safe arrangements for volunteers working with Children and Young People. Volunteers might be vulnerable to complaints made against them or have difficulties maintaining the boundaries in relationships even if they haven't previously been susceptible to crossing those boundaries. Therefore the scheme should seek to minimise volunteers working alone with children and young people and volunteers should be alert to any of their colleagues "grooming" activities.

All the Blackburn Community Sports Club volunteers working directly with families and children/ young people will undertake relevant child protection training and be familiar with the Blackburn Community Sports Club local procedures. They will receive support for their work and be familiar with what to do if they suspect colleagues within the scheme of any inappropriate behaviour.

Additionally schemes should familiarise themselves with Area Child Protection Child Protection policies and practice and be clear about how the scheme's procedures fit with these local procedures.

Where Blackburn Community Sports Club considers that a child may be in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (Children in Need) it may refer the Child or Young Person to Social Services for additional support. This should of course always be made within the parent/s and child/young person's consent and prior knowledge.

In circumstances where the issue relates to that of domestic abuse then care should be taken to ensure any discussion does not put the non-abusing carer at further risk.

Schemes may find it useful to be familiar with the local Social Services department's arrangements for assessing families in need.

It is not the responsibility of any Blackburn Community Sports Club volunteer to make judgements about the concerns **or to investigate further.**

Where a member of the scheme is aware of an incident or an accumulation of concerns about a child / young person that concern should always be shared with someone more senior in the scheme and/or the named person or designated person for Child Welfare matters on the management committee.

Remember there are very few life and death emergencies in child protection, take time to reflect on information but don't neglect to act within the confines of these procedures.

Be aware of the impact on yourself, the volunteer and others and ensure that appropriate support is provided.

Take further advice from within the scheme, or from a child protection specialist who has an agreed role with the scheme, using anonymous information if required initially. Think carefully about the appropriateness of speaking with or involving the family at this stage.

Consider the appropriateness of passing on to the relevant agency a concern about the child/ren or young person/s. Referrals about the safety of a child should be made to the social worker involved with the family if there is one in the first instance. Where there is no social work involvement referrals should be made to the local Social Services offices. There are 24-hour referral points. When making a referral if possible, speak directly to a social worker on the same day. Have the following information ready:

- Details of an incident and/or other concerns and the source of that information.
- Names and dates of birth of children / young people.
- Family addresses and Telephone numbers
- Names of those having parental responsibility for the children / young people.
- Anyone else involved in the care of the children (e.g. stepparents, co-habitees).
- GP Health Visitor.
- School attended if known).
- Any known movements regarding the family (working hours etc).
- How you or the Child Protection Officer can be contacted.

The lack of any of this information should not stop you from making a referral or seeking advice from an investigating agency.

Record what you have been told, who you have spoken to, the actions you have agreed and the reasons for them as soon as possible after you have completed the actions.

The responsibility to investigate lies with the statutory agencies, not with Blackburn Community Sports Club, see Do's and Don'ts leaflet.

In an emergency

If a child / young person is potentially seriously injured: ensure the child has received or receives medical attention as soon as possible. Every attempt should be made to include the parent in any attempts to have a medical examination.

If a child / young person is alone or someone is threatening to harm the child / young person: ring 999 or the local police station. The police are empowered to act immediately to protect a child. Social Services are not empowered to act in the same way without a Court Order.

Recognising abuse

Child abuse occurs throughout all sectors of society. Child abuse is the term used to describe how children are harmed, often by adults who are responsible for their care. All children, whatever their circumstances, have the right to expect protection from harm. All parents have a right to receive help and support to prevent them from further harming their child.

There are different kinds of abuse. Some occur because of the way adults or other children and young people behave towards a child; some happen because adults are failing to unable to provide proper care for the children they look after. One child may suffer several different kinds of abuse at the same time. It is important that action is taken straight away to help a child who is being abused.

Children are dependent upon others for their survival and well-being and have a right to have someone who will act on their behalf. Any adult with whom a child has contact can start the protection process.

The abuse or neglect of children – neglectfully, physically, emotionally or sexually can have long term effects on all aspect of a child's health and development. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self image and self esteem and on their future life. Difficulties may extend into adult life and can affect personal, social and work relationships.

It is not only the stressful events of abuse that have an impact on children, but also the context in which they take place. Any potentially abusive incident has to be seen in context to assess the extent of harm to a child and appropriate intervention. Often it is the interaction between a number of factors, which serve to increase the likelihood or level of significant harm. Understanding child abuse in the wider context of child welfare means that the impact of abuse on an individual child will be dependent on other factors such as:

- The individual child's means of coping and adapting
- Support from family and social networks
- The impact of supportive and therapeutic interventions and subsequent life events

The concept of significant harm was introduced by the Children Act in 1989 as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. The Local Authority is under a duty to make enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Definitions

The Department of Health defines child abuse as:

- Physical injury
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Triggers of concern

There are several triggers:

- Something you see on a child
- Something you observe about a child's behaviour
- Something a child or someone else tells you
- General concerns regarding parenting.

Recognising abuse is not always easy, even for those with specialised training. Only a paediatric doctor is in a position to confirm or discount abuse as a cause of an injury.

Children with a disability are often at greater risk and their additional vulnerability should always be born in mind.

Where uncertainty/doubts exist it is always good practice to seek further advice/consultation with your designated Child Protection worker or other designated professionals. This helps to ensure that a child is not left in a situation where a delay in responding, or no action exposes them to additional risk of harm.

Other issues to be aware of:

Other children

Abuse may be happening to any child in the family not just the child/children you have contact with. It may be important to consider friends, relatives or other visitors to the home who may be perpetrators of abuse

Parents as survivors

Some parents, perhaps the minority, will be survivors of child abuse and may still be suffering physically or emotionally, because of it. It may affect the way they are as parents to their own children either positively or negatively.

Potential Perpetrators within Blackburn Community Sports Club

Adults with a motivation to abuse children target activities, which bring them into contact with children and Young people and provide opportunities for abuse. Any organisation which helps families is therefore vulnerable.

Recruitment processes within Blackburn Community Sports Club should be followed carefully.

The Department of Health is clear that all children, no matter what situation they are in, should be protected from abuse. If members of the management committee or volunteers see or hear anything which causes them to suspect that a child is being abused by someone within Blackburn Community Sports Club they should discuss the situation immediately with one of the following:

- The chairperson or other member of the Management Committee
- A member of paid staff
- A named/designated person identified as giving support to the scheme in the area of child protection

Responding to concerns about a child

The need for medical attention

Any child found to be suffering from an injury which seems to need immediate medical attention should be taken, with his or her parent, to a hospital Accident and Emergency Department without delay. It is essential that anxiety about how an injury was caused does not get in the way of recognising the need for a child to receive medical treatment.

Volunteers' concerns about the safety of a child

Volunteers as members of the public have a duty to protect the welfare of the children in the family they support. An understanding of the broad framework underpinning work with children and families and child protection should part of the volunteer's training and induction in preparation to ensure volunteers are aware of:

- The signs of abuse
- The appropriate procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child

- The support available to themselves
- Children's developmental needs

Volunteers who in the course of their work with Blackburn Community Sports Club have a concern about the safety of a child should immediately contact the designated person within the organisation. If this person is not available they should contact one of the schemes other named contacts or the chairperson.

Remember: Concerns about the safety of a child or Young Person should always be shared.

Important telephone Numbers for the Blackburn with Darwen Area

Designated Child Welfare Person within the Scheme (Sue Hamer 01254 721308 or 07970474633)

Social Services (Office Hours) 01254 583328 (Customer Liaison Officer)

Social Services (Out of Office Hours Emergency Duty Team) 01254 587547(Social Worker)

Police 01254 51212

If a member of the scheme wishes to informally discuss any concerns with someone within the Social Services they can either contact someone on any of the above numbers or during office hours, Ian Wilkins, Independent Reviewing Officer (Social Services) on 01254 587343 or the switch board 01254 583328

Name of Person who drew up this Policy and Procedures.

Nigel Dixon (Blackburn Community Sports Club Trustee)

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