

COCKLE ISLAND BOAT CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

As defined in the Children's (NI) Order 1995, for the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of eighteen should be considered as a child.

It is the policy of Cockle Island Boat Club (the club) to safeguard children and young people taking part in boating from physical, sexual or emotional harm. The club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, children participating in club activities do so in a safe environment. We recognise that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, whatever their age, gender, disability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have a right to protection from abuse.

The club actively seeks to:

Create a safe and welcoming environment, both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence.

Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.

Ensure that the club organised training and events are run to the highest possible safety standards.

Be prepared to review its ways of working to incorporate best practice.

We will:

Treat all children with respect and celebrate their achievements.

Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse.

This policy relates to all members. It will be kept under periodic review, at least once a year. All relevant concerns, allegations, complaints and their outcome should be notified to the Club Child Protection Officer.

The Club Child Protection Officer is:

Gemma McCoubrey mobile 07738237294

Good Practice

All members of the Club should follow the good practice guidelines attached.
(Appendix A).

Those working with young people should be aware of the guidance on recognising abuse. (Appendix B).

The Club will seek written consent from the child and their parents/carers before taking photos or video at an event or training session or publishing such images. Parents and spectators should be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state their purpose for photography/filming. If the Club publishes images of children, no identifying information other than names will be included. Any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography or the inappropriate use of images should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Any Member or Associate of the Club or visitor to the Club failing to comply with the Child Protection Policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Signature:

Date: 9 April 2025

Gemma McCoubrey

Club Position:

Review date: 9 April 2026

Safeguarding Officer

Appendix A

Good Practice Guidelines

This guide only covers the essential points of good practice when working with children and young people.

Avoid spending any significant time working with children in isolation.

Do not take children alone in a car, however short the journey.

Do not take children to your home as part of your organisation's activity.

Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure that they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the child's parents.

Design training programmes that are within the ability of the individual child.

If a child is having difficulty with a wetsuit or buoyancy aid, ask them to ask a friend to help if at all possible.

If you do have to help a child, make sure you are in full view of others, preferably another adult.

You should never:

engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.

allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.

allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged or use such language yourself when with children.

make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.

fail to respond to an allegation made by a child.

do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child (where possible) and their parents/carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents

should be fully informed. In such situations it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Appendix B

What is child abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children causing physical harm:

by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning.

giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.

attempting to suffocate or drown children.

in sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Neglect is 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 involve a parent or carer failing to:

provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.

protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.

ensure adequate supervision.

ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

neglect in a sailing situation might occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves an individual forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, to meet their own sexual needs.

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, unloved or inadequate.

not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

imposing expectations which are beyond the child's age or developmental capability.

overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning.

preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

the exploitation or corruption of children.

emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

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

Recognising Abuse

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

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

sexually explicit language or actions.

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

the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.

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

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

an unexpected reaction to normal physical contact.

difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

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

If you are concerned

If there are concerns about sexual abuse or violence in the home, talking to the parents or carers might put the child at greater risk. If you cannot talk to the parents/carers, consult your Club Child Protection Officer or the person in charge. It is this person's responsibility to make the decision to contact Children's Social Care Services or the Police. It is NOT their responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, BUT it is their responsibility to act on your concerns.

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