

FARNHAM TRIATHLON CLUB

Farnham Tri Club Safeguarding Policy and procedures

This policy is based on principles which underpin our commitment to Safeguarding. This policy should be read alongside the British Triathlon Safeguarding and Protecting children policy.

- The safety and well being of children and young people is paramount
- Children and young people have a right to protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation (article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Children and young people have the right to be protected from discrimination and to be valued as individuals
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

This policy is based on key legislation and guidance including the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.

Working Together 2013 defines safeguarding as

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

This policy commits Farnham Tri Club to safeguarding in all these respects.

All activity within Farnham Tri Club should consider and put measures in place to safeguard children and young people. However, during the course of our work situations may arise that raise concern regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. In response to these situations it may be necessary for a referral to be made to a children's social care department who may need to take action to ensure the child or young person's protection. This is referred to as Child Protection and is part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Child protection is the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are believed to be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the child, and places a duty on Local Authorities to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. (Section 47 of the Children Act 1989)

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What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

A child protection issue may come to the notice of a coach or club member in several ways:

- A child may make a direct allegation or disclose abuse
- A child may make a comment that seems to suggest abuse
- A child may have bruises or marks
- A child's behaviour may suggest the possibility of abuse
- Something in an adult's behaviour may suggest that they are not affording appropriate care for a child

No coach or club member should try to investigate whether or not a child has been abused; this responsibility lies with children's social care departments and the police. All concerns must be taken to the Welfare officer for discussion and agreement about what steps will be taken and by whom.

All child protection concerns must be reported in the first instance to the club Welfare officer who will then speak to the British Triathlon Child Protection Officer or in the case where there is serious concern, to a children's social care department, or to the police, on the same day.

If a child makes a direct allegation or disclosure, the coach or club member should:

1. Let the child speak but should not ask any prompting or leading questions (such as asking "did this happen last night?"). The general rule is to ask only questions that are necessary to clarify whether the child is alleging that abuse has taken place. (Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions)
2. Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for disabled children and for children whose preferred language is not English.
3. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing in talking to you, but avoid interrupting a child who is freely recalling events.
4. Listen carefully; remembering that children may not necessarily have the vocabulary to explain clearly what it is that distresses them.
5. Allow the child to speak for as long as they wish; if the child is clearly alleging abuse this does not mean that you need to tell the child not to say any more.

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6. Never promise a child, young person or adult, that an allegation of abuse can be kept secret. When an abusive or exploitative relationship exists, a coach or club member cannot agree to keep this secret.
7. Record what the child has said, including any times or dates mentioned, and details of any significant marks or behaviour that were observed. Also note the names of any witnesses to what has been said or observed.
8. Distinguish your own opinion from the facts. Any opinion you write about the child presenting in a certain manner, for example, should be explained with evidence of what leads you to forming this opinion.
9. Never try to question a person who a child has made a clear allegation about.
10. Always take a child seriously if they make an allegation about another child or sibling. This does not necessarily mean that you accept everything the child has said as fact, but all concerns require further enquiries to be made and it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place.
11. Explain to the child what you have to do next and who you are going to speak to.
12. As soon as possible after the receipt of an allegation or disclosure the coach or club member must share the information with the Welfare officer. A discussion should agree the next steps and decide whether it is in the best interests of the child to inform the parent/s of the allegation made.

In exceptional circumstances, when it is judged that the child or young person is in immediate danger, the Welfare officer should take steps to keep them safe until appropriate action can be taken by children's social care or the police.

In general, seek to discuss your concerns with the child, as appropriate to their age and understanding, and with their parent/s and seek agreement to making a referral to children's social care UNLESS you consider such a discussion would place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

In circumstances where a child discloses abuse by a parent or carer, a duty social worker in children's social care can be contacted for advice on whether Farnham Tri Club should inform the parent/s that a child protection referral is to be made

Where there are concerns that a child has been (or may be at risk of being) harmed and a parent refuses to agree to a referral being made to children's social care, the parent/s should be informed that the referral will still be made in line with the responsibility of the coach and organisation to act in the best interests of the child.

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All decisions and outcomes relating to sharing information and seeking consent to a referral being made should be fully recorded with an explanation as to how/why decisions have been reached.

Definitions and Impact of Abuse

Definitions (as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013)

Definition of a child

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Where the term 'child' is used within this policy, it includes all children and young people up to the age of 18. Any club member, within Farnham Tri Club, under the age of 18 is also included in the definition of a child.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Those who perpetrate abuse are not just strangers, but can include parents, carers, family members, friends, people in positions of trust and authority and other children or young people.

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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

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as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

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 occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

The potential for abuse in the modern world of technology

The internet is integral to the lives of children of all ages. It opens up new opportunities and is now an essential part of their every day world whether they are using it for homework, to talk and share materials with their friends or for a multitude of other uses that are legitimate and beneficial in so many ways. But where children go then child sex offenders will follow – whether in the real or virtual world. (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, CEOP)

Children and young people using social networking sites can, unwittingly, post details about themselves on a website that makes it possible for others to identify or locate their school or home address. Young people can be enticed into sexual activity (posting indecent photographs of

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themselves on the internet or engaging in sexual acts via a webcam). Adults may pose as other young people, and in the worse case scenario, may get access to and be able to abuse young victims.

A large proportion of young people own a personal mobile phone and/or a personal email account. A mobile phone can offer some level of safety, as young people can keep in touch with parents or contact someone in an emergency. However, young people can also put themselves at risk of being subjected to abusive behaviour (especially cyber - bullying by peers) when they share their mobile number or email details.

The Impact of abuse and neglect

The sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life. Difficulties may extend into adulthood: the experience of long-term abuse may lead to difficulties in forming or sustaining close relationships, establishing oneself in the workforce and to extra difficulties in developing the attitudes and skills needed to be an effective parent.

It is not only the stressful events of abuse that have an impact, 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 actual significant harm.

For every child or family, there may be factors that aggravate the harm caused to the child, and those that protect against harm. Relevant factors include the individual child's means of coping and adapting, support from a family and social network, and the impact of any interventions. The effects on a child are also influenced by the quality of the family environment at the time of abuse, and subsequent life events. An important point, sometimes overlooked, is that the way in which professionals respond has a significant bearing on subsequent outcomes.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or – at the extreme – death. Harm may be caused to children both by the abuse itself, and by the abuse taking place in a wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, emotional and behaviour problems, and educational difficulties.

Emotional Abuse

There is increasing evidence of the adverse long-term consequences for children's development where they have been subject to sustained emotional abuse. Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially

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damaging in infancy. Underlying emotional abuse may be as important, if not more so, than other more visible forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Disturbed behaviour including self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, sadness, depression and a loss of self-esteem, have all been linked to sexual abuse. Its adverse effects may endure into adulthood. The severity of impact on a child is believed to increase the longer the abuse continues, the more extensive the abuse, and the older the child. A number of features of sexual abuse have also been linked with severity of impact, including the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. A child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse, once recognised or disclosed, is strengthened by the support of a non-abusive adult who believes the child, helps the child understand the abuse, and is able to offer help and protection.

A proportion of adults who sexually abuse children have themselves been sexually abused as children. They may also have been exposed as children to domestic violence and discontinuity of care. However, it would be quite wrong to suggest that most children who are sexually abused will inevitably go on to become abusers themselves.

Neglect

Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.