



ARUN YOUTH AQUA CENTRE GUIDELINE

REF	G01	PAGE 1 of 6
TITLE	CHILD PROTECTION	
ISSUE DATE	5 th MAY 2007	Issue Number 2
APPROVED BY	R. Elliman	Chairman Management Committee
SIGNATURE		

1. PURPOSE

This guideline responds to the AYAC Policy on Child Protection.

2. SCOPE

This guideline covers the protection of children from child abuse and the protection of adult helpers from being in a situation where allegations of child abuse cannot be refuted whilst operating at the Centre. The guideline does not apply to situations where the adult helper is the legal guardian of the child unless another adult is concerned or is informed of a potential child abuse situation.

3. DEFINITIONS

Adult Helpers All adult personnel who act as adult helpers in any capacity (including Senior Instructors and members of the Management Committee) at the Centre.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Management Committee will ensure that all adult helpers are aware of this guideline.

Adult Helpers also have a responsibility to ensure that ANY suspected case of child abuse whether arising from the activities at the Centre or not are advised to the appropriate authorities.

5. GUIDELINE

1. Nothing in this guideline must prevent appropriate action being taken to ensure the safety of the child arising from any event e.g. accident, as a consequence of an existing medical condition etc.
2. All adult helpers must be familiar with the contents of Appendix I of this guideline.
3. Under normal circumstances, no adult should assist a child of the opposite gender in dressing or undressing, however if a child is brought ashore, is cold and it is necessary to remove clothing (wet suits et al), the permission of the child must be sought and only that help absolutely required given. A note should be included within the accident book.
4. Adults should always be conscious whilst assisting children with dressing or undressing including external items e.g. buoyancy aids / trapeze harnesses / spray decks that their actions could be misinterpreted. Carry out these activities with others present in an open way, if possible in an outside



G01

5th MAY 2007

CHILD PROTECTION

Page 2 of 6

5. If a one to one debrief is being carried out ensure another adult is aware that it is taking place, ensure that you are positioned such that the child is closest to the exit and that their exit is not obstructed. Do not attempt a one to one with a child of the opposite gender.
6. As an adult in a dinghy you are particularly vulnerable to allegations of abuse and generally the Senior Instructor will try and ensure that least two children are present. Basically use common sense and discuss “neutral topics” and maintain an awareness of their and your vulnerability
7. An adult who is physically assisting a child e.g. entering or leaving a canoe/sailing dinghy/safety boat must be open with what they are doing and have talked to the child on how they will be helping them. Always try and ensure there are others in the vicinity (children or adults). Listen carefully to any complaint or allegation by a child and show that you are taking them seriously. DO NOT promise that you can keep the information secret, you cannot.
8. The Centre is generally a very open area with few hiding places where child abuse can take place, the changing rooms and the area to the rear of the safety boat shed are the most likely, take note of the guidelines and be watchful.
9. Do not accompany a child away from the Centre, i.e. the park, alone and without informing another adult. If a child wishes to attend the toilet and there are no other personnel present, do not enter the toilet alone with the child.
10. Apply common sense!



APPENDIX I

CHILD PROTECTION

(Written in conjunction with the NSPCC and abstracted from RYA G14/93)

It is now widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. All children have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse and discrimination and to be treated equally regardless of age, gender, racial origin, culture, religious belief, language, disability or sexual identity.

Child abuse, and particularly child sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand those feelings and not allow them to interfere with your professional judgement.

The sailing instructor, particularly if working in a centre where children attend on a regular, sessional basis, may become an important link in identifying a case where a child needs protection. Child abuse may come to light in a number of ways:

- i. a child may tell you what has happened to them;
- ii. from a third party (for example, another child);
- iii. through the child's behaviour;
- iv. a suspicious, unexplained injury to the child.

These notes are intended to provide a guide to help you identify signs of possible abuse and know what action to take in such cases.

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical abuse:

This is where adults physically hurt or injure children. Hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison is classified as physical abuse. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category.

Sexual abuse:

Girls and boys are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This might be full sexual inter-course, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, or fondling. Showing children pornographic magazines or videos is also a form of sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse:

Persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make the child very nervous and withdrawn.

Neglect:

This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs, like food or warm clothing. Children might also be constantly left alone unsupervised. Sometimes adults fail to, or refuse to, give their children love and affection. This is emotional neglect.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child of any age. The effects can be so damaging that they may follow an individual into adulthood.

Identifying signs of possible abuse



Recognising abuse is not easy, even for individuals who have experience of working with child abuse. Most children will receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may well be other reasons for these factors other than abuse, but any concern should be immediately discussed with a senior colleague to assess the situation.

Warning signs which may alert instructors to the possibility of abuse can include:

- i. unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the child, particularly if these are parts of the body not normally injured in accidents
- ii. an injury which a parent or carer tries to hide, or for, which they might have given different explanations
- iii. changes in behaviour such as the child suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive, or displaying severe tantrums loss of weight without a medical explanation
- iv. an inappropriately dressed or ill-kept child who may also be dirty
- v. sexually explicit behaviour, for instance playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age
- vi. continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- vii. running away from home, attempted suicides, self-inflicted injuries
- viii. a lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to the child
- ix. disturbed sleep, nightmares and enuresis, particularly if a child has previously been dry
- x. eating problems, including over-eating or loss of appetite.

Remember, the above signs do not necessarily mean that a child has been abused. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, however, you must act. Do not assume that someone else will help the child; they might not.

Listening to the child

Remember that the child's welfare is paramount, and this must be the most important consideration.

Listen carefully to any complaint or allegation by the child, and tell and show the child that you are taking them seriously.

If a child's behaviour or your observations give rise to concern, then talk to the child sensitively to find out if there is anything worrying them.

Keep questions to a minimum, but make sure you are absolutely clear about what a child has said so that you can pass on this information to professionals who are trained and experienced in investigating possible child abuse.

Acknowledge how difficult and painful it must have been for them to confide in you and reassure the child, stressing that they are never to blame.

Stay calm; don't take hasty or inappropriate action.

Don't make promises which you may not be able to keep.



Don't take sole responsibility; consult a Senior Instructor so that together you can begin to protect the child, and also so that you can get some support for yourself in what could be a difficult situation.

As soon as possible after talking with the child, make a written record of what the child said, how they were behaving, and what YOU did in response. These Records will be kept in a confidential area.

Talking to parents and carers

It is possible that a relationship with parents and carers will have been established and as a general principle it is important to be open and honest when dealing with them.

There may be circumstances, however, when it is not appropriate for parents to be informed immediately of the concerns you have, as this may prejudice any investigation and may place the child at even greater risk.

Always discuss your concerns first with a Senior Instructor; contact with parents could be delayed until you have sought advice from one of the professional agencies who have been notified (see below).

Responding to child abuse: what to do if you are concerned

Remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to take action, however small your concern.

Inform the Senior Instructor of the session who will take responsibility for seeking any additional advice and for contacting the local Social Services Department, the Police or the NSPCC, who are trained to deal with such situations and have the necessary legal power to protect the child.

If no Senior Instructor or members of the Centre's Management Committee are available, or concerns for the child remain, then you must contact the local Social Services Department, the Police or the NSPCC yourself. You do not have to give your name, although this will be helpful to the agency making enquiries into the matter and who may need to talk to you again.

The agency receiving your referral will take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate investigations are undertaken and the child protected.

Allegations of abuse against members of staff

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur in other settings. The following notes contain guidance on recruitment and what to do if there are concerns that a member of staff is abusing a child.

Recruitment (Paid Staff and Volunteers):

Supervision and Monitoring

All applicants for work, whether paid staff or volunteers, should be subject to scrutiny. Application forms should be designed to elicit information about the applicant's past career (requiring explanations for any gaps) and to establish any criminal record.

Although positive vetting is not specifically recommended, applicants should signify their consent to checks being made with police and social services and should provide references, preferably including at least one regarding previous work with children. References must always be taken up.



G01

5th MAY 2007

CHILD PROTECTION

Page 6 of 6

The Department of Health operates a consultancy service on an advisory basis whereby local authorities and voluntary agencies are able to check on the suitability of those proposing to work with children.

The Department of Education and Science also has a “List 99” which contains information about people whom the Secretary of State for Education and Science has adjudged to be a risk if seeking subsequent employment which will involve contact with children. Further advice about these two systems can be obtained from your local Social Services Department and Education Department.

It is important for Principals to review the operation of their establishments to minimise the situations where any adult is left alone with a child (or group of very young children).

What to do if there are allegations of abuse against a member of staff

Again, remember it is the child’s welfare which must be of paramount importance.

Follow the guidelines in the section dealing with “Listening to the Child”.

Refer the matter to the Senior Instructor so that the appropriate child protection procedures can be followed. The Senior Instructor must inform the social services department, the police or the NSPCC.

If your concern is about a Senior Instructor, then seek advice from a member of the Management Committee or other Senior Instructor who should ensure that the child protection procedures are implemented and the social services department, the police or the NSPCC are informed.

It is important to understand that anyone reporting a case of child abuse, particularly by a colleague, may undergo a very high degree of stress, including feelings of guilt for having reported the matter. It is therefore very important to ensure that appropriate counseling and support is available for staff in such a situation.