

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Ulster Gliding Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Northern Ireland.

Participation for children shall be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere where the child's welfare is paramount. The club recognises that all children have the right to protection from abuse and will ensure that all instances of inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with. Standards of behaviour for leaders and children are considered to be as important as the standards set for performance in the sport. The club's aim of achieving a high standard of excellence also extends to personal conduct.

The Ulster Gliding Club shall work closely with our Governing Body, The British Gliding Association, to ensure that best practice is followed by this club. In order to promote the best practice in children's sport, this club shall comply with the guidelines of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Northern Ireland as set out in Section 2.7 of that publication which require that:

The club shall adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Northern Ireland as an integral part of its policy on children in the club

The club shall have its Articles of Association approved and adopted by the club's members at an AGM or EGM

The club shall permit all members over 16 years of age to vote, where possible. One parent / guardian should have one vote for all their children under 16 years of age, where relevant

The club shall ensure that the Club Management Committee is elected or endorsed by registered club members at each AGM

The club shall adopt and consistently apply a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting Sports Leaders

The club shall clearly define the role of committee members, all other Sports Leaders and parents/guardians

The club shall appoint at least one Children's Officer as outlined in the Code.

The club shall designate the Club Chairperson to provide liaison with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse. Any such reports should be made according to the procedures outlined in the Code.

The club shall ensure best practice is applied throughout the club by disseminating its code of conduct, including the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in operation within the club to all its members. The club's code of conduct shall be posted at all facilities used by the club

The club shall have in place, procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or Sports Leader or other members of the club.

The club shall ensure that relevant Sports Leaders report to the Club Management Committee on a regular basis

The club shall encourage regular turnover of committee membership while ensuring adequate continuity and experience

The club shall develop effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents

The club shall ensure that any unusual activity (high rate of dropout, transfers, etc.) is checked out and reported by the Club Chairperson to the Governing Body of Sport

The club shall ensure that all club members are given adequate notice of AGMs and other meetings

The club shall ensure that all minutes of all meetings (AGMs, EGMs and Committee) are recorded and safely filed

Guidelines for parents/guardians

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children. They should :-

- Appraise themselves of the club's policies and rules
- Insist that their children abide by the rules and requirements of the club
- Liaise with the instructors in relation to all requirements for their child's safety
- Advise the instructors of any medical conditions that their children may have
- Consider joining the club under the family membership scheme

Guidelines for Members

A) Protecting children from abuse

The club recognises that abusers have difficulty operating in a well run club with good quality management and training. To minimise the risks to children the club shall :-

- Plan the organisation's operations to minimise the situations where abuse can occur.
- Appoint and train a member of the club as Children's officer.
- Train all relevant persons in the prevention of child abuse
- Issue guidelines on how to deal with abuse and follow established procedures
- Ensure children's complaints are heard

Members can help in minimising opportunities for abuse and can help protect themselves against allegations by the use of good practice which includes :-

- Minimising time spent alone with children, except for essential training purposes
- Not taking children alone in a car
- Not taking children to your home
(Where these situations are unavoidable ensure they only occur with the authority of the child's parents or a responsible person within the Club)
- Not allowing children to use inappropriate language
- Not making suggestive comments to a child
- Not doing things of a personal nature for children
- Not engaging in physical or sexually provocative games
- Not engaging in inappropriate touching
- Always acting upon allegations made by a child

B) Action if a child complains he/she is being abused

If a member receives a complaint of abuse from a child it is essential that appropriate action is taken and this will include :-

- Stay calm and ensure that the child is safe and feels secure
- Consider the environment carefully if recording information
- Tell the child that you are taking the complaint seriously
- Be honest; explain that you will have to tell somebody else, emphasising that this will be on a need to know basis
- Document what the child has said as soon as possible
- Record basic information - (do not start an investigation)
- Being aware that unnecessary interviews with a child may prejudice a police inquiry
- Ensure that another adult is present
- Avoid touching the child.
- Avoid any rush into actions

Avoid making promises you cannot keep
Avoid inappropriate questions
Avoid taking sole responsibility
Report the complaint to the club's Children's Officer

C) Recognising abuse

This section explains briefly what child abuse is, how to recognise it and what to do.

(i) What is child abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults. This takes many forms including :-

Physical abuse - Physical abuse occurs where adults or other children:

Physically hurt or injure children
Give children noxious substances (e.g. alcohol/drugs)

Neglect - Neglect includes situations in which adults:

Fail to meet a child's physical needs
Consistently leave children alone or unsupervised
Fail to give children affection or attention
Fail to ensure children are safe or expose them to unnecessary cold or risk of injury

Sexual abuse - Children are sexually abused when adults or children use them to meet their own sexual needs; examples:

Unlawful intercourse
Inappropriate touching
Taking pornographic photographs
Mental Cruelty - This can take place if children are:
Taunted or unnecessarily shouted at
Subjected to undue criticism
Put under unreasonable pressure to perform

Bullying - Bullying may be carried out by adults or by other children:

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time
Any child can be a victim of bullying
More usual victims are shy, sensitive, anxious and insecure

(ii) How would I recognise if a child is being abused?

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused. However, typical symptoms would include:

Unexplained or suspicious injuries
Sexually explicit language or actions
A sudden change in behaviour
The child describes an abusive act
The child loses weight or becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt
The child has a general distrust and avoidance of adults
An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact

Although a child may be displaying some or all of these signs, it does not necessarily mean the child is being abused.

(iii) What should I do if I have concerns?

You should voice your concerns immediately to the Club's Children's officer.

Allegations of abuse

In the event that a concern about or a complaint against a committee member or Sports Leader or other member of the club is reported to the Statutory Authorities, that individual :-

Should stand aside, while the matter is being examined.

Should co-operate with the Statutory Authorities making the investigations.

The individual should be invited to resume full duties immediately if s/he is vindicated

A lot of this looks like the Safeguarding policy do we need Both?