

Safeguarding policy statement

Note: The terms 'child' and 'young person' describe any person under the age of 18. References to 'parents' should be read as parents and carers inclusively

Contact details

In a safeguarding emergency, if a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, call 999

- **West Sussex Children Social Care Support**
 - 01403 229900 office hours Monday to Friday
 - 033 022 26664 out of hours emergency duty team
 - 07711 769657 emergency safeguarding concerns

- **NSPCC**
 - 0808 800 5000 NSPCC helpline
 - 0800 1111 Childline (for under 18's)

- **Worthing Fencing Club**
 - Jo Banks, Welfare Officer
 - Email: welfare@worthingfencingclub.org.uk
07500 600951

 - Hazel Jones, Deputy Welfare Officer
 - Email: welfare@worthingfencingclub.org.uk
07506 524554

 - Steve Jones, Club Chair
 - Email: welfare@worthingfencingclub.org.uk
07930 413143

Club statement

Everyone who participates in Worthing Fencing Club is entitled to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. The club has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that when given responsibility for young people, coaches and volunteers provide the highest standard of care.

Worthing Fencing Club is committed to implementing and reviewing policies to ensure that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This includes following procedures set down by sports governing bodies and local and national authorities; ensuring any concerns about welfare are reported to the correct authorities; and promote good practice within the club so that staff and volunteers are confident about making informed choices to specific protection issues.

Our Policy

Worthing Fencing Club acknowledges the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport at Worthing Fencing Club in a safe and child-centred environment
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in fencing or outside of the activity.

We acknowledge that some children, including disabled children or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Worthing Fencing Club employees and volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the local safeguarding partnership, UK Sport and/or home country sports councils and the British Fencing Association
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

This policy was last reviewed on 12/07/2022



Signed

Promoting good practice

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in fencing everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in fencing to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

Good practice

All personnel are expected to adhere to the following principles and action:

- Work in an open environment, avoiding private and unobserved situations and encouraging open communication

- Make fencing fun and enjoyable; promoting fairness and dealing with bullying
- Treat all young people equally with respect and dignity
- Put the welfare of young people first, above winning and competition success
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person.
- Involve parents & carers wherever possible (e.g. paired supervision in changing rooms)
- Request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars
- Gain written consent for any significant travel (e.g. overnight stays for competition)
- Ensure that mixed teams venturing outside the club are accompanied by male and female staff members
- Ensure adults do not enter young people's changing rooms or lodgings at outside events
- Be an excellent role model, and ensure behaviour is appropriate in front of young people
- Give constructive and helpful feedback instead of negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people, and do not jeopardise those in favour of club or personal achievements. Progress and training must be in partnership with young people, not forced on them against their will
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with treatment given

Poor practice

The following should be regarded as poor practice and avoided by personnel:

- Spending unnecessary time alone with young people, away from others
- Taking young people on car journeys, however short
- Taking young people to your home where they are alone with you
- Sharing a room with young people
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allowing inappropriate use of language by young people to go unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to young people
- Bullying or making a young person cry as a form of control
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or unacted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature a young person can do for themselves
- Not gaining parental consent and the consent of the young person when certain situations (e.g. transporting a child by car) are impossible to avoid
- Not reporting any incident where a young person is hurt, appears distressed, mistakes or misjudges something you have done, or demonstrates inappropriate behaviour towards yourself or other members of the club

Child abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various

factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

- Physical Abuse is where a young person is physically hurt or injured through force, or encouraged to engage in physically harmful activities or behaviours
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting effects on the individual and their emotional development. This can include bullying, but also more subtle forms of criticism designed to undermine the self-worth of a young person, including the use of social media
- Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the basic physical and psychological needs of a young person, to the extent where their health and development can be seriously impaired. Neglect in sport can include the failure of a coach to keep an athlete safe and free from injury
- Sexual abuse occurs when adults use children to meet their sexual needs. This can include direct physical contact, but also inappropriate exposure to sexual material or behaviour intended to manipulate a young person

Indicators

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse is taking place, or has occurred. The following signs may indicate that concern is warranted:

- Unexplained injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns; particularly if situated on a body part not usually prone to such injuries
- Injuries for which explanations appear inconsistent
- A young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- A young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of another young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (withdrawal, distress, anger)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults
- Difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with others
- Displaying variations in eating patterns (loss of appetite, over-eating)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Poor personal hygiene and tidiness
- Behavioural changes from bullying (reduced concentration, emotional upheaval, drop-off in performance, social withdrawal, loss of money or possessions, physical complaints to avoid training)

This list is not exhaustive. The presence of one or more of these factors is not proof abuse is occurring, and it is not the role of Worthing Fencing Club to decide this. However, it is the responsibility of members of the club to act on concerns, whether this is to escalate to a member of the committee, or with one of the designated contacts listed at the top of this document.

Use of photographic/recording equipment

All members have the options to allow or disallow the photographic images of their children as part of club promotional activities. The details and agreement are listed in the Worthing Fencing Club membership form and privacy policy documents.

- Parents will be made aware if video or recording equipment will be used by coaching staff as a training aid
- Parents and carers seeking to obtain photographs/video of their child with other young people must obtain permission from the child's parents to do so. The membership register can be checked to see which parents have expressly requested their child is **not** included in photographs
- For events where other external visitors, coaches and competitors are present, a policy statement will be issued at the beginning of the competition

Responding to allegations and suspicions

It is the responsibility of Worthing Fencing Club to act on any concerns through contacting the appropriate authorities. It is then the responsibility of the official agencies to make inquiries and undertake necessary action. This applies to allegations and suspicions occurring within Worthing Fencing Club and externally.

When dealing with an allegation or suspicion of abuse

- Stay calm
- Reassure the child they were right to come forward and reassure them they are not to blame
- Listen to them and take what they say seriously
- Keep questions to a minimum. Limit questioning to obtain an accurate understanding of the situation and do not suggest or lead the child
- Inform the child that you will need to inform someone else about what they have said. This is necessary to stop the abuse continuing
- Call the emergency services if the child is in imminent danger or they need medical attention
- Record the information
- Report the incident to the club Welfare Officer
- If unsure, consult one of the contact numbers at the top of this document

Recording information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- Their home address and telephone number
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their concern, or relating a concern from someone else
- Nature of the allegation: dates, times and other relevant information
- Descriptions of any physical injuries or indirect signs (e.g. behavioural changes)
- Details of any witnesses to the incident
- The child's account of what happened to them
- Has the child's parents been contacted, and what was said?
- Any other people consulted?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

Reporting information

All suspicions and allegations *must* be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Worthing Fencing Club expects staff and members to discuss any concerns over child welfare to the person in charge, and to subsequently check that appropriate action has been taken.

- Appointed Club Welfare Officer (Jo Banks)
- If unavailable, any deputy welfare officer (Steve Jones, Hazel Jones)
- If unavailable, any of the appointed coaching staff (Lewis McInley)

If no-one from the club is immediately available, consult the contact details at the top of this document, but ensure that the Welfare Officer is copied on correspondence.

The above applies if allegations are made after the event, such as after a sporting competition.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Welfare Officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- British Fencing Welfare Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)
- Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Action

Worthing Fencing Club will refer the matter to the relevant social services contact.

- Following advice from social services, the parent or carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible
- The committee will convene with the Welfare Officer to discuss the best course of action
- The Club Welfare Officer will notify the relevant sport governing body
- Any internal disciplinary proceedings or remedial action within the club's authority will be agreed upon

Recruiting staff to work with children

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

Worthing Fencing Club requires:

- All staff working with children to undergo a DBS check
- Coaches and Welfare Officers to undertake the relevant child protection training and qualification
- Maintain current knowledge in child protection through requalification and CPD offered via the BFA
- Coaches to have a professionally-recognised coaching qualification and current first aid qualification
- All members to agree with the relevant section of the 'code of conduct', available on the website