





## British Fencing

British Fencing would like to thank the Child Protection in Sport Unit staff as well as all the other members who have generously allowed British Fencing open access to their Policies and Procedures which greatly assisted in the production of this document.

Specific thanks must go to Anne Tiivas, British Gymnastics, Rugby Football Union, England & Wales Cricket Board.



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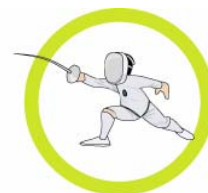
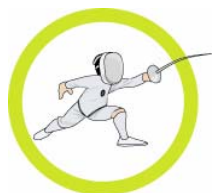
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## Foreword

The Policy is based upon the following fundamental principles:

- The Children Act defines a child or young person as anyone under 18 years of age
- All young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, gender, disability, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation have a right to be protected from abuse.
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report it
- The welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and all concerns and allegations of potential poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- The best practice guidance and procedures apply equally in the protection of vulnerable adults, although different legislation is applied.
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the common law of confidentiality.

All participants in our sport have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. The promotion of good practice will reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring.

In British Fencing we believe that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse. Everyone in fencing - administrator, club official, coach, parent, friend, children themselves, everyone - can help.

Abuse can occur anywhere there are children - at home, at school, in the park, at the club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone in British Fencing has a part to play in looking after the children with whom we are working. This is both a moral and a legal obligation. The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has the care of children should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare."

**These child protection procedures stem from the following principles:**

- the child's welfare is paramount
- all children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- British Fencing will take seriously all suspicions and allegations of abuse and





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- respond swiftly and appropriately.
- British Fencing recognises that working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of the children and is committed to working together with Statutory Agencies/Local Safeguarding Children Board and to comply with procedures.
- British Fencing recognise the statutory responsibility of Social Service Departments to ensure the welfare of children
- Adults working with children are also provided with best practice guidance information and training to enable them to fulfil their responsibility to provide a safe environment for all.

**It is essential that all clubs, regions and affiliated bodies require staff, coaches, officials, administrators, parents and participants to adopt and abide by the British Fencing Association's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.**

**All affiliated clubs shall participate in and take all reasonable steps to comply with the procedures of the Criminal Records Bureau/Scottish Criminal Records Office/Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (NI) and its checking services in regard to recruitment of staff or volunteers to work with children and young people. All complaints about poor practice/child abuse will be dealt with fairly and confidentially.**

**All members of affiliated clubs shall participate in and comply with the procedures of the Criminal Records Bureau/Scottish Criminal Records Office Pre-Employment Consultancy Service and its checking services in regard to Child Protection matters and/or any subsequent procedures by the BFA.**

We know that if the procedures are to help to protect children, everyone involved in fencing needs to see and discuss them: a full version is available from BF web-site. We are, therefore, asking regional, county and club secretaries to make sure that they are widely distributed and discussed at club executive and general meetings.

**Finally, please remember British Fencing will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a child is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.**

**Strict confidentiality will be upheld with regard to any person involved in disciplinary proceedings unless there is an overriding obligation in the interests of child safety or enforcement to share information with other interested parties**





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**Terminology.** The term “British Fencing” is used as a generic term and includes all the Home Countries. In the context of this resource the words “children” or “child” or the term “young people” are used to describe children and young people under the age of



18 and the term “parents” is used as a generic term to represent all parents, carers and guardians.

**NB** Whenever “BF membership” is used in this document it covers all home country members who are also members of British Fencing by being members of their own organisations.



In Scotland, ‘Social Services’ should read as ‘Social Work Department’ and ‘Welfare Officers’ are known as ‘Child Protection Co-ordinators’.

NB Sample forms are available at the end of this document which can be adapted or personalised for use by all British Fencing Organisations



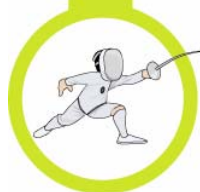
**British Fencing recognises its responsibilities and will use its best efforts to promote good practice to protect children and reduce risk to our fencers, volunteers, officials and coaches.**







# POLICY



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## 1.0 POLICY



### 1.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of British Fencing (BF) and of every adult working within British Fencing, whether as a professional or volunteer, to ensure that all young people and vulnerable adults who participate in fencing do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.

British Fencing:

- respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of all participants
- adopt good practice in recruitment, training and supervision of all employees and volunteers
- require all staff/volunteers and members and clubs to adopt and abide by the British Fencing Codes of Ethics and Conduct and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- respond to any allegations and concerns appropriately, following BF's complaints procedure and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.

### 1.2 GUIDANCE & LEGISLATION

The guidance given in the procedures reflect the framework outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Health document "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006", which applies to England and Wales. In Northern Ireland (NI) the guidance is based on the Department of Health Social Services & Public Safety's document "Co-operating to Safeguard Children 2003" and in Scotland, guidelines are set by SportScotland, the Executive Agency for Sports in Scotland. The following legislation is core to all procedures within the policy.

The Children's Act 1989 and The Children's Act 2004

The Children (NI) Order 1995

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

The Police Act 1997

The Protection of Children Act 1999

The Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000





The Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995  
The Human Rights Act 1998  
The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child  
The Data Protection Act 1994 & 1998



### 1.3 IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The purpose of the British Fencing Child Protection Implementation Plan is to safeguard the welfare of the participants in fencing. The Implementation plan sets out how British Fencing will work towards the “Standards for Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport”, developed by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit and endorsed by Sport England and the Sports Minister. Allowing for legislative differences in the Home Countries, this sets out a framework for British Fencing and its affiliated bodies.

### 1.4 ACTIONS TAKEN BY BRITISH FENCING

British Fencing has appointed a National Child Protection Officer. The Home Countries have a designated person in place with a responsibility for child protection.

British Fencing has established a management group to monitor, review and advise on all child protection issues.

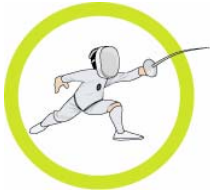
British Fencing has established a semi-independent Case Management group, which has members from Social Services, Legal, Medical and Educational backgrounds, to ensure all child protection related incidents are appropriately managed.

British Fencing maintains confidential records of all complaints, concerns and sanctions against clubs, coaches, and anyone else who acts in the name of British Fencing, whether a member of BFA or not.

British Fencing have reviewed their Child Protection policy implemented in 2001 and are committed to ensure that the reviewed policy is widely publicised in 2006.

Safety, welfare and child protection issues are included within British Fencing’s coach and officials education programmes.





Best practice is extensively promoted, and coaches, officials, clubs and affiliated organisations are required to adhere to British Fencing's guidelines.

British Fencing is a Registered Body with the Criminal Records Bureau and facilitates a disclosure service on behalf of clubs and employers to prevent unsuitable people from working within the sport. In Northern Ireland the Northern Ireland Fencing Association (NIFA) is registered with the Pre-Employment Consultancy Service to facilitate a similar disclosure, and in Scotland, Scottish Fencing is able to carry out disclosures through Disclosure Scotland.



#### 1.5 MONITORING PROCEDURES

The British Fencing Child Protection policy and procedures will be regularly monitored and a full policy review will take place tri-annually in any event, the next being in 2009. The following situations may also prompt a review of the policy:

As a result of any changes in legislation.

As a result of any changes in governance of the sport.

Following a procedural review as a result of a significant case.

#### 1.6 ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY HOME COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

There must be policies and procedures in place in the Home Countries: it is essential that these policies comply with the standards adopted by British Fencing.

The right to take part in fencing activities in a safe environment, and stay free from harm, applies to all children and vulnerable adults across the UK. Home Countries and Regions affiliated to British Fencing will be required to:

- Adopt and implement the BF policy or a policy that complies with the standards set by BF and/or the relevant national guidance.
- Designate a responsible person with a lead responsibility for Child Protection.
- Ensure that Clubs implement Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all competitions and events organisers implement procedures for Child Protection.
- Ensure there are relevant training opportunities for staff, coaches, officials and other volunteers.
- Inform BF of any incidents or allegations of poor practice or abuse involving BF members.





# SAFE RECRUITMENT

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## 2.0 SAFE RECRUITMENT

The vast majority of coaches, officials/helpers are committed, dedicated people who are motivated to work within the sport for commendable reasons. However, it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people or people with an inappropriate motivation are prevented from working with young people and vulnerable adults. The following procedures must be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a coach, helper or official in either a voluntary or paid capacity.



### 2.1 ADVERTISING

When any form of advertising is used to recruit staff or volunteers, the following information must be reflected:

- aims of the club or organisation
- responsibilities of the role
- level of experience or qualifications required (eg experience of working with children is an advantage)
- The club or organisation's open and positive approach to child protection
- The use of criminal records disclosures as part of the recruitment and selection process

### 2.2 Pre-Application Information

Anyone who expresses an interest in a job or role should, along with the application form, be given a job description, a person specification, a copy of BF Code of Ethics and conduct appropriate to the position sought

### 2.3 APPLICATION FORMS

All applicants whether for paid or voluntary, full, or part-time positions must complete an application form, which is designed to elicit information regarding an applicant's past career – including any gaps in involvement or employment, and any relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken. The candidate must be asked to supply the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number
- National Insurance Number (to confirm identity and right to work).



- Qualifications and validated relevant experience.
- Contact details of at least two referees (not relatives) one of which should be a previous employer or club who have agreed to provide written comment on the applicant's experience of, and suitability to work with children and young people.
- A signed agreement to abide by the Code of Ethics and Conduct and club policies, and British Fencing's Child Protection policy.

Applicants must be informed that failure to adhere to the relevant codes of ethics and conduct may result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal/exclusion from the club or organisation.

#### 2.4 PROCEDURES FOR SHORT-LISTING CANDIDATES

- Request in writing, and on formal headed paper, confirmation from BF of a coach's qualifications or any known reason for not employing/appointing that person as coach/official
- Applicants who are short listed for a position will be required to complete a self-declaration of convictions form and, consent to carry out an enhanced level criminal records disclosure. The following organisations provide disclosures and the application can be facilitated by the relevant governing body in their role as a registered body:

In England and Wales: Criminal Records Bureau (British Fencing)

In Scotland: Disclosure Scotland (Scottish Fencing)

In Northern Ireland: Pre Employment Consultancy Service (Northern Ireland Fencing Association)

Clubs can request a form from BF and ask the candidate to complete the form (forms can be obtained direct by following the guidance displayed on BF website). The relevant person within the club/organisation must complete the identity verification and return the disclosure application to the NGB.

An enhanced level disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau must be obtained for each person who may have significant/ substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults. British Fencing recommends anyone over the age of 16 with significant/ substantial access to young people, or anyone with a managerial responsibility for individuals in this position, should complete an enhanced disclosure request.



## 2.5 INTERVIEWS

Where a position involves significant/ substantial contact with young people, a formal interview must be held according to correct procedures and protocol. At interview you can request any additional information to support the details contained in the application form and address/ask questions relating to any information disclosed on the self-declaration of convictions form.



## 2.6 MAKING THE APPOINTMENT

Once a decision has been made to employ someone or invite someone to take on a voluntary role within a club or organisation, an offer letter should be issued. This letter should specify full details and requirement of the position and any probation period if appropriate. The applicant should be informed that the appointment is subject to a satisfactory criminal records disclosure.

NB the Candidate will receive their own copy of their disclosure and clubs/organisation should obtain confirmation of the applicant's suitability from BF prior to confirming the appointment. An individual may be allowed to commence their duties but care must be taken to ensure that a senior member of staff is always present.

Following appointment, induction procedures should be conducted, whether the position is paid or voluntary. An induction must include:

- Explanation of Child protection procedures and other club/organisation policies.
- Formally signing up to codes of ethics and conduct.
- Clarification of roles, responsibilities and consideration of expectations.
- Assessment of training needs, which should normally include attendance at a recognised Child Protection awareness course and any other training relevant to the role.

## 2.7 MONITORING AND APPRAISAL

All staff and volunteers should be given the opportunity to receive feedback, either through a formal appraisal or more informally through a mentoring situation. Although this is good practice for any voluntary or paid position, appraisals are essential for positions that involve significant/ substantial contact with young people. Appraisals should be offered at regular intervals, initially at the end of a probation period and thereafter at yearly intervals as a minimum. An appraisal can help to establish training needs, review targets and consider any concerns.



## 2.8 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A Club or organisation must/shall put in place a procedure to deal with complaints. Parents/carers and all members must be made aware of the procedures for raising a complaint or concern. Provision should be made in the rules or constitution to provide for complaints and disciplinary procedures to be implemented.







# PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

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## PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

Although good recruitment procedures may help to deter potential abuse perpetrators, each club must also implement a policy which ensures that young people are protected and kept safe from harm. A coach, official or volunteer within a club may be able to identify situations or raise concerns when a young person may need protection. The Child Protection policy will include procedures to safeguard young people, but also allow for incidents or concerns to be appropriately referred. The policy must be publicised to all club members and their parents, and all coaches, volunteers and officials must be aware of and sensitive to potentially abusive situations.

### 3.1 GOOD PRACTICE FOR CLUBS

It is essential that child protection is paramount for all club activities, not only to provide the best possible protection for young people in fencing, but also to avoid allegations of poor practice and to ensure the safety of staff and participants. Failure to follow the following guidelines could place young people, coaches and the club in a vulnerable position:

- Adoption of the British Fencing Child & Vulnerable Adults protection policy and procedures.
- Promotion of the policy to all club members and parents to show the club's commitment to a safe environment.
- Promotion of an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal.
- Establishing procedures through which complaints or concerns can be voiced and dealt with confidentially, complying with BF reporting guidelines.
- Requesting written consent for participation, contact details, photography consent, medical information and an agreement to act in loco parentis in an emergency.
- Keeping written records of any poor practice or child protection related incident and/or accidents, and any action taken.
- Provision of regular training for coaches, assistants and officials.
- Provision of an open-door environment.
- Ensuring that every effort is made to prevent situations where an adult is alone with a child or group of young people.
- Ensuring that there are at least two responsible adults present at training sessions.



- Ensuring that there are good practice guidelines in place for any trips or events away from the regular training venue. (Refer to BF guidance available on website)
- Keeping parents and fencers fully informed about child protection procedures.
- Designating a person to deal with child protection and welfare issues and ensuring this person undergoes a criminal records disclosure and receives appropriate training.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities and equity policies are adhered to, and that discrimination is prohibited.
- Careful screening of all coaches, helpers, or officials according to the guidelines.
- Adopting British Fencing guidelines to control the use of photographic and filming equipment, and monitor the use of photographic materials involving children.
- Publicising an anti-bullying policy.
- Providing regular Monitoring and Appraisal opportunities to receive feedback regarding staff training needs and issues such as poor coaching practice.
- Encouraging coaches to observe exponents of good coaching practice.
- Offering support to those who report concerns regarding suspicious or poor practice



### 3.2 GOOD PRACTICE FOR COACHES AND OFFICIALS

All participants have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. The promotion of good practice will reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring. A good and caring coach will continually reflect upon their own coaching style, philosophy and practices to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants at all times. Although these guidelines are written with coaches in mind, they are applicable to all adults with access to children through fencing.

The following are examples of good practice which will create a safe and desirable environment.

#### Good practice means:

- always working in an open environment, avoiding situations where a coach and an individual child or vulnerable adult cannot be observed.
- Always ensuring that there is at least one other responsible adult present during training sessions.
- treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with performers (eg it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a young person or to share a room



with them)

- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by British Fencing. Care is needed when amending hand and body positions as well as assisting with protective equipment. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive and their views should always be carefully considered.
- keeping up to date with your knowledge and technical skills.
- involving parents/carers wherever possible (eg for the responsibility of their young children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they are always accompanied by at least one male and one female member of staff .
- ensuring that at tournaments or residential camps, adults should not enter young people's rooms on their own, or invite young people into their rooms (formal room checks must always be done with 2 or more members of staff)
- being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- motivate with enthusiastic and positive feedback and constructive criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- securing parental consent in writing to acting in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- awareness of any medicines being taken by participants, or existing injuries
- maintain a written record of any incident or injury that occurs, together with any subsequent treatment or action.
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars. NB Young people are strongly advised to use the rear seat whenever possible.
- Do not take a child alone on a car journey except in unforeseen circumstances.
- Do not exceed the level of your competence and qualifications.
- Ensure all members of BF adhere to the codes of ethics and code of conduct and anti doping policy.



The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and



consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a young person sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a young person up at the end of a session. Organise central pick-up and drop-off points to ensure the driver is not alone with a child and make sure the route and breaks (if necessary) are well planned:

### Practice never to be condoned

You should never:

- Invite a child to your home or secluded place when they will be alone with you.
- Share a room with a young person
- Neglect responsibility for any child under your care at any time
- Bully a child either physically or verbally, nor wilfully reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young/vulnerable fencer – even in fun.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
- Do things of a personal nature for a fencer that they can do for themselves unless specifically requested to do so and then with the utmost discretion
- Vacate the venue until the supervision of the safe dispersal of all the fencers is complete (NB delegation of this duty may be allocated to another official)
- Spend excessive amounts of time with individual fencers away from others
- Abuse the coaches position of power or trust in any way
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Embarrass, humiliate or undermine any individual or cause them to lose self esteem
- Make remarks about another individual that are in any way offensive or in any way can be construed as such.
- Fail to record any incident in line with BF guidelines

(NB this list is not exhaustive)

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for a young person, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the fencers involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting



or assisting a young person to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- if a young fencer is accidentally hurt during practice by either you or an opponent
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a young fencer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a young fencer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done or said.



### 3.3 GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

A good coach will develop a strong, trusting bond with his/her fencers. This is essential in a successful coach/fencer relationship. However as a parent you should check that:



- The Club has a published their child protection policy, which ensures that all young people are protected and kept safe from harm. Clubs may adopt a Health, Safety and Welfare policy which includes a Child Protection policy and procedures.
- The club has an anti-bullying policy
- The club has codes of conduct for all members including coaches, staff and volunteers, parents and fencers.
- There is a designated person (Welfare Officer) in place with a responsibility for Child Protection, and young people and adults are aware that they can talk to them about concerns without fear of victimisation or reprisal.
- There are procedures in place for dealing with concern, complaints and disciplinary issues.
- The club has procedures in place for safe recruitment including criminal record disclosures.
- The coach in charge has a minimum British Fencing Coaching qualification.
- The coach has a qualification appropriate to the fencer's performance level.
- The club makes every effort to ensure that at least two responsible adults are present during training sessions. (NB the second adult could be a parent helper or club official)
- If necessary there are suitable procedures for intimate care needs for children and the disabled: Routines for toileting and supervising
- The club encourages all staff and volunteers to attend Child Protection Awareness training.
- There is guidance in place regarding arrangements for travelling to events.



- Parents are not discouraged from watching or becoming involved.
- The club has an equity/equality policy, which states that all young people have an equal right to be protected from harm and that discrimination is not tolerated.

Encourage your children to talk to you about their training and ensure that they know how to voice their concerns if they are not happy about any situations that may arise.

### 3.4 GUIDELINES FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC FILMING EQUIPMENT AT FENCING EVENTS

Implicit within British Fencing's Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures is the commitment to ensure that all publications and media represent participants appropriately and with due respect. It is not the intention of British Fencing to prevent parents from taking pictures of their children but rather to ensure photographic practices are carefully monitored to allow British Fencing to act in cases where inappropriate imagery is circulated and to deter anyone with undesirable intentions.

- The use of mobile phones within the event arena or training area is prohibited, unless registered as a photographic device.
- A photograph or image (website) of a child should not be published without written consent, and personal information of the individual must not accompany the image without written consent.
- Care must be taken to ensure that images of children who are under a court order or for whom consent has NOT been given to be photographed are not recorded or published without permission.
- Websites should be carefully monitored to eliminate the use of inappropriate images or improper text.
- Any instance of the use of inappropriate images must be reported to the Child Protection Officer at British Fencing, who may then inform the appropriate authorities.
- British Fencing competition entry forms may contain an informed consent statement that photographers will be present at British Fencing events and images may be published by British Fencing. By entering for the event, there is acceptance that the child/participant may be photographed, unless written consent is specifically declined.
- It is also a recommendation that clubs introduce a parental consent form for the taking and publishing of video, photographs and images. (This should ideally be included on club registration forms)
- British Fencing Regions or Home Countries may implement their own



photography accreditation system which may be an annual accreditation or other procedure that suits the local needs.

### 3.5 USE OF VIDEO, FILM OR PHOTOGRAPHY AT EVENTS

The vast majority of people involved in fencing activities derive interest and pleasure from the success and enjoyment shown by the participants. A British Fencing event, by its very nature, is in the public arena and when entering for the event the participant acknowledges this fact, which may result in the recording of his/her image, since there is already an acceptance that at least professionally approved photographers may take photographs. British Fencing does not wish to discourage the use of video or photographic equipment at events for appropriate use, but will take all reasonable precautions to protect our members against the possible inappropriate use of films or photographic images. British Fencing may therefore introduce procedures, which require all persons wishing to use video or photographic equipment at a British Fencing event, to apply for permission: this can be done prior to the event, via the event organiser.



Photography Accreditation for British Fencing National Events:

- 
- Any person wishing to engage in the use of video or photography must register their intentions and provide proof of identity, to the registration desk at the event. A person wishing to take images with a mobile phone must register the device as a camera at the registration desk.
- Members of the public/parents or members who are associated with a club or school etc are encouraged to complete the registration form and return this to the event organiser for inclusion on the pre-registration list at least 5 days prior to the event.
- A 3 year accreditation system may be introduced and issue an identification/Accreditation card. A valid card may be presented to the registration desk and will be accepted for accreditation at the particular event.
- Failure to adhere to these criteria will result in the individual being refused entry or being asked to leave the premises.
- If the event organiser or their representative suspects inappropriate photography or filming they will request the person to leave the venue and to surrender any film relating to the event.
- The list of registered persons will be returned to British Fencing to be confidentially archived, to facilitate any enquires by police or social services.
- A statement regarding this policy and procedures will be displayed at the event and included in any programme.



### 3.6 USE OF VIDEO AS AN AID TO COACHING

The use of video equipment can be a valuable aid to coaching. The guidelines below should be implemented to safeguard against inappropriate practice.

- Ensure that the fencers and their parent/carer are aware of the purpose of the filming as a coaching aid and give their written consent.
- Ensure that the person designated for participant's welfare and one other responsible and approved adult is present to ensure that fencers are protected against inappropriate filming.
- Care should be taken to securely store the video materials to avoid inappropriate usage.
- Any video of young people should only be kept for so long as they serve this purpose or be returned/given to parent or guardian.



### 3.7 SUPERVISION

From the moment a child arrives at a fencing club or event (**NB if the child is to be unaccompanied at an event the organisers must be informed and contact telephone numbers supplied and a medical form completed**), or when they are handed over by their parents to travel to an event, the staff or volunteers have a duty of care and, while carrying out a supervisory role, should act in loco parentis. The responsibility remains until the child is handed back to the parent or other person nominated in advance by the parent/carer.

It is essential that appropriate ratios for supervision are adopted and everyone is clear of their supervisory responsibilities. Ratios would be determined by considering age, the type of activity and where it is taking place. For club training, British Fencing would recommend a minimum ratio of one adult to fifteen fencers, depending on the age of the fencers. Where events are external to the regular club training venue, a minimum ratio of one adult (without any other role, eg fencer or refereeing duties) to 10 fencers is required, again according to the age of the fencers. This ratio must be increased for individuals under eight years. There should always be at least two adults present, and this shall always be reviewed once the particular circumstances of the event are known. This ensures that there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.





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## 3.0 RECOGNITION OF POOR PRACTICE, ABUSE AND BULLYING

All adults involved in sport have a duty to respond to suspicions of abuse, inappropriate behaviour or poor practice. Clubs and other organisations should provide confidential communication lines through which concerns can be expressed. Clubs need to designate a responsible person to act as the Welfare Officer to whom concerns can be expressed in confidence

### 4.1 POOR PRACTICE

Poor practice may be defined as any action or behaviour that contravenes the following:

- Best coaching practice as advocated through the British Fencing coach education programme or resource materials
- The BF Codes of Conduct or Code of Ethics.
- The BF Equity Policy
- The accepted roles and responsibilities of a coach
- The BF Child Protection Policy and Health and Safety and Welfare Guidance

### 4.2 ABUSE

Abuse can and does occur in a wide range of settings, including sport. The effects of abuse can be so damaging, they may follow a person into adulthood. For example, a person who has been abused as a young person may find it difficult or impossible to maintain stable, trusting relationships, become involved with drugs, experience mental health problems or self-harm. A young person who has been neglected can experience serious impairment in their health and development.

#### People with a Disability

People with a disability or impairment may be more vulnerable to abuse or poor practice, since they may not be able to express their concerns or protect themselves or understand what is happening. Coaches, officials and organisations must avoid discrimination against people with a disability and must be vigilant in caring for these vulnerable people. Further information and guidance should be sought for



organisations that require a policy specific to the needs of disabled and/or vulnerable people.

### **Racial Discrimination and Equity**

It is likely that people from black and minority ethnic groups may experience harassment, discrimination and institutional racism. Although racism clearly causes harm, it is not, itself a category of abuse. However, it may be considered emotional abuse and recent legislation has made racism illegal.

Equal opportunities must be provided for all, regardless of gender, race or culture and we must endeavour to protect ethnic minority groups from racial harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism. Through adherence to the BF Equity Policy, problems such as discrimination against ethnic minority groups should be avoided.

### **Abuse and Neglect**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people and vulnerable adults may be abused within their family, at school and sometimes in the sporting environment. There is growing evidence to suggest that peer abuse is an increasing concern for young people.

**There are many forms of abuse:-**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Where someone:

- Physically hurts or injures a child intentionally by hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or any other physical harm.
- Gives alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison to a child.
- Uses drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.
- Inflicts a type and intensity of training which exceeds the capacity of the child's maturation.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Where adults or other children (male and female) sexually abuse boys or girls to satisfy their own sexual needs, or where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity.

This could include:



- Full sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation or oral sex.
- Taking or possessing inappropriate photographic materials involving children.
- Showing inappropriate, pornographic materials to children.

It should be noted that in sports situations where physical contact is made ie in stretching exercises or physical correction, sexual abuse may go unnoticed. These situations also provide the opportunity for abuse to occur.

**NB** it should be remembered that a weapon is considered to be an extension of the hand and should be used with the utmost care.

The misuse of the power of the coach over young people or vulnerable adults may lead to abusive situations developing.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse can be described as the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, which can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the young person'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. Examples of this may include when:

- The young person is constantly shouted at, taunted, humiliated or ignored.
- The young person is subjected to constant criticism, name calling, sarcasm or bullying.
- An unrealistic pressure to perform consistently to high expectations is placed upon the young person by the coach, club officials or parents.

### **Neglect**

Failure of an adult to provide food, shelter and clothing for a young person or failure to protect a young person from danger or physical harm may constitute neglect. Failure to access appropriate medical care or provide love and affection may be classified as neglect.

Coaches who allow young people to be exposed to unnecessary risk of injury or harm are being neglectful. Correct protective clothing must be worn at all times.

### **Indicators of Abuse**

Indications that a young person may be being abused can be difficult to recognise even for the experienced.



There are signs which could alert you to the fact that a child might be being abused, and these include:

- Unexplained bruising or injury particularly in unusual places.
- An injury for which the explanation seems to be inconsistent.
- The child describes an act or behaviour that appears to be abusive.
- Something another person (a young person or adult) has said which suggests a child is being abused.
- Unexplained sudden changes in behaviour (eg withdrawn, very quiet, sudden outbursts of temper or emotion).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or language or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected (eg parents, coach, family friend).
- Is prevented from socialising with other young people or has difficulty making friends.
- Displays variations in eating patterns (eg overeating or loss of appetite).
- Loss of or increase in weight for no apparent reason (the child may be trying to make himself/herself less sexually attractive).
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these symptoms is not proof that abuse has taken place, but it should raise concerns.

**It is not the responsibility of the coach or official to decide that a child is being abused but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.**

It is acknowledged that taking appropriate action is never easy and the discovery that a member of staff or colleague is, or may be, abusing a child will raise concerns and emotional feelings among other colleagues.

These emotions may evolve around feelings of:

- Doubt: Is it true?
- Confusion: What will happen?  
What actions should be taken?  
What will be the effect?
- Guilt: Should I have known?  
Did I miss something?



Did I have any suspicions?  
Should I have said something?

- Fear: Will I or others be suspected?
- Concerns: What can I do to support all those people who may need support:  
How will it affect further relationships or contact with children?  
Are there systems in place to expose future situations?

There is clearly a need to have support mechanisms for all those involved in or surrounding the issue, including those making the allegation, those who may be being abused and those against whom the allegation(s) are made.

British Fencing is primarily concerned with the well being and safety of all its members and participants, and will support anyone who in good faith, and where he/she has reasonable grounds for doing so, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

#### 4.3 BULLYING

It is important to recognise that in some cases, it may not be an adult who is carrying out the abuse. In the case of bullying the abuser is often another young person. Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour in the form of physical, psychological or aggressive verbal conduct against another person. Bullying can take many forms, the three main types are physical (eg hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (eg racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (eg isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of the peer group).

Victims of bullying are typically shy, timid and sensitive and are often physically small, overweight, have a disability or are from an ethnic minority group. Bullies frequently have low self-esteem, and are aggressive and manipulative in order to gain power over others.

Coaches and officials hold a position of power in the relationship with their athletes and must not abuse this position to bully the children or vulnerable adults in their care. An over zealous coach, or one who resorts to aggressive physical or verbal behaviour, tormenting, humiliating or ignoring a person, may be accused of bullying. In some instances parents can bully their children by pushing them too hard.

Symptoms that may indicate that a person is being bullied might include:



- Behavioural changes such as a reluctance to attend school or activities previously enjoyed; tearfulness; depression; erratic emotions and loss of concentration.
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, bruising, self harming, damaged clothing, and bingeing on food, alcohol or cigarettes.
- Performance levels may also drop.

Regardless of who the perpetrator might be, the signs of bullying should be reported to a person of responsibility.

It is important that bullying is recognised and Clubs/affiliated bodies take appropriate action and rigorously enforce anti-bullying strategies. It is vital not to underestimate the damage that can be caused by bullying.

#### 4.4 ABUSE OF POSITION OF TRUST

**This guidance is primarily intended to protect young people over the age of sexual consent but includes all those under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults where a relationship of trust with an adult exists.**

In England, Scotland and Wales, young people of 16 or 17 years can legally consent to most types of sexual activity but they may still be relatively immature emotionally. (In Northern Ireland the age of consent is 17). It is essential that those who may be in a position of responsibility and trust recognise this vulnerability and ensure that it is not exploited. There is no simple definition of a vulnerable adult but the position of trust and the vulnerability of adults must not be abused.

The principles and guidance apply, irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable in a position of trust.

Sexual Offences Legislation was recently reviewed and one of the amendments tabled related to breach of trust. The current legislation does not specifically apply to sports coaches but this may be amended in the near future and in any event it is unacceptable to abuse such a position of trust.

i) A relationship of Trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another by virtue of their position.



A genuine relationship can start between two people within a relationship of trust but the relationship of trust must end before any sexual relationship develops.

ii) Abuse of trust and sexual or other abuse

Any sexual activity, which is not freely consented to, is a criminal act. The sexual activity covered by abuse of trust may be ostensibly consensual, but rendered unacceptable because of the relative positions of the parties concerned.

iii) Code on abuse of trust

The Code of Conduct on sexual activity between individuals in a relationship of trust aims to:

- Protect a young person or vulnerable adult from an unequal and potentially damaging relationship.
- Protect the person in a position of trust by preventing him/her from entering into such a relationship deliberately or accidentally, by providing clear and enforceable guidance on what behaviour is acceptable.

The British Fencing Code on abuse of trust:

- Any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the individual(s) in their care, must be avoided.
- Any sexual relationship within a relationship of trust is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues.
- All those in an organisation have a duty to raise concerns about behaviour by coaches, staff, volunteers, managers and others, which may be harmful to those in their care, without prejudice to their own position.





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## 5.0 Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Everyone has a responsibility to respond to these concerns whether they relate to a child's home or family or community situation or involve incidents with the club.

It is important to note that most children or young people do not share those concerns and rely on those adults who they are in contact with to be alert to the possibility that they may be experiencing harm in some area of their lives.

### 5.1 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE OUTSIDE SPORT

**British Fencing's primary responsibility is to ensure that concerns and any relevant information are passed on the police or social services without delay. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish if a child is at risk of harm.**

It is vital that individuals within the club are aware of British Fencing's guidance and pass any concerns to the designated person with the responsibility for Child Protection within the club or the person in charge. If neither person is available, the information should be passed directly to Social Services or the Police. The British Fencing's Child Protection incident form should be completed and, together with any other written information, be sent to the relevant statutory organisation and British Fencing within 24 hours.

### 5.2 RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

If a young person indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern that the child may be being abused, the person receiving the information should:

- Stay calm and ensure that the young person is safe and feels safe.
- Tell the young person he/she is not to blame and it was right to tell you.
- Show and tell the young person that you are taking what he/she says seriously and recognise any difficulties inherent in interpreting what the young person says.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said and make a record of all that has been said, heard and/or seen. (This record will be referred to during further investigations and



detailed questioning should be left to the qualified investigator.)

- Be honest and explain that you will have to tell someone else to help to protect them.

### **Actions to Avoid**

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is offered
- make promises you cannot keep: such as agreeing not to tell someone else
- speculate or make assumptions
- approach the alleged abuser
- make negative comments about the accused person

### **Social Services**

When a referral is made to Social Services, they have a legal responsibility to make enquiries where a child or young person may be at risk of "significant harm". This may involve gathering information from others who know the child, and talking to the young person and their family. Enquires may be carried out jointly with the police when a criminal offence is suspected. If action needs to be taken urgently, contact the Police by dialling 999. If concerns are identified out of office hours, that need to be dealt with immediately, the police and Social Services provide an out of hour's service to deal with such concerns.



### **Sharing Concerns with Parents**

There is a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most circumstances, it could be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any concerns. For example, if a young person seemed withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. The young person may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.



### **When not to share concerns with parents**

If you are suspicious that the parents, guardian or carer may be the abuser or you believe that the parent may not be able to respond appropriately to the situation, speaking to them regarding the matter might place the young person at greater risk. In these circumstances, if concerns still exist you should report the suspicion or allegation to the senior person or designated person. Advice and guidance should be sought from Social Services with respect to consulting with parents in such circumstances.



### Sharing concerns with a designated officer (Welfare Officer)

Each Home Country, Region and club will identify a designated person to handle child protection issues. If a designated person is in place, you should share your concerns with them. It is the responsibility of the Welfare Officer to make the decision to contact the Social Services. If a designated person has not been appointed, contact the person in charge or, if they are not available or the concerns are about him/her, you contact British Fencing or the relevant Home Country, or Social Services who will be able to advise you on any action that should be taken.

The club or organisation must ensure that the Designated Welfare Officer:

- Signs a self-declaration form initially
- Is police checked via the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service.
- Is given adequate training and guidance to undertake the child protection role.

### Records and Information

Any information passed to the Social Services or the Police must be as accurate and helpful as possible and it will be useful if a detailed record, including the following can be provided:

- The nature of the allegation.
- Description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- Detailed description of the child's account of how the incident, injuries or bruising occurred.
- Witnesses to the incident(s).
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.



Reporting the matter to the Police or Social Services department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals made by telephone to the Social Services or Police should be confirmed with a copy of the incident report within 24 hours. The club must record on the incident form, the name and designation of the Social Services member of staff to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call.

A copy of the incident report (see page 66) must be sent to the British Fencing and/or Home Country Child Protection Officer and marked "private and confidential"



### 5.3 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COACHES, OFFICIALS OR OTHER MEMBERS

An allegation may involve volunteers or paid staff within British Fencing. Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within a sporting situation. It is crucial that everyone involved in fencing recognises this possibility and takes seriously any allegations made against a coach, helper, official or anyone else working closely with children.

The designated person must be notified immediately of any circumstances that cause concern or raises suspicions. If the designated person is unclear about what action to take, advice must be sought from British Fencing's Child Protection Officer, or from the Social Services. The circumstances may indicate poor practice, abuse or harassment by a coach, official or other member and may need to be referred to the Police or Social Services.

If you have reasonable grounds for being concerned about a particular case involving a coach or official or another club member, it is not your responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place or to investigate it but, **it is your responsibility to act on those concerns and do something about it.**

#### Taking the appropriate action.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between what may constitute abuse and what may be poor practice but the following guidelines may help to select the appropriate course of action. Where an allegation has been received, a disclosure has been made, or a club employee or volunteer has observed behaviour that has caused them concern, clubs must consider what the appropriate course of action is.



#### Types of investigation

Where a complaint of abuse is made there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct

The disciplinary or misconduct procedure is conducted by British Fencing and the results of the Social Services or Police investigation will inform the investigation. The disciplinary procedures can be found on British Fencing's website.



The person that made the allegation, or their family, can also initiate civil proceedings.

### Issues of poor practice.

- British Fencings complaints procedure will be implemented.
- If following consideration the allegation is clearly poor practice, then the CPO may deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice of the Welfare Officer or where a poor practice allegation continues to remain a concern, British Fencing must be informed and sent an incident report.
- If the incident of poor practice raises any suspicions or concerns about abuse, all details should be recorded and reported without delay to British Fencing's CPO.

### Suspected abuse

If there is any suspicion that a young person has been abused by either a fencing club staff member or volunteer, the club Welfare Officer must immediately be informed so that they can consider whether to refer the incident to Social Services (or if necessary go directly to the Police). British Fencing CPO must also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If a disclosure concerns possible abuse within the home, family or community then the club Welfare Officer must immediately be informed so that the information can be passed on to the relevant statutory organisation.

If the allegation concerns the Welfare Officer, the incident must be referred to Social Services (or if necessary to the Police). British Fencing's should also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If the Welfare Officer is unavailable, British Fencings CPO (or if out-of-hours) the Police or Social Services, must be contacted. Any delay may place a child at risk.

If you are unsure of what action to take, you can contact the Social Services, British Fencing CPO or the NSPCC 24 hour Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000 for advice. British Fencing MUST be kept fully informed of any allegations as it is essential that an early decision is made about whether to temporarily suspend any accused individual, pending further Social Services or Police enquiries. British Fencing Child Protection Panel will be consulted on the appropriate course of action and will make recommendation to the General Secretary.



Further details on the disciplinary proceedings can be found in British Fencing's website.

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police enquiries, British Fencing CPP will assess all individual cases to decide whether a recommendation should be made to reinstate a member or to move towards disciplinary proceedings. British Fencing will hold a disciplinary hearing for anyone investigated, or charged by the authorities with abuse (accept when an individual has been convicted). This may be a difficult decision, particularly when there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police.

British Fencing disciplinary panels will comply with the principles of natural justice. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability; whether it was more likely than not for the allegations to have occurred. All efforts will be made to obtain as much evidence as possible to advise the panel and there is a right to appeal against the decision. British Fencing will make a referral for inclusion on the Protection of Children Act (POCA) List in any instance where a decision is reached to exclude a member from the Governing Body. Throughout these processes the welfare of children will remain paramount and British Fencing will endeavour to provide appropriate support to children, parents, coaches and volunteers who are affected by an abuse situation including, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator.

#### 5.4 ALLEGATIONS OF PREVIOUS ABUSE

It is possible that allegations of abuse by a coach may be made some considerable time after the event. Where such a belated allegation is made the designated person should report the matter to the Social Services or the Police and make sure that the British

Fencing or relevant Home Country CPO is informed without delay. This is necessary because it is possible that other children may have been abused or may be at risk from the accused person.

##### **Maintain confidentiality**

Only tell others, on a strictly need to know basis, if it will help to protect the child. While British Fencing recognise peoples concerns, all cases will be dealt with fairly and equitably. Confidentiality must be maintained for all parties.

**Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned – including the accused as well as the young person.** False



allegations are of great concern not only because of the personal distress caused to the individual and their family, but also since the media may exploit the issue to their fullest benefit, and their actions may erroneously destroy the career of a fallaciously accused coach. Even the accused needs to be protected until sufficient evidence is gathered to substantiate the case against him/her.

If allegations are published that turn out to be unfounded, this may be defamatory. However, this would not apply to cases of alleged abuse, which are reported to the Police or Social Services in good faith when there are reasonable grounds for suspicion.

## 5.5 RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED BULLYING

The procedures set out in 5.2 should be followed if bullying is suspected.

### Strategies to discourage bullying

- Create an open environment and provide adequate supervision at all times.
- Encourage young people to speak out and share any concerns with the person in charge, the Welfare Officer or other responsible adults.
- Take all signs of possible bullying seriously.

### Supporting the victim of bullying

- Reassure the victim that you will help them and can be trusted.
- Explain that you may have to inform someone in authority.
- Keep accurate records of what happened together with names of those involved and any action taken.
- Report suspicions or concerns to the person in charge.

### Confronting the bully(ies)

- Talk to the bully(ies), explain the situation and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Seek an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim.
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist that any borrowed items are returned to the victim.
- Impose sanctions or disciplinary action if necessary.
- Report and record all actions taken.
- Provide support for the victim and his/her coach.
- Encourage the bully(ies) to change his/her behaviour.

## 5.6 RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE OF A POSITION OF TRUST



The procedures set out in 5.2 should be followed if abuse of a position of trust is suspected. It is still appropriate to inform Social Services and or the Police, as in some instances they may become involved. All concerns or allegations relating to a breach of the code of trust will be investigated according to the BF complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

## 5.7 RESPONDING TO MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Child abuse is an area of great interest to the media. When incidents occur it is important to have a strategy to manage any media enquiries. Although British Fencing and the Home Countries can deal with media enquiries, it is important for Clubs and Regions to be able to handle initial enquiries in a sensitive and appropriate manner to avoid generating any negative publicity.

The media can become involved in cases as a result of approaches made by a source linked to the victim and may already have significant information before approaching the Club or Region. If a journalist approaches you, the following guidance should be followed:

- Take a note of the journalist's name and whom they represent (ie Newspaper, TV Company etc) and any contact details.
- Take a note of what the journalist is asking you and ask for any clarifications.
- Establish whether the journalist has any deadlines and inform them that the matter will be referred to BF or the appropriate Home Country who will contact them with a response.
- Inform the appropriate Welfare Officer or person in charge who will refer the matter to BF or the appropriate Home Country Officer. An appropriate response will be formulated in consultation with BF Press and Media Officer or appropriate Home Country Officer.
- A copy of the response will be forwarded to the journalist, the club and appropriate region.

The same procedures should be followed for any subsequent enquiries and ensure that BF or the Home Country is kept fully informed of any local press coverage.

It is important to recognise the harm that can be done to a sport and the persons concerned by negative media coverage. **Do not be tempted to speak 'off the record' to journalists as this may result in damaging publicity but also do not pretend the situation is not serious, as this can often create equally detrimental press coverage.**







# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

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## Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers

- Do encourage your child to learn the rules and play within them.
- Discourage unfair play and arguing with officials.
- Help your child to recognise good performance, not just results.
- Never force your child to take part in sport.
- Set a good example by recognizing fair play and applauding good performance of all.
- Publicly accept officials' judgements.
- Support your child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport.
- Use correct and proper language at all times.
- Encourage and guide participants to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.



## BF Code of Conduct

For all Home Nations, Regions, Counties, Clubs, Members and Persons:-

- must ensure that Fencing is always conducted in a disciplined and sporting manner and acknowledge that it is not sufficient to rely solely upon the organisers to maintain those principles;
- shall co-operate in ensuring that the spirit of the Laws of Fencing) are upheld and select fencers that uphold these Laws
- shall observe the Fencing Laws at all times;
- shall accept and observe the authority and decisions of referees, organisers and all other fencing disciplinary bodies.
- shall not publish or cause to be published criticism of the manner in which a referee handled a fight;
- shall not publish or cause to be published criticism of the manner in which the Board or any other fencing disciplinary body handled or resolved any dispute or disciplinary matter resulting from a breach of the Bye-Laws, Regulations, or Laws of the Sport;
- shall not engage in any conduct or any activity on or off the piste that may impair public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of a fight, competition, Championship or Series or in the integrity and good character of any Person;
- shall promote the reputation of the Sport and take all possible steps to prevent it from being brought into disrepute.
- shall not commit a Doping Offence as defined in the FIE/BFA doping regulations.
- shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, organiser or other official, whether on or off the piste;
- shall not use crude or abusive language or gestures towards referees, organisers or other officials or spectators;
- shall not do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other Person at an event on the ground of their religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin;
- shall not do anything which adversely affects the Sport of Fencing, the Board, any member or any commercial partner of the Sport;
- Each body within British Fencing is under an obligation to;
- Comply with and ensure that each of its members comply with this Code of Conduct; and
- Adopt procedures to monitor compliance with and impose sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct by Persons under its jurisdiction.

Note: Definitions of 'Person' and 'Player' as follows;

'Person' means a fencer, trainer, referee, organiser, coach, selector, armourer, medical officer, physiotherapist or any other individual who is or has been at any time involved in the Sport, or in the organisation, administration or promotion of the Sport including spectators and supporters.



## British Fencing Coaches Code of Conduct

This Code does not supersede the Person Code of Conduct but is in addition to it.

- All fencing coaches must ensure that every individual particularly all young/vulnerable people in their care are respected as individuals and treated equitably and with dignity at all times. They should ensure that all training complies with the current guidance issued by British Fencing and does not form any sort of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, neglect etc.)
- All relationships should be based on respect, honesty and openness.
- All fencing coaches should recognise the personal development of young fencers takes priority even over the development of their performance.
- All fencing coaches should encourage young/vulnerable fencers to be responsible for their own behaviour and performance.
- All fencing coaches should have an ongoing commitment to their own training and work with others (i.e. referees, medical advisors, sports scientists, parents and other coaches) to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all fencers in order that they can develop both within fencing as well as outside.
- All fencing coaches should respect a fencer's need for confidentiality.
- All fencing coaches should work within their own competency and qualifications.
- All fencing coaches should strive to be positive role models, working within British Fencing guidance displaying high standards of personal behaviour.
- All fencing coaches have a responsibility to develop in partnership with all fencers particularly parents and young/vulnerable fencers clear expectations both on and off the piste and what the young/vulnerable fencer is entitled in return to expect of the coach.
- All fencing coaches should promote good behaviour within the rules of Fencing.

### British Fencing coaches should never:

- Invite a child to your home or secluded place when they will be alone with you.
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Neglect their responsibility for any child under their care at any time
- Bully a child either physically or verbally, nor reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young/vulnerable fencer – even in fun.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
- Do things of a personal nature for a fencer that they can do for themselves unless specifically requested to do so and then with the utmost discretion





- Vacate the venue until the supervision of the safe dispersal of all the fencers is complete (NB delegation of this duty may be allocated to another official)

Spend excessive amounts of time with individual fencers away from others

Abuse the coaches position of power or trust in any way

Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Embarrass, humiliate or undermine any individual or cause them to lose self esteem

Make remarks about another individual that are in any way offensive or in any way can be construed as such.

Fail to record any incident in line with BF guidelines

(NB this list is not exhaustive)



## Good Practice Guidance for Referees.

When refereeing young fencers referees should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when refereeing young players;
- Provide verbal feedback in a positive way after the poule or DE fight;
- Appreciate the needs of the fencers;
- Be a positive role model;
- Recognise that safety is paramount;
- Explain decisions – most young fencers are still learning;
- Never tolerate verbal abuse.

Officials should not:

- Change in the same area as young fencers if at all possible and ensure that they are not left alone with a child in the changing rooms;
- Be alone with young fencers at any time – if a young fencer comes into the changing room, ensure another adult is present;
- Administer first aid if a nominated first aider is present;
- Allow a young fencer to continue to fence if there are doubts about their fitness;
- Tolerate bad language from young fencers;
- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young fencers;
- Give a lift to a fencer unless there are other young people or adults in the car and the parents are aware except in an emergency and then only if parents/guardian notified;
- Take a young fencer to your home;
- Overtly criticise young fencers or use language which may cause the player to lose confidence or self-esteem;
- Make sexually explicit remarks to young players, even in fun;

**Referees must always:** Report, in writing, to the appropriate person,

- Behaviour by adults which you feel contravenes BF Child Protection Policy;
- Verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators;
- Physical abuse by coaches/parents/spectators;
- Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young fencer;
- Verbal abuse directed at the official by young people or adults.

**REMEMBER:** The welfare of all young people is paramount.



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is not easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types of bullying are: physical (eg 'hard hitting' pushing) verbal ( eg racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional ( eg isolating an individual from activities).

They will all include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim
- A victim who is weaker than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- Other forms of violence
- Deliberate 'hard hitting'
- Biased refereeing
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing or theft
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comment of a sexual nature

Emotional and verbal bullying is difficult to cope with or prove. It is of paramount importance that all clubs should adopt an anti-bullying policy to which all its members, coaches, players staffing volunteers and parents subscribe to and accept

Every club will:

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate any incidents
- Talk to the bullies and victims separately

Decide on appropriate action, such as:

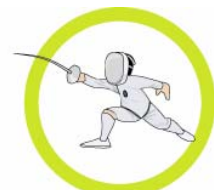
- Obtain an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim
- Inform parents of the bully(ies)
- Insist on the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen
- Insist bullies compensate the victim
- Hold club or class discussions about bullying
- Provide support for the coach of the victim
- 



## Hand out

This sets out best practice in a brief easily read leaflet suitable for clubs to personalise for their own use as well as setting out 'best practice' for all.

This document will be updated and available as a separate document on website in due course. The original handout that was issued to all clubs in 2001 is still valid.



## Club Guidance

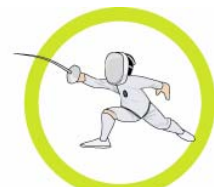
This is a brief guide setting out what all clubs should be aiming to achieve in the near future. British Fencing intend to provide support material aimed at clubs this will be available on the webpage in due course. Please see the model of a brief Child Protection Policy which has been adapted for club use which may be personalised for individual clubs.

Child Protection now has a much higher profile for all activities which involve young people and vulnerable adults. All clubs are expected to create a safe environment for young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm, this is becoming a necessary benchmark to assist those involved in sport to make informed decisions about whether to allow use of facilities, funding or affiliation for example.

British Fencing's aim is to put the necessary procedures in place to prevent any abuse of young people and vulnerable adults. British Fencing will encourage all clubs to appoint a child welfare officer who will be responsible for ensuring that all young people and vulnerable adults have the opportunity to participate in fencing in a safe environment.

Please see below a list of 'good practice', this list is not exclusive and is not intended to be definitive:

- All clubs should have a child protection policy and procedures, this may be a statement that they have adopted British Fencings CPP and Procedures or they may wish to personalise one of their own.
- All coaches and officials should attend a Child Protection Awareness Course. These courses are available through Sports Coach UK, however many Local Safe Guarding Children Boards or Sports Partnership's are also providing similar courses which are often provided at reduced fees and in some cases free to volunteers. Information should be available from local authorities. Unfortunately all local authorities are different and advice must be sort locally. England has a programme of these workshops on the England Fencing website which is updated regularly, or contact [ismaycoven@aol.com](mailto:ismaycoven@aol.com) .
- All British Fencing registered coaches are required to be CRB checked.
- It is also advisable that all club officials who are responsible for young people should have acceptable enhanced CRB disclosures. Details of how to apply are on BF website NB when working with children there are no 'spent' convictions and all convictions or relevant information should be declared at the time of completing the application by ticking the appropriate box. Only relevant convictions will be taken into account by British Fencing when making decisions about a persons suitability for a role within fencing.
- No adult should be expected to be alone with a child at any time and sufficient support from parents or adult members of the club must ensure that more than one adult is always present, those that regularly take on these responsibilities are advised to consider complying with the CRB disclosure as above.
- All club equipment must have documented regular safety checks, it is also important that all fencers using club equipment is of the correct size for them.
- Many fencing clubs are open to fencers of all ages and it is important that all participants are acknowledged to be valued members of the club. It is important that all Clubs operate equitably, without discrimination, and all fencers receive equal support.





➤ All clubs should keep a record of all their members contact details, including a telephone number in case of emergencies on the premises. This is particularly important with lone visiting fencers. The emergency exits and procedures should be made known to those attending, if no mobile telephone is available the whereabouts of the nearest accessible telephone should be identified.

➤ If qualified first aid is not available at the venue it is advisable to qualify a nominated person who is usually present, through attending a recognised emergency aid course.

➤ All those fencing in the club should be members of their National Association at the appropriate level. It is also important that all fencing complies with British Fencing regulations for safety particularly with regard to safety equipment.

➤ **NB British Fencing Insurance is only valid if British Fencings' safety recommendations are adhered to.**

➤ All clubs should comply with the photographic policy of any venue they use and in any event with BF's policy.

➤ At the end of each session an approved person should be delegated to supervise the collection of all minors and take the necessary steps if any problems occur, individual clubs should establish and publicise their own procedures depending on their own circumstances.

I am sure the above appears daunting to many club officers but it is important to note that most of the above is the responsibility of the club and its officials already. British Fencing is not asking clubs to take on additional tasks merely setting out those that are recognised as best practice and/or legal requirements already.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above please contact me by email.

Ismay Cowen  
Child Protection Office  
British Fencing  
[ismaycowen@aol.com](mailto:ismaycowen@aol.com)



## Whistle-blowing

Everyone at some point in their own or their child's sporting life has concerns about things they observe within their sport. These may vary from simple bad manners to the outright dangerous and everything in between.

Often these concerns are relatively minor and can be easily resolved.

If you have any concerns with regard to the behaviour of any adult towards a young person whilst connected with fencing (wherever it might be), it is important that you share your concerns with British Fencing's Child Protection Officer. The earlier you express your concern the more likely it is that it can be resolved quickly and without potentially further harm to any young person.

**Doing nothing about it may seem the easiest thing to do, but what concerns YOU may also be the concern of others: it won't go away and the situation could get worse.**

All information received or discussed will be treated in confidence and only be shared with those individuals within the British Fencing Association or club(s) who will be able to manage and resolve the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice from or inform the statutory agencies e.g. Social Services or the Police.

All concerns will be taken seriously and be managed according to British Fencing's Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

British Fencing is primarily concerned with the well being and safety of all members and participants in our sport, and will support anyone who in good faith, and where he/she has reasonable grounds for doing so, reports his/her concern that an adult is, or may be, abusing a child in any way, including bullying.

British Fencing will not discriminate against, victimize nor be judgemental of any official, volunteer or fencer who comes forward with genuine concerns.

Should you wish to put in writing your concerns, please address this to:

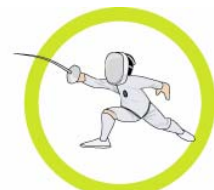
Child Protection Officer/Chair Disciplinary Committee  
British Fencing  
1 Baron's Court  
33 Rothschild Road  
London W4 5HT

Or email [ismaycowen@aol.com](mailto:ismaycowen@aol.com).

Please ensure that all correspondence is marked "Private & Confidential" "Addressee only"

If you would rather speak in person or by telephone, please initially email the above address with your contact number.

**Everyone suffers when malpractice occurs in an organization. It is important that those who act wrongly are dealt with appropriately. Help BF to stamp out bad practice and help maintain BF's good standards and reputation.**





## SAMPLE FORMS

APPLICATION FORM

REFERENCE FORM

SELF DECLARATION FORM

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

ADVICE ON RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

QUICK GUIDE TO PROCEDURES

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# APPLICATION FORM

This form is to be completed by employees and volunteers in fencing.

## Confidential

Position applied for:	
Surname and title (Mr/Mrs/Miss):	
Any first name, surname or maiden name previously known by:	
First name(s):	
Date of birth:	Place of birth:
Present address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone Number(s)	
E-mail address:	
Former address (if moved within the previous three years):	
Current occupation:	Name of organisation:
Role:	Address:
Start date:	
Previous occupation:	
Name of organisation:	
Start date:	
Finish date:	
Relevant experience:	
Previous experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity:	

Cont'd



Qualifications

Academic/school:  
(not essential for those applying for voluntary posts to complete)

**Vocational interests:**

**Sporting qualifications and experience:**

**Reasons for applying:**

Name and address of two people who know you well (and are not related to you) who have first-hand experience of you working with children and who we can contact for a reference, or who have provided you with a reference testimonial:

With your approval we shall also contact your current employer (where appropriate) for a reference

I agree to abide by any Code of Ethics and Conduct which British Fencing has in force.

Signed:

Date:

Print name:

**NB Failure to disclose this information may result in exclusion from the club or organisation**



**REFERENCE FORM**

**Confidential**

The following person ..... has expressed an interest in working with ..... The post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare of and protection of children, we are anxious to know if there is any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people.

If you are happy to complete this reference, any information will be treated with due confidentiality and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Information will only be shared with the person conducting the assessment of the candidate’s suitability for the post, if he/she is offered the position in question. We would appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation of this person.

- 1 How long have you known this person?  
.....
- 2 In what capacity?  
.....
- 3 What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 4 Please rate this person on the following – please tick one box for each statement:

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
<b>Responsibility</b>					
<b>Maturity</b>					
<b>Self motivation</b>					
<b>Can motivate others</b>					
<b>Energy</b>					
<b>Trustworthiness</b>					
<b>Reliability</b>					

This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people.

YES

NO

If you have answered YES we will contact you in confidence.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....



# SELF DECLARATION FORM

You have a right of access to information held on you and other rights under the Data Protection Act 1984

## Part A

Title	First Name	Surname	Any previous names by which you may have been known:
Address:			
Postcode:			
Telephone number(s):			
E-mail address:			

<b>Date of Birth</b>					

Sex	M	F
-----	---	---

Current Club(s)	Position	Start Date
	Coach/Helper/Team manager/Chaperone/Other*	
	Coach/Helper/Team manager/Chaperone/Other*	
	Coach/Helper/Team manager/Chaperone/Other*	

\*Please delete as appropriate

Club (Previous)	Date(s)	Club (Previous)	Date(s)

I confirm that I have seen identification documents relating to this person, and I confirm to the best of my ability that these are accurate. **Please detail which documents:**

.....

**Signature of club secretary or other designated officer:** .....

**Print name:** ..... **Date:** .....  
Cont'd



## Part B

### Self Declaration (for completion by the individual named in Part A)

**1 Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details of any criminal convictions:

.....

.....

NOTE: You are advised under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.

**1 Are you a person known to any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

.....

**2 Have you had a disciplinary sanction (from a sports or other organisations governing body) relating to child abuse? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

.....

\*Delete as appropriate

#### IMPORTANT

**I have read and understood the information leaflet regarding British Fencing's Child Protection List. I hereby consent to British Fencing undertaking police and/or social services checks against me. I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of police and social services checks and information supplied by third parties, will be included on British Fencing's Child Protection List, may be notified to my club/organisation and may be supplied by British Fencing to other persons or organisations who have an interest in child protection issues.**

Please put a cross in this box if you do not wish to receive any other sports related information

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print name: .....

**This form should be retained on file by club or person employing the applicant or where necessary returned DIRECT to British Fencing**



# INCIDENT RECORD FORM

(to be marked Strictly Confidential and forwarded to CPO, British Fencing, 1 Baron's Court, 33 Rothschild Road, London W4 5HT)

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex please tick box M  F   
 Child's address: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents/carers names and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Disability (if applicable)

Ethnic Group

- 1. White  British  Irish  Other please specify
- 2. Mixed  White/Black Caribbean  White/Black African  White Asian  
 Other mixed background, please specify
- 3. Asian or Asian/British  Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi
- 4. Black or Black.....  Caribbean  African  
 Other Black background, please specify
- 5. Chinese or other Oriental group  Chinese  Other, please specify
- 6. Other group not included above  Please specify

Date and time of any incident:

Your observations:

State exactly what the child said and what you said: (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. )

Action taken so far:

Name of accused \_\_\_\_\_ Position in sport \_\_\_\_\_

External agencies contacted (date & time)

<p><b>Police</b>      yes/no</p>	<p>If yes – which:</p> <p>Name and contact number:</p>
----------------------------------	--



	Details of advice received:
<b>Social services</b> Yes/no	If yes – which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
	If yes – which:
British Fencing	Name and contact number:
<b>Yes/no</b>	Details of advice received:
Local Authority	If yes – which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
<b>Yes/no</b>	
<b>Other</b> (eg NSPCC)	Which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	

NB A copy of this form should be sent to social services after the telephone report.

**Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.**

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE

Please see below British Fencing's procedures for disclosures of abuse they receive

### RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE OUTSIDE SPORT



**British Fencings' primary responsibility is to ensure that concerns and any relevant information are passed on to the police or social services without delay. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish if a child is at risk of harm.**

It is vital that individuals within the club are aware of British Fencings' guidance and pass any concerns to the designated person with the responsibility for Child Protection within the club or the person in charge. If neither person is available, the information should be passed directly to Social Services or the Police. The British Fencings' Child Protection incident form should be completed and together with any other written information, should be sent to the relevant statutory organisation and British Fencing within 24 hours.

If you have reasonable grounds for being concerned about a particular case involving a coach or official or another club member, it is not your responsibility or to decide if abuse is taking place nor to investigate it but, **it is your responsibility to act on those concerns and do something about it.**

### **Suspected abuse**

If there is any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a fencing club staff member or volunteer, the club Welfare Officer should immediately be informed so that they can either refer the incident to Social Services (or if necessary go directly to the Police). British Fencing should also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If a disclosure concerns possible abuse within the home, family or community then the club Welfare Officer should immediately be informed so that the information can be passed on to the relevant statutory organisation.

If the allegation concerns the Welfare Officer, the incident should be referred to Social Services (or if necessary to the Police). British Fencing should also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If the Welfare Officer is unavailable, British Fencings General Secretary (or if out-of-hours) the Police or Social Services, must be contacted. Any delay may place a child at risk.

If you are unsure of what action to take, you can contact the Social Services, British Fencing or the NSPCC 24 hour Child Protection Helpline for advice. British Fencing **MUST** be kept fully informed of any allegations as it is essential that an early decision is made about whether to temporarily suspend any accused individual, pending further Social Services or Police enquiries. British Fencing Child Protection Panel will be consulted on the appropriate course of action and will make recommendation to the General Secretary.

Further details on the disciplinary proceedings can be found in British Fencings' website.

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police enquiries, British Fencing will assess all individual cases to decide whether a recommendation should be made to reinstate a member or to move towards disciplinary proceedings. British Fencing will hold a disciplinary hearing for anyone investigated, or charged by the authorities with abuse (accept when an individual has been convicted). This may be a difficult decision, particularly when there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police.

British Fencing disciplinary panels will comply with the principles of natural justice. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability; whether it was more likely for the allegations to have occurred. All efforts will be made to obtain as much evidence to advise the panel and there is a right to appeal against the decision. British Fencing will make recommendation for inclusion on the Protection of Children Act (POCA) List in any instance where a decision is reached to exclude a member from the Governing Body. Throughout these processes the welfare of

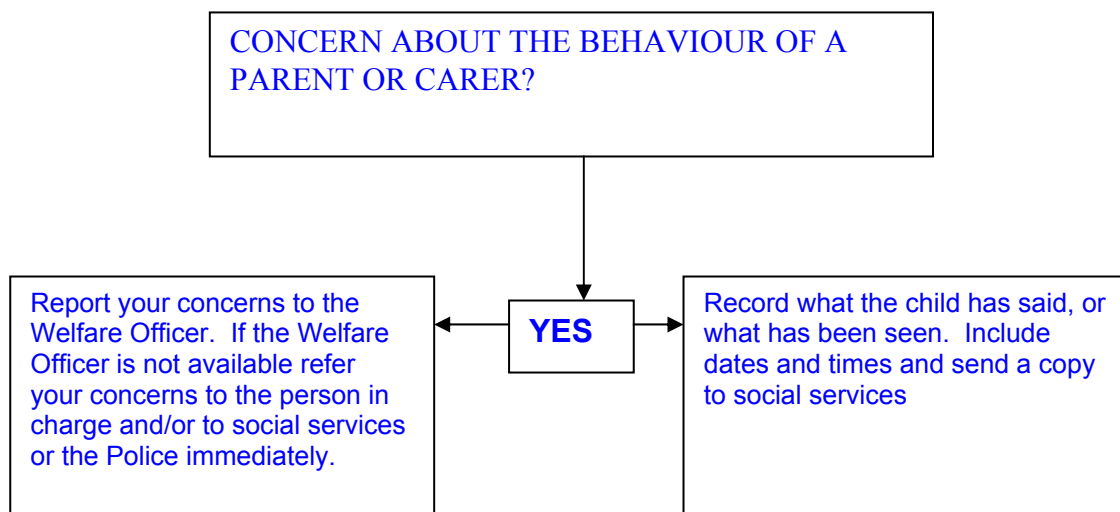


children will remain paramount and British Fencing will endeavour to provide appropriate support to children, parents, coaches and volunteers who are affected by an abuse situation including, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator.



## Appendix A A Quick Guide to Procedures

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about either a parent or carer (eg outside the immediate fencing environment) when reported from authorities outside British Fencing.

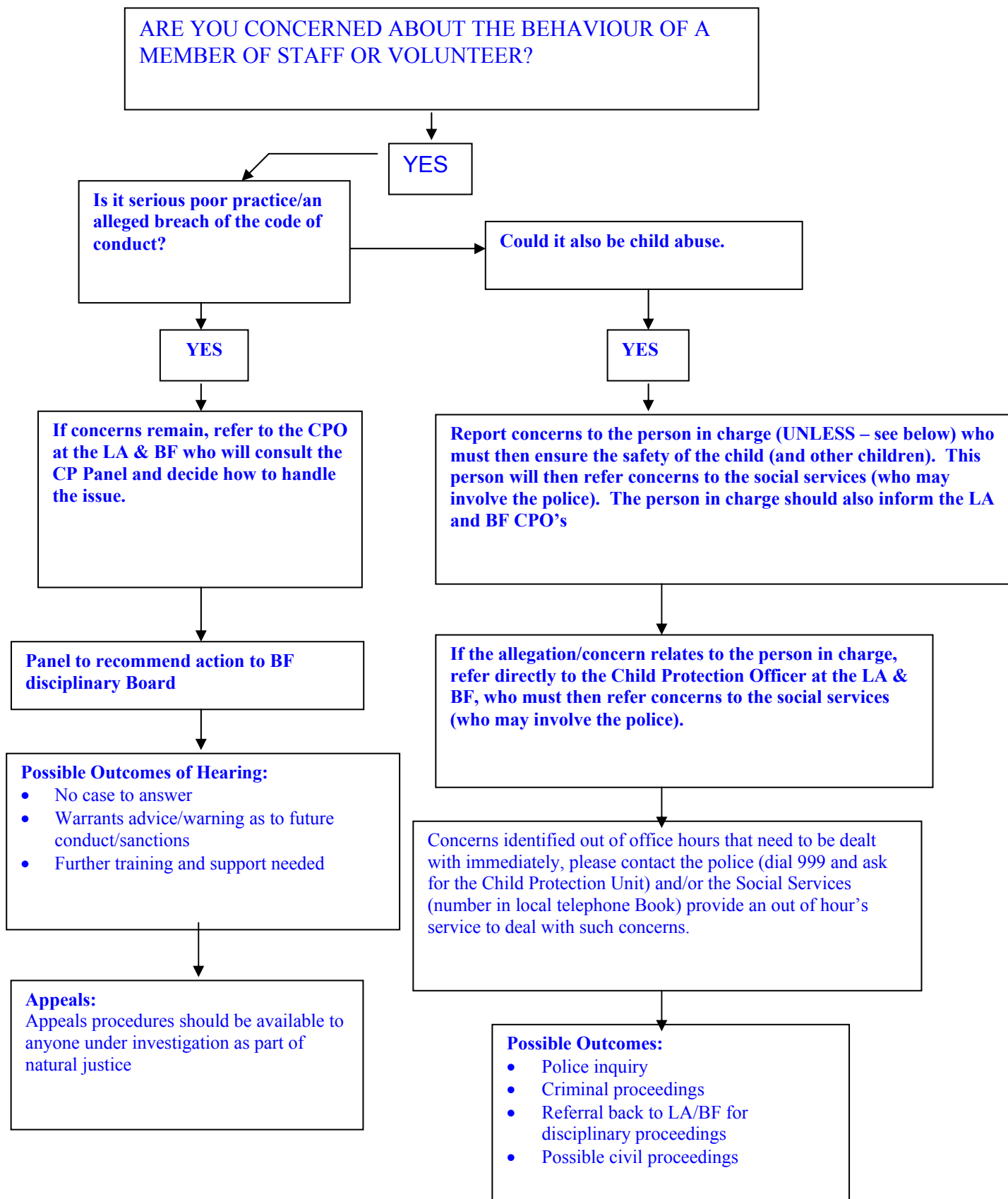


Remember:

- Maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis only
- Ensure the person in charge follows up with social services.
- **If the concerns are about someone who also plays a role within fencing**, then the person in charge should inform the relevant BF Child Protection Officer (CPO).



This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within fencing.



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the social services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111).



