



SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN POLICY

ROCHDALE TRIATHLON CLUB

Purpose and Context

All children and young people have a right to be safe and protected from harm. This is supported and promoted by the Law which sets out very clear guidance for all Local Authorities to follow.

All formal clubs, groups and organisations which come into contact with children also have a duty to uphold the safety and protection of children (and vulnerable adults) by adhering to some basic principles and procedures.

Rochdale Triathlon Club understands the importance of its role in promoting positive experiences in sport for young people, and ensuring that children and young people in their care have their welfare protected.

It is important that those who are in the employment of RTC (paid or voluntary), and those in contact with children and young people understand what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. It is also important that personnel are protected from false allegations and understand the importance of 'good practice'.

This policy will clarify roles, responsibilities and the process to be followed by committee members, employees of the club, club members and anybody else associated with the club in upholding the safety of children and young people.

Please note that this document is meant as a brief guide to be understood within the full context of the Child Protection Policy of British Triathlon (obtainable from committee members of RTC, or direct from BT).

Safe Adults

RTC must comply with the specific requirements as set out in section 3 (Recruitment, Selection and Training) of British Triathlon Safeguarding and Protecting Children policy.

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that RTC has done all that it can to minimise the likelihood of abusive adults being involved with children who are placed in the care of the club. It also makes clear to club members that RTC take seriously its responsibility to ensure the safety of its members.

What is Meant by 'Abuse' or 'Harm'?

There are 4 broad categories of abuse (standardised by Local Authority Safeguarding Boards) which come under the following headings:

- Physical abuse (hitting, shaking, burning or otherwise causing physical harm)
- Emotional abuse (saying overly negative things about and to the child, imposition of inappropriate expectations, witnessing domestic abuse, bullying or being made to feel frightened for example)
- Sexual abuse (forcing or enticing a child to be involved in sexual acts, including exposure to pornography)
- Neglect (ongoing failure to meet the child's basic needs eg, food, love, warmth or safety)

Coaching staff, committee officers and members are not expected to be an expert in identifying if, when or how abuse might have happened, and it is not their role to investigate. Adults are expected to report any concerns to Welfare or Child Welfare Officers.

The role of all adults associated with RTC is to be aware that children and young people whom they come into contact with might at some point be being abused, or have suffered abuse in some way. Abuse can happen in any setting; home, schools or clubs for example.

You may be made aware of concerns directly by the child or someone else, or you may notice that the child has an unexplained injury, worsened physical presentation or is behaving differently for example. Alternatively you may witness behaviour by an adult which seems to you to be abusive or poor practice. (For more guidance see sections 2-5 Indicators of Abuse and Bullying).

What You Should Do / Process

[1] *It is imperative that any concern about a child's welfare is acted upon.*

Your concern might feel like a small one, in which case seek clarification from the child if it is ok to do that. In cases where a child has disclosed concerns, the child should be believed and a record of what they have said, made as soon as possible afterwards. Don't be tempted to ask lots of questions however as this can hinder any future Police investigation should one be needed.

[2] *If the child is considered to be in immediate danger, then the Police should be called.*

Take action in an effort to protect the child from additional harm. The Police will involve Childrens Social Care (Social Services) if necessary.

[3] *If the child is in immediate need of medical attention, get them to hospital.*

[4] *The clubs Child Welfare Officer should be contacted in all cases.*

The CWO should be contacted as soon as possible, and it is their responsibility to obtain relevant information and decide on the next course of action (as detailed in British Triathlon CP Policy). British Triathlon would be informed in most cases. If the Welfare Officer is unobtainable, or the concerns are about that person, contact BT CPO, Childrens Services in Rochdale or the Police (Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Unit) for advice (see page 5 of this document for contact details).

[5] *Parents/ carers should be informed as soon as possible in all cases unless you are concerned that informing them may put the child at further risk (eg, it is the carer who is the alleged perpetrator).*

What Happens Next?

The raising of concerns about a child or young person could result in numerous causes of action, all of which are designed to keep the child's safety and welfare paramount, and to assess the safety and welfare of other children with whom a concerning adult may also be in contact.

There could follow a criminal investigation by the Police, a Child Protection investigation by Childrens Services, and/or a disciplinary or misconduct investigation carried out by British Triathlon depending on the circumstances of the particular allegation. It is also important to note that a concern raised may be found to have no child protection issues.

It is always better that any concerns noted, are shared with someone (as outlined) and found to require no further action, than choosing to act less cautiously and consequently risking failing to protect a child.

Good Practice / Poor Practice

RTC endeavour to support positive experiences in sport for all its members. Triathlon should be fun and enjoyable. Fairness, rule adherence, equality of opportunity and equal attention regardless of ability should be ensured for all children within the club. Respect for any child's ability will be assured at RTC and training and expectation of achievements will be reasonable in each individual case.

Coaches should aim to present as positive role models regarding their behaviour (including respect for others), inspiration and good sportsmanship.

As a sports club there are additional issues which RTC need to be mindful of:

In line with the policy of British Triathlon, there is guidance in respect of taking photographs or video images of young people (sec 2.2 Poor Practice). Before an event where photography or videoing is anticipated, RTC require that permission is sought from the child's parent/carer, and that the purposes of any photos or videos are clearly explained. Good practice advises that photos of children's faces should not be accompanied by their names. There will be exceptions to this, as RTC would support celebrating young people's achievements in relevant publications, where permissions have been given beforehand. Consent forms are to be found in the BT policy.

There is also guidance around the provision of appropriate changing and showering facilities. Adults must not find themselves alone with a child or children when showering or changing, and personal care should not be assisted by an adult who is not their carer or parent.

Travelling and sleeping arrangements should members take part in activities which require travelling or the use of overnight accommodation, need also to be carefully considered in line with British Triathlon policy.

Additionally it is important to be aware that the environment of a sports club can encourage bullying behaviour by a parent or coach, for example. Bullying is abusive and it can seriously affect a child's emotional wellbeing. Therefore RTC will also be vigilant with respect to bullying behaviour.

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USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Rochdale Triathlon Club Welfare Officer
Evelyn Cunningham
07716802960

Rochdale Triathlon Club Child Officer
Gillian Mostyn
07779631219

British Triathlon Child Protection Officer
01509 226 161

Rochdale Childrens Services
0845 226 5570
Out of hours number
0845 121 2975

Police Safeguarding Unit
0161 856 8067 (in emergency, 999)

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit
0116 234 7278