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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

WELFARE POLICY

Definition of terms

- Where the term 'children' is used this refers to children and young persons and vulnerable adults
- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation
- BASES: The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
- BASES member: current membership of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
- Accredited Sport and Exercise Scientist: Those members who hold a valid BASES Sport Science Support Accreditation
- Welfare officer: Child Protection Officer
- Area welfare officer: Local Child Protection Officer.

2. Introduction

All sporting organisations that make provision for children, young people and vulnerable adults must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

BASES members/accredited sport and exercise scientists are not normally trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred. All BASES members/accredited sport and exercise scientists have, however, a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

3. Policy statement

BASES has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in sport and exercise science from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. BASES will aim to ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in sport and exercise science practice through adherence to the welfare policy adopted by BASES.

4. Policy aims

The aim of BASES Welfare Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of BASES members/accredited sport and exercise scientists
- Allowing all BASES members/accredited sports scientists to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection or vulnerable adult issues.

5. Promoting good practice

Good practice means:

- BASES members should always adhere to the BASES code of conduct. This can be found at the BASES website, www.bases.org.uk

5.1 In addition accredited sport and exercise scientists should:

- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, then it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the coach/parent/carer and recognised good practice/guidelines within that sport.
- Involve parents/carers/clubs wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, then always ensure sport and exercise scientists work within the sight of another responsible adult and do not work alone
- Ensure that, if mixed groups are taken away from the supervision of parents/carers, then they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur
- Request written parental consent if required to transport children in their cars
- Ensure that, at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Be aware of the relevant practice and policy guidelines of the appropriate governing bodies with whom they work.

5.2 Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, then it should be with the full knowledge and consent of either someone in official temporary charge of the child (such as a coach) or the child's parent/carer. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/carer fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others outside of planned sessions
- Avoid taking a child alone in a vehicle.

5.3 Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. BASES members should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult. Reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for BASES members to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parent/carer and the individuals involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, then 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 an athlete to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

5.4 Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur, then you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents/carer of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If s/he seems distressed in any manner
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

5.5 Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All BASES members sport and exercise scientists should be vigilant and any concerns regarding conduct should be reported to the appropriate body (event organiser/ Club Welfare Officer).

5.6 Videoing in sport and exercise science

There is no intention to prevent sport and exercise scientists using video equipment in legitimate sport and exercise science practice. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the support programme and such films should be stored safely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

6. Registration and training of sport and exercise scientists

BASES recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. As BASES holds an accredited list of sport and exercise scientists and those undertaking Supervised Experience we recognise our responsibility to recommend those suitable to work with children. Checks will include the following:

6.1 Registration: From October 2006

- All new registrations for Accreditation or Supervised Experience will complete an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check through BASES
- Exceptions to the above are unless evidence can be provided that demonstrates a disclosure check has been made through other employment within 6 months of application. This would be validated through CRB and reference from the employer through which the disclosure check was registered. The certificate must have been issued at the same level of disclosure and for a similar role
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children (if possible). These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact
- Sport and exercise science (or relevant) qualifications should be substantiated by the Supervised Experience or Accreditation process.
- All BASES members should be made aware that membership implies that they have signed up to the association's Code of Conduct
- Child protection and vulnerable adult procedures are explained and training needs are identified. All members will have access via the BASES website to a copy of the Welfare policy and procedures.

6.2 Training:

In addition to checks outlined above, the safeguarding process should include training to help BASES members to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse by peers, athletes or any others
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person
- Work safely and effectively with children.

6.2.1 By October 2006 BASES will:

- Establish a Welfare Officer supported through appropriate training and development
- Ensure Strategic Management Team and BASES staff have attended a BASES 'Safeguarding Welfare in Sport and Exercise Sciences' workshop or an alternative good practice and child protection awareness training workshop
- Broadcast and promote this policy.

6.2.2 For Accreditation/or Re-Accreditation onto the BASES accredited list of sport and exercise scientists, members must

- Attend a BASES 'Safeguarding Welfare in Sport and Exercise Sciences' workshop or a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure

their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection

- All accredited members will be required to have attended a BASES 'Safeguarding Welfare in Sport and Exercise Sciences' workshop or a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop by December 2007

7. Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in BASES (within the organisation or as a member/ Accredited sports scientist) to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

7.1 BASES will assure all staff and sports scientists that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

7.2 Where there is a complaint against a BASES accredited sports scientist/member/ organisation staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation (Police)
- A child protection investigation (Social Services)
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (within BASES).

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

8. Action if there are concerns

8.1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; then the BASES Welfare Officer will deal with it as a minor misconduct issue
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the BASES Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, then it should be reported to the Executive Officer who will decide, in consultation with the Chair, how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

8.2. Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the relevant sport/club Welfare Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk
- The Sport/Club Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to Social Services (within athletes locality) department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- The Sport/Club Welfare Officer should also notify BASES Welfare Officer, Area Welfare Officer and Governing Body Welfare Officer
- If the Club Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, then the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

8.3. Confidentiality

It is important to recognise that information relating to concerns about a child or vulnerable adult must be shared with the appropriate organisations. It is important that both the individual and BASES member are aware that the rules of confidentiality that would normally govern the professional relationship cannot be respected if a child or vulnerable adult is deemed to be at risk or harm.

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

- The Club/sport Welfare Officer
- The parent/carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services within locality of athlete/police
- The BASES Welfare Officer and Sport Governing Body Welfare Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

9. Internal enquiries and suspension

- For a full description of the reporting process see appendix A.
- The BASES Welfare Officer in conjunction with the Executive Officer and BASES Chair will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from the BASES accredited list/Supervised Experience pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the BASES Disciplinary Tribunal will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the BASES Disciplinary Tribunal must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout (for details of the disciplinary procedures refer to the BASES Code of Conduct).
- Any member accused of abuse/poor practice will have the right to appeal against the decision to the Strategic Management Team who shall have full power to consider the matter afresh, together with full power to revise, confirm or refer (to an appropriate authority) any prior decision.

10. Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. BASES will inform all parties of relevant helplines, support groups, opportunities for critical debriefing and will maintain an open culture and help the healing process
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

11. Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g., by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the sport and exercise scientist should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

12. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child/vulnerable adult's name, age and date of birth of the child
- The child/vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents/carers been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the child/vulnerable adult was not the person who reported the incident, has the child/vulnerable adult been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

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BASES Reporting Procedures For Poor Practice/Abuse



