

# MOUNTAIN WARRIORS LIMITED



## Child Protection Policy

10<sup>th</sup> May 2007

All young people have a right to be safe and enjoy their sport, and as such this document outlines the Child Protection Policy Procedures for Mountain Warriors Ltd. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the club's Child Protection Policy Statement. It is imperative that all coaches, volunteers, officials and parents read and fully understand the club's Child Protection Policy to ensure that all young people at the club are protected and safe to enjoy sport. Adults at all times in the vicinity of young people at the club must be conscious and aware of these procedures and abide by them fully.

It is important that all individuals working with Young People behave in an appropriate manner, operating within an accepted ethical framework. This will protect both the Young People and the Adults within the club.

The following section provides guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when working with Young People. The guidelines are relevant to all Adults (Coaches, Officials, Team Managers, Volunteers and Parents) working with Young People at Mountain Warriors.

## Principles of good practice

- Ensure that the sport is fun, enjoyable and fair play is promoted
- Treat all Young People equally, with respect and dignity
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of Young People
- Always put the welfare of each Young Person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment, e.g. no secrets)
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers Young People to share in the decision-making process
- The club adopts Home Office guidelines, which recommends the principle that people in positions of trust and authority do not have sexual relationships with 16-17 year olds or vulnerable adults in their care.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of Young People, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism
- Ask each participant to complete a Player Profile Form providing details on:
  - name, address, date of birth
  - experience of playing the sport
  - any medicines being taken
  - existing injuries or conditions
  - emergency contact details of a Parent or Carer
- Ensure the information on the Player Profile Form is to hand, in case of emergency
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by recognised first aid organisations
- Keep up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in the sport.
- If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure Parents/Teachers/Coaches /Officials work in pairs
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of Staff

- Ensure that at tournaments or away/overnight fixtures, Adults do not enter Young People's rooms without following appropriate guidelines, or invite Young People into their rooms
- Ensure that there is regular communication with Parents/Carers, gaining written consent: to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment to take Young People away to a tournament

## Principles of poor practice

The following practice will place Young People and those working with them in a vulnerable position and is deemed to be poor practice. If poor practice is identified through a complaint or referral, this may result in an investigation and disciplinary action in terms of various relevant authorities (as listed at the end of this procedure).

All individuals working with Young People should avoid the following practice.

You should NEVER:

- Spend time alone with Young People away from others
- Take Young People to your home where they will be alone with you
- Transport Young People in your car alone
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Share a room with a Young Person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching or physical abuse
- Allow Young People to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a Young Person, even in fun
- Reduce a Young Person to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a Young Person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for a Young People that they can do for themselves

If any of the above, or the following incidents occur or are observed, you must report them to the Club Child Welfare Officer and make a written note, which is signed and dated and inform Parents wherever possible if:

- You accidentally hurt a Young Person
- A Young Person seems distressed in any manner
- A Young Person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- A Young Person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

## Codes of conduct

The Codes of Conduct adopted by the club are based on the principles of good practice and Home Office guidance in "Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? - Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust", 1999, which protects those working with Young People or Vulnerable Adults against sexual activity within relationships of trust.

Adults working with Young People in the club, in particular Coaches and Team Managers are in a relationship of trust. This can be described in broad terms as one party (the Adult) having responsibility for another party (the Young Person/People) in a way which gives the Adult power or influence over the Young Person. It is not acceptable for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with anyone in his/her care. ("Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? - Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust", Home Office, 1999).

If coaches, volunteers or officials at the club breach this code of conduct, the individual may face disciplinary action.

## Guidance for appointment of coaches, volunteers & officials

When appointing a coach, volunteer or official to support or run a young person's team, it is essential for the person to undertake the following:

- The individual has been screened to check his/her suitability to work with Young People. Ideally this screening process will involve an official Criminal Records Bureau check, or otherwise will be a self-declaration form and references.
- The individual should be screened every three years.
- To complete a form to indicate that they have read and understood the: Code of Conduct, Role Description, the Club Constitution, The Child Protection Policy, and the Equity Statement.

It would be desirable if the person had the following:

- The individual is appropriately qualified
- Holds relevant current insurance

## Guidance on photography & use of video

The club is keen to promote positive images of Young People playing sport at the club and is not banning the use of photographic or videoing equipment. However, there is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of Young People.

Before taking photographic images of young people, it is advisable that the club follows these guidelines:

- Ask for parental permission to use their child's image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the club or sport.
- Ask for the Young Person's permission to use his/her image. This ensures that he/she is aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the club or sport.
- If the young person is named, avoid using his/her photograph
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the Young Person.
- Only use images of Young People in appropriate dress, to reduce the risk of inappropriate use, and to provide positive images of the Young Person at the club.
- Encourage the reporting of inappropriate use of images of Young People. If you are concerned, report your concerns to the Club Child Welfare Officer
- Using Video as a coaching aid: There is no intention to prevent Club Coaches using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, Players and their Parents/Carers should be aware that this is part of the Coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

The Parents/Carers and Young People must provide written consent for the use of photography and video analysis.

## Guidelines on changing

Players aged 10 and under must be supervised at all times in changing rooms by two members of Staff of the same gender as the Players.

Adults working with young teams, including Volunteers, Coaches, Officials or Staff, should not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as Young Players (under 16).

Mixed gender teams must have access to separate male and female changing rooms.

If Young Players (under 16) play for Adult Teams, they and their Parents must be informed of the Club's policy on changing arrangements.

If Young People are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so.

If the Club has disabled players, involve them and their Carers in deciding how, if applicable, they wish to be assisted to change and ensure they provide full consent to any support or assistance required.

## Guidelines on transportation

The parents/carers will be informed by the club of the transport policy regarding the dropping off and collecting of Young People at the Club.

The following principles will help underpin the policy:

- Coaches and Club Staff will be responsible for Young People in their care when on the Club premises
- It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to transport their child/children to and from the Club
- It is not the Coach's or Volunteer's responsibility to transport the Young People to and from the Club
- The Club must receive permission from Parents/Carers for Young People to participate in all competitions and away fixtures/events
- The Club will provide a timetable of activities at the beginning of a season and notify Parents/Carers in writing where practically possible of any changes to this timetable
- The Club will require contact numbers for Parents/Carers and any alternative numbers if they are not contactable on the numbers provided
- The Club will provide the Parents/Carers with a contact number which may be used if the Parents/Carers will be late in collecting their child/children

If a Parent/Carer is late the Club will:

- Attempt to contact the Parent/Carer
- Check the Club contact number for any information regarding the Young Person
- Contact the alternative contact name/number
- Wait with the Young Person at the Club with, wherever possible, other Staff/Volunteers or Parents
- Remind Parents/Carers of the policy relating to late collection
- If Parents/Carers remain uncontactable, Staff will need to report the situation to Social Services or the Police

Staff/Volunteers should avoid:

- Taking the Child home or to any other location
- Asking the Child to wait in a vehicle or the Club with them alone
- Sending the Child home with another person without permission

## Use of Alcohol and illegal substances

Whilst actively working with young people ALL adults must adhere to the code of conduct. If an Adult is reported to have breached the code of conduct, with regard to the use of alcohol, cigarettes or illegal substances, he/she will be investigated under the club's complaints and discipline procedures.

Within a Club setting or on away fixtures or tours, it is inappropriate and it is illegal in some cases for adults, coaches, volunteers, or officials to allow young people to consume alcohol, smoke (under the age of 16), or take illegal or banned substances. If a report is received with allegations of this taking place, the individuals will be seen to have breached the code of conduct and will be investigated under the club's disciplinary procedures.

## Indicators of abuse

Not all situations that give cause for concern may be a breach of code of conduct or poor practice. Some incidents may be suspected child abuse, either within or outside the sport or club.

Indications that a Young Person may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The Young Person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of Adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Has difficulty in making friends
- Is prevented from socialising with other young people
- Displays variations in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite
- Loses weight for no apparent reason
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Some changes in behaviour can be caused by changes at home, for example bereavement. Parents/carers must inform the coach, club or volunteer of any significant changes which may affect the behaviour of their child.

It is not the responsibility of those working in the club to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## Bullying and Harassment

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Although bullying often takes place in schools, it can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision - on the way to and from school, at a sporting event, in the playground and in changing rooms.

The competitive nature of sport can create or support an environment for the bully. The bully in sport can be:

- A parent who pushes too hard
- A coach who adopts a "win at all costs" philosophy

- A young player who intimidates inappropriately
- An older player who intimidates inappropriately
- An official who places unfair pressure on a young person.

Bullying can be defined in the following ways:

- Physical: e.g. hitting, kicking and theft
- Verbal: e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures
- Written: e.g. graffiti, letter or mobile text messaging
- Emotional: e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
- Sexual: e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to Young People, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a young person is being bullied:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn
- Being clingy, depressed, tearful, and emotionally up and down
- Showing reluctance to go to school, training or sports club
- A drop off in performance at school or standard of play
- Physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions
- Drop out of a newer member

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that bullying or harassment is actually taking place.

It is not the responsibility of those working in the club to decide that bullying or harassment is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## Suspicious and allegations

You must report your concerns or any information received to the Club Child Welfare Officer, who will refer the matter to the Mountain Warriors Welfare Case Officer or to an appropriate agency, such as the Police, Social Services or the NSPCC as rapidly as possible.

When responding to a disclosure you need to always:

- Stay calm
- Keep an open mind
- Listen carefully to what is said and take the young person seriously
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not keep secrets
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by telling you

- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the Young Person's own words as soon as possible.
- Report the incident to the Club Child Welfare Officer or National Governing Body's Welfare Case Officer.

## Dealing with alleged abuse

It is not the club's responsibility to decide if a referral is child abuse. If there is any concern or doubt, the information received will be shared with Social Services, the Police or any other appropriate child protection agency.

Social Services are legally bound to make enquiries with regard to referrals. They will always work in partnership with the Police, as necessary. Their primary duty is to safeguard and ensure the welfare of the young person and to work within the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Disciplinary or misconduct – the club and maybe the National Governing Body is involved
- Criminal - the Police are involved
- Child protection - Social Services are involved (possible involvement by the Police)

Information passed to the NGB, Social Services or the Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information needs to include the following:

- Details of the young person i.e. age/date of birth, address, race, gender and ethnic origin
- Details of the facts of the allegation or observations
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries that have occurred
- Witnesses to the incident(s)
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A signature, date and time on the report

Reporting the matter to the NGB, Police or Social Services department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the Social Services department must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record must also be made of the name and designation of the Social Services member of Staff or Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. A copy of this information should be sent to the National Governing Body's Welfare Case Officer.

### **Confidentiality:**

The legal principle that the 'welfare of the child is paramount' means that the considerations which might apply to other situations in the organisation should not be allowed to over-ride the right of Young People to be protected from harm.

However, every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

If you have a concern with regard to the behaviour of an adult towards a young person, it is important that you share your concerns with the National Governing Body's Welfare Case Officer or another appropriate statutory agency.

All concerns will be taken seriously and managed accordingly within the policies and procedures for the Welfare of young people in sport.

## If an allegation is made against you

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of an adult towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated. If you are the person who is the centre of an allegation, the situation will be explained to you and you may be asked to stop working with young people in the club. This may result in suspension from activity within the club and the sport whilst a full investigation is carried out. This is to protect all parties involved.

On completion of the investigation, depending on the outcome, the club and other appropriate agencies will assess the appropriateness of you returning to work with young people in the club and how, if applicable, this will be managed.

## Useful contacts

- Club Child Welfare Officer  
Richard Gillies  
Child Welfare Officer  
Mountain Warriors Ltd  
24 Hillford Place,  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 5AU  
Tel 07742 056 154
- National Governing Body Child Welfare Case Officer  
As above
- Local Social Services  
Out of office hours contact  
NB In an emergency, the Samaritans will hold the SS Duty Officer's contact number
- Local Police child protection teams  
In an emergency contact via 999
- NSPCC  
Freephone 24 hour Helpline 0800 800 5000  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Childline UK  
Tel: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit  
3 Gilmour Close  
Beaumont Leys  
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## Document History

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## Distribution Lists

Distribution lists (See separate distribution lists)
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