

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

ST GEORGE’S SAILING CLUB CIC

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POLICY DATE:	06/04/2026
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1 Policy Statement

As defined in the Children's Act 1989, for the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child. The policy also applies to vulnerable adults. Where it states "child" or "children" in this policy it includes and applies to vulnerable adults.

It is the policy of SGSC to safeguard children and vulnerable adults taking part in activities from abuse.

SGSC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, children and vulnerable adults participating in SGSC activities do so in a safe environment.

We recognise that the safety and welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount and that all children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection from abuse. No adult, or child may be discriminated against in any way, whether for their age, gender (including reassignment), sexual orientation or identity, appearance, ethnic origin, culture, religion or belief, home language, family background/class/status, ability, learning difficulties or disabilities, or health status.

SGSC actively seeks to:

- Create a safe and welcoming environment, both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.
- Ensure that SGSC organised activities and events are run to the highest possible safety standards.
- Be prepared to review SGSC's ways of working to incorporate best practice.

We will:

- Treat all children with respect and celebrate their achievements.
- Carefully recruit and select all volunteers, whatever their role within the club.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected/actual child abuse.

2 Designated Person

SGSC Welfare Officer / Safeguarding Lead: Tanya Markwick 07847003982

Disclosure Co-ordinator Dana Albu 07714956808

Email: safeguarding@sgsailing.org.uk

The Welfare Officer's general terms of reference are:

- Maintaining up-to-date policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that relevant volunteers, staff and contractors are aware of the policy and follow the procedures including implementing safe recruitment procedures.
- Advising the Commodore of any incidents (whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality as required by Social Services/Police).
- Advising the Directors of BLYM and wider leadership team on child protection issues as appropriate.
- Attending training to keep current with issues and legislation.
- Maintaining contact details for local Children's Social Services and Police.

If there is a concern, the Welfare Officer would:

- Be the first point of contact for any concerns or allegations, from children or adults, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained in all cases.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken, in line with the organisation's procedures and in conjunction with the person in charge at the time (Director/ Welfare Officer/ Group Leader etc).
- Keep the RYA informed as necessary.

3 Practice Guidelines

3.1 Culture

It is important to develop a culture within SGSC where both children and adults feel able to raise concerns, knowing that they will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and will not make the situation worse for themselves or others.

Some children and adults may be more vulnerable to abuse or find it more difficult to express their concerns. For example, a disabled child or vulnerable adult who relies on a carer to help them get changed may worry that they won't be able to sail any more if they report the carer. A child who has experienced racism may find it difficult to trust an adult from a different ethnic background.

3.2 Minimising Risk

3.2.1 Leadership and Volunteer Responsibilities

The SGSC directors, leadership team and volunteers should be given clear roles and responsibilities; and be provided with and aware of SGSC's:

- Child Protection policy and procedures (section 4)
- Guidelines on following good practice (3.2.2)
- Guidelines on recognising signs of abuse (section 6)

[All contained within this document].

RYA Coaches and Instructors are expected to comply with the RYA Codes of Ethics and Conduct.

3.2.2 Volunteer "Good Practice Guide"

SGSC will endeavour to plan the work of the organisation and promote good practice to minimise situations where adults are working unobserved or could take advantage of their position of trust. Good practice protects everyone.

N.B. Where it states "child" or "children" it includes and applies to vulnerable adults.

You should:

- Avoid spending any significant time working with children in isolation.
- Not take children alone in a car, however short the journey.
- Not take children to your home as part of your organisation's activity.
- Design training programmes that are within the ability of the child.
- Get a child to ask a friend to help if they are having difficulty with a wetsuit or suncream.
- Not enter an 'under 18's' changing room when children are in them, except in a safeguarding situation. If it is essential, in an emergency situation, for a male to enter a female changing area or vice versa, it is advised that they are accompanied by another adult of the opposite gender.
- Make sure you are in view of others, preferably another adult, if you have to help a child (e.g. first aid).

Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure that they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation or the child's parents/guardians or the or vulnerable adult's carer.

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged; or use such language yourself when with children.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Fail to respond to an allegation made by a child – You Must Always Act.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- Photograph or video children, or publish their pictures, unless as an authorised SGSC Officer and/or with permission of SGSSC leadership team and the knowledge and consent of their parents/carers. Be sensitive to the risk, that a third party could misuse images.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child (where possible) and their parents/carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents/carers should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure that any adult present is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

3.2.3 First Aid & Medical Treatment

First aid is part of our normal duty of care. Obtain consent (from parent and/or child as appropriate) if medication or medical treatment is required in the absence of the parent/carer. Check for details on the 'Membership Application & Consent Form'.

3.2.4 Parental Responsibilities

Although SGSC has a duty of care to its members, and particularly to young people who cannot take full responsibility for their own safety, parents must be responsible for their children's welfare and behaviour, or designate another adult to take that responsibility, outside formal club-organised activities.

3.2.5 Photography

Publishing articles and photographs is an excellent way of recognising young people's achievements and of promoting SGSC and the sport as a whole. However, it is important to minimise the risk of anyone using images of children in an inappropriate way. Digital technology makes it easy to take, store, send, manipulate and publish images.

SGSC may take photographs or videos of those taking part in any SGSC activity and may use and/or store this media for coaching and/or promotional purposes in perpetuity, in line with the consent obtained on the 'Membership Application & Consent Form' for each member. Consent to future photographs or videos may be withdrawn at any time if requested in writing.

Most sailing activity takes place in areas that are open to the public and it is therefore not possible to control all photography, but any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography, should be reported to the SGSC's welfare advisor / Group leader and treated in the same way as any other child protection concern. Parents and spectators should be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state their purpose for photography/filming.

The use of cameras or camera phones in changing areas are not permitted in any circumstances. Such use by young people should be regarded as a form of bullying.

3.2.6 Changing Rooms & Showers

BLYM has 4 separate changing facilities (changing rooms, showers and toilets), one room each for Adult Males, Adult Females, Under 18 Males and Under 18 Females. There are additionally Male and Female Disabled Changing Rooms.

It is preferable for adults to stay out of Under 18 Changing Rooms while there are children in them. However, bullying can be an issue here and a balance should be struck depending on the situation. If it is essential, in an emergency situation, for a male to enter a female changing area or vice versa, it is advised that they are accompanied by another adult of the opposite gender.

3.2.7 Events & Expeditions

Everyone taking part in an open event will be required to become a temporary member of SGSC and should be made aware that there is someone designated to be responsible for child welfare.

It is essential that those accompanying young people to away events, and those attending, have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the conduct expected of them.

4 Child Protection Procedure

4.1 Statement

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, their parents, someone in SGSC or an external body. It may involve the behaviour of a volunteer, member of the leadership team, a peer, or something that has happened to the child outside the sport, perhaps at home or at school. Children may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel at ease.

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If there is a concern that a child is being abused it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and report them to a SGSC Welfare Advisor. If they cannot be contacted, then it must be reported to the senior person in charge of SGSC that day who will refer the matter to the SGSC Welfare Advisor or in an emergency to the appropriate statutory or regulatory authorities.

4.2 Safe Recruitment

4.2.1 Recruitment

All volunteers who work with children with SGSC, will be subject to some form of scrutiny and will be expected to have the relevant experience for the role and to be clear about what it entails.

SGSC will make all reasonable efforts to find out if the volunteer has any conviction for criminal offences against children. They will be asked to complete the 'Self-declaration and disclosure' form and consent to DBS checks being made with the Criminal Records Bureau, through the SGSC Disclosure Co-ordinator.

4.2.2 Competence

To ensure that a volunteer is suited to a role with specific responsibilities and to meet equality of opportunity SGSC will, where appropriate:

- Provide a job or role description.
- Draw up a "person specification" listing the key qualifications, skills and experience required.
- Check that the person is competent for the role e.g. they hold appropriate and valid RYA Safety Boat certificate.

4.2.3 Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

Volunteers over the age of 18 years and involved in close or regular contact, training or supervising of children; or in a position of trust or authority:

- will be required to complete a Self-declaration and disclosure form which will be kept and stored securely by the Disclosure Co-ordinator and Welfare Officer.
- will be DBS checked and an Enhanced Criminal Record Disclosure sought.

The SGSC Disclosure co-ordinator is the designated person authorised to issue and ensure the completion of the DBS forms and forward them to the RYA for processing.

The RYA operates as a registered umbrella body with the DBS and with Disclosure Scotland, who can provide details of a person's criminal record (with the individual's consent) in the form of a Disclosure certificate. The certificate is sent to the individual, and the club is informed of the outcome by the RYA and given the DBS number and date. This data is held by the Disclosure Co-ordinator and Welfare Officer.

It is SGSC's policy that DBS checks are carried out every 3 years or via subscription to continual updates.

4.3 Handling Concerns, Reports, and Allegations

Always:

- Stay calm – remain receptive & approachable, ensure that the child is safe and feels safe.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what they say seriously.
- Listen carefully and patiently.
- If you need more information, use TED: Tell me... Explain to me... Describe to me
- Be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the child wants & can be misinterpreted.
- Thank the person for telling you and acknowledge how difficult it must have been to disclose.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you, stress that they are not to blame.
- Be honest, explain what will happen next - that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Record what the child has said, using exact words where possible, as soon as possible after the event.
- Record of the date, time, place and people who were present at the disclosure.
- Follow SGSC's child protection procedures.

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep (e.g. you won't tell anyone).
- Ask leading questions or more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act.
- Interrupt when a child is recalling significant events.
- Discuss the referral with anyone who does not need to know.
- Ignore what you have been told – **you must pass it on.**
- Confront or contact the Subject of Concern.
- Take sole responsibility – you should consult someone else (ideally the designated SGSC Welfare Advisor or the person in charge) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

What a child has said can be upsetting or a concern about the consequences of actions taken in response to an alleged abuse such as calling the police. However, one thing is certain – it cannot be ignored.

4.3.1 Recording Information

If there is a suspicion that a child may have been the subject of any form of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, the allegation must be referred as soon as possible to a SGSC Welfare Advisor who will refer the matter as appropriate to the statutory or regulatory authorities who have trained experts to handle such cases.

Asking questions should be avoided as this may jeopardise any formal investigation. Listening and keeping a record of anything the child says or that has been observed or any other information should be passed on to SGSC Welfare Officer preferably on the 'SGSC Incident Reporting Form'.

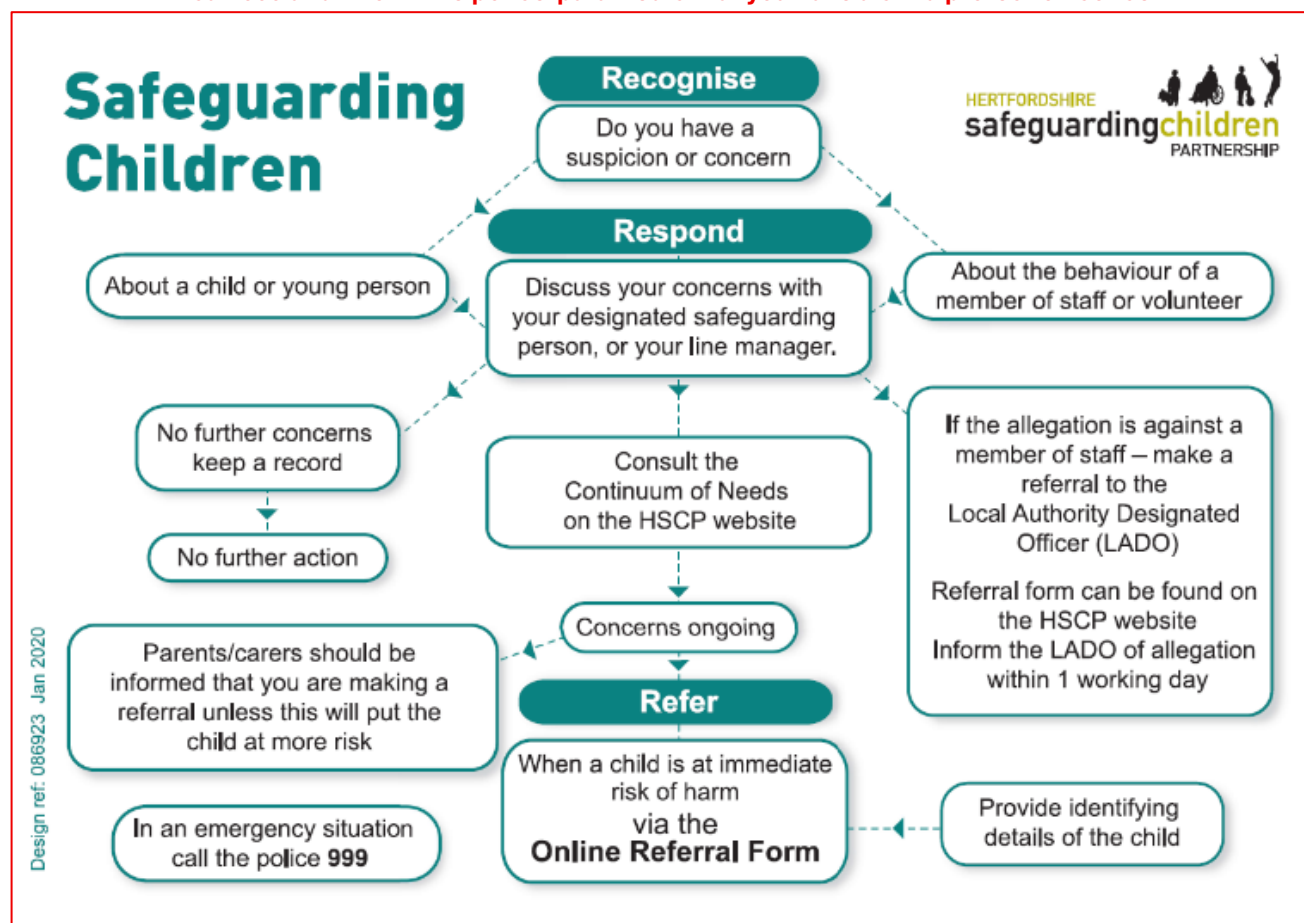
All information is treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to know.

If the allegation or suspicion concerns someone within SGSC the child's parents/carers, the SGSC Welfare Officer, Person in charge at the time, and Commodore of SGSC (unless they are the subject of the allegation) and the relevant authorities will be informed. The RYA Child Protection Co-Ordinator may also be consulted for advice.

If the alleged abuse took place outside of SGSC recognised activities, the Police or Children's Social Care will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within SGSC other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the Welfare Officer / Person in charge.

4.4.2 Procedure Flowchart

**If the child is unsafe or requires urgent medical attention,
call 999 and inform the police/paramedic that you have a child protection concern**



Continuum of Needs & Online Referral Form - <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/home.aspx>

RECORD EVERYTHING

- If the Designated safeguarding person is not available, then refer the matter designated Team Leader of SGSC for that session.
- RYA safeguarding team can be contacted for support & direction.

5 Useful Contacts

Hertfordshire Social Services (Children)	03001234043	
(Adult)	03001234042	
Police Child Protection Team	08453300222	
National Police Prevent Line	08000113764	
NSPCC	08088005000	help@nspcc.org.uk
ChildLine UK	08001111	
NSPCC Child Protection in Sport	0116 366 5580	cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
RYA Safeguarding Team	02380012796	safeguarding@rya.org.uk
SGSC Safeguarding – Tanya	07847003982	safeguarding@sgsailing.org.uk
SGSC Disclosure Co-ordinator	07714956808	
SGSC Commodore – Flo	07880432999	

6 Types of Abuse & Recognising the signs

6.1 Types of Abuse

Abuse is the maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, adults, another child, or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children causing physical harm, for example but not limited to:

- Hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning
- Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- Attempting to suffocate or drown children

In sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

Neglect in a sailing situation might occur if an instructor / coach fails to ensure that children are safe; or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves an individual forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, to meet their own sexual needs. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact (e.g. full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling)
- Showing children pornographic books, photographs, videos or online images
- Taking pictures of children for pornographic purposes
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Imposing expectations which are beyond the child's age or developmental capability
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- Preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- Bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- The exploitation or corruption of children

Emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Bullying

Bullying (including cyber bullying) may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person. 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.

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. **In a sport context this could be a coach, volunteer, or adult in a position of trust.**

Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. **Grooming in sport can also facilitate financial, emotional, or physical exploitation.**

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative. Children and young people can be groomed online, in person or both – by a stranger or someone they know.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It is in itself a form of harm.

The Prevent duty requires specified authorities to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". It focuses on early intervention, tackling ideology, and supporting vulnerable individuals

Where there is a concern regarding extremist views and risk of radicalisation it must be reported to Social Services and the Prevent Team.

Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. **County Lines** is a form of criminal exploitation. It refers to gangs using children to move, hold and sell drugs across the UK using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs.

6.2 Recognising Abuse

It is not always easy, even for the most experienced carers, to spot when a child has been abused. However, some of the more typical symptoms which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- 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
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- A sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- A change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)
- A general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- An unexpected reaction to normal physical contact
- Difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

It is important to note that a child could be displaying some or a combination of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, without this necessarily meaning that the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, but you may just feel that something is wrong. If you have noticed a change in the child's behaviour, first talk to the parents or carers. It may be that something has happened, such as a bereavement, which has caused the child to be unhappy.