

UKSDC - Child Protection Code of Practice and Procedures

1. Good and poor practice

As stated in the 'SDC Child protection policy' it should be the objective of all SDC Staff and volunteers to demonstrate good practice at all times as set out in this 'SDC Code of practice and procedures' document.

The main reason for this is that poor practice is not in itself abuse but creates an environment where abuse is more likely to happen.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the work environment, or during extra-curricular activities. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.

A teacher, SDC staff member, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. Whenever there is concern that abuse may have taken place or is likely to occur this concern should be raised with an SDC Child Protection Officer (CPO).

1.1. Definition of good practice behaviour

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate. Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person before the achievement of goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Challenge the use inappropriate language by children (and adults).
- Consider the risks of allowing unrestricted access to unsuitable content on internet or other digital media.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any accident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

1.2. Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in the Management Team in the SDC or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury during an SDC activity and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Do not spend time alone with children away from others.
- Do not take children alone in a car.

1.3. Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. No employee, volunteer or other individual affiliated with the SDC should ever:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Make suggestive comments to a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allowing or encouraging viewing of abusive or pornographic images on digital media.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

1.4. Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to a CPO and record the incident. You should also ensure the teachers or parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child in the care of the SDC
- If a child seems distressed in any way during the activity or workshop in which you are involved.

2. Use of photographs, video and social media involving children

Many situations occur in the normal operation of SDC activities where children and vulnerable adults may be photographed, filmed or exposed to social media; by taking a few reasonable precautions and following some simple guidelines this can be done in a way that will not put any child at risk or endanger the reputation of the Ri and its employees. For events within the RSDC our standard terms and conditions of booking allow for some use of images of attendees, e.g. in group shots for promotional use, however it may often be sensible to go beyond these standard terms and give more notification.

If you are acting on behalf of the SDC in a role that may involve photography, filming or interview of young people you are expected to follow the guidance below and if unsure contact an SDC member of staff or a CPO.

2.1. Consent and seeking specific permissions

School parties should ensure that appropriate parental permission is obtained before attendance at any SDC event". Whilst this does cover a multitude of situations it is good practice and courteous to seek extra permission from the parent or guardian if an event you are organizing or administering may involve more than distant filming of a group.

You may well have to pass this responsibility onto the group's teacher or leader/assigned responsible adult but it is essential that you collect and store electronic/hard copies of the school's consent forms.

2.2. Use of personal details in promotion, advertising and media

When using the image of a child either on the website or in the external media it is often desirable to include supplementary personal information; in doing so however you should try to reduce the possibility of full identification of the subject to a minimum. You should bear in mind the ability to search for people using search engines and social media channels. The kind of information that would aid a full identification include the following list and only a small selection of these (two or possibly 3) should be available to the public:

- First name
- Surname
- School or school badge
- Town or village of residence
- Age
- Time and place of photo if likely to be repeated at a later identifiable time.
- Association with other identifiable (e.g. famous) people
- Identifying personal details e.g. unusual health issues

The use of any kind of immediately identifying information such as telephone number or email address should always be avoided.

3. Bullying

Bullying is a form of emotional abuse and every child has the right to experience education and the SDC's activities in a safe environment free from abuse and bullying from both adults and their own peers.

In the first instance bullying of a child by an adult or another child should be challenged. If you are concerned that persistent bullying is taking place you should report your concerns in the first instance to the event supervisor or if necessary to a CPO. They will decide on the appropriate action that may range from a caution of those concerned to involvement of social services or the police. All SDC events should include clauses that allow for a bully to be excluded from the event.

The CPO will decide how to involve the parents/carers. The CPO should also report the incident to the relevant trustee. The trustee in question should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident either should be removed from the SDC's volunteer database.

4. Responding to concerns or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the SDC in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

The SDC will assure all staff/volunteers 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.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation (by the police).
- A child protection investigation (usually by social services).
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (by SDC trustees).

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach

a decision. There should be no expectation that those who raise concerns will be informed of the results of any of these investigations

4.1. Reporting concerns about poor practice or suspected abuse

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice a CPO will deal with it as a misconduct issue, if however the allegation requires further investigation the CPO will involve other people and organisations as necessary. The CPO will also 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 SDC's Child Protection Officer should also notify the Chair of Trustees, who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the allegation is about poor practice by an SDC Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair of trustees, who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

4.2. Possible signals of abuse and your immediate response.

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused. However, typical symptoms would include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- A sudden change in behaviour
- The child describes an abusive act
- The child has a general distrust and avoidance of adults
- An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact

Although a child may be displaying some or all of these signs, it does not necessarily mean the child is being abused.

As previously stated you can raise concerns with the CPO but do not start an investigation yourself, this includes unsolicited questioning of the child.

4.3. Action to take if a child reports an abusive action or event to you.

- Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels secure
- Tell the child you are taking the complaint seriously
- Be honest; explain you will have to tell somebody else
- Document what the child has said as soon as possible
- Where possible record actual words said not your interpretation
- Avoid touching the child.

If you are concerned about a child and unable to contact the designated person in your organisation, please call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.

5. Providing information to police or social services

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child'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's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted and if so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- 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.

6. Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

The SDC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Where possible, UKSDC will obtain DBS certificates for key members of UKSDC.

Volunteers may be asked to fulfil the following requirements before they take up their role. These may include:

- Submission for visual confirmation of, or application for, a DBS certificate that satisfies the SDC
- Signed agreement to comply with the SDC's Child Protection Policy
- Making necessary and sufficient checks of identity and suitability of anyone they engage who may themselves have contact with young people.
- Ensuring anyone they engage has read, understood and is willing to comply with the SDC Child Protection Policy.