

# THE SABRE TRUST CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

The Sabre Trust believes that:

- the welfare of any child is paramount
- anyone, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity has the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

The Sabre Trust recognises that its Assessors and volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, and therefore they have put in place a structure that will support them and most importantly protect the child

## DEFINITIONS

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Position of Trust - refers to anyone with a position of responsibility over a child.

Sexual offences legislation states that any sexual activity involving children under 16 is unlawful. The primary motivation for legislation that addresses the abuse of positions of trust is the need to protect young people aged 16 and 17 who, despite reaching the age of consent for sexual activity, are considered to be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, in defined circumstances.

The law defines specific roles and settings where sexual activity between 16 and 17 year olds and those in positions of trust, responsibility or authority constitutes a criminal offence.

Under The Sabre Trust's Child Protection Policy, any person in a position of trust having a sexual relationship with a young person under 18 would be deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct.

Everyone in The Sabre Trust has a duty of care to safeguard children involved in activities from harm. Everyone has a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The Sabre Trust will do its utmost to ensure the safety and protection of everyone it encounters as part of the grant making process.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

There are four main types of abuse. These are:

**Physical Abuse** - this may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when a child is forced into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body; or where a child is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.

## Child Protection Policy

**Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non- penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

In sport, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with children can potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

**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 or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name calling, and sarcasm or bullying. Putting them under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

**Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical harm and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care - givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

### POLICY AIMS

The aim of our Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice. The Sabre Trust will do this by a number of means including:

- allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific issues
- promoting good practice

## Child Protection Policy

### Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions. The Sabre Trust recognises that it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with our judgement about the appropriate action to take. By having a strong framework in place, we believe that this will reduce the judgements that people have to make.

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

In the course of conducting assessments, whether in person or by phone:

- Treat everyone fairly.
- Don't use abusive or inappropriate language.
- Listen to any possible complaints that are made while conducting assessments.
- Make notes of comments by children. No one will criticise you if you follow up on a comment made by a child, which leads you to suspect something is not right in the child's life.
- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Everyone should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. With this in mind, we expect everyone involved in The Sabre Trust to follow the common sense guidelines.

### SAFEGUARDING DISABLED FENCERS

Research has shown that disabled children are up to 4 times as likely to be abused as a non-disabled child. Deaf and disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons including:

- increased likelihood of social isolation
- fewer outside contacts than children without a disability
- dependency on others for practical assistance in daily living (including intimate care)
- impaired capacity to resist, avoid or understand abuse
- speech and language communication needs may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- limited access to someone to disclose to
- particular vulnerability to bullying

The Sabre Trust only deals with disabled and vulnerable people. We will take particular care to protect these more vulnerable participants in the Trust's activity and take action if any information is given to us relating to a disabled or vulnerable participant.

### REPORTING AND RECORDING AN INCIDENT

If any of the following occur, this should be reported immediately to the Chair and the incident recorded. Parents of the child should be informed if:

- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if an applicant appears to be sexually aroused by your presence
- if an applicant misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

If you suspect abuse or poor practice then you must inform the Chair and provide them with a written report. This 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
- Are these your concerns or those of someone else

## Child Protection Policy

- 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 and as far as possible use the child or words
- 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/carers been contacted?
- 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, have they 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 Children's Social Care should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

The first point of contact for any concerns of abuse should be to the Chair, or a Trustee delegated by the Chair for this purpose. Whether the allegations arise from within fencing (ie about a coach or volunteer within a club) or is a concern from outside of fencing (ie about a relative or family friend) the response will be same.

Once a concern is logged with the Chair the information will be passed to the Police or Social Services. If the concern arises out of fencing activities it will be for the Police or Social Services in due course to contact British Fencing so that they can deal with the fencing issues.

### REVIEW OF POLICY

The policy will be reviewed every year.  
The next review is due in March 2021