

Martlet Kayak Club: Child Protection Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the BCU Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy which can be found in the Club Social Arch and on the BCU website; the Martlet Kayak Club Constitution, Rules and membership declaration (on membership form).

Policy Statement

Martlet Kayak Club (MKC) has an open recruitment policy that encourages any individual to take up canoeing.

All members of MKC are regarded as equals and should interact with each other with mutual respect. Members are expected to show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of others and they should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Club.

Child Protection

The purpose of this policy is to: -

1. Protect children and young people involved in our Sport
2. Protect children and young people through their involvement in our Sport
3. Protect coaches and volunteers from wrongful allegations

Definitions

For the purposes of this document the term 'children' includes everyone under 16; 'young people' includes those over 16 and under 18.

Under the heading 'potential areas of harm' are included all the normal risks associated with canoeing. In addition we need to recognise physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. (Explanations of these forms of abuse and a list of indications that a child is being abused can be found in the BCU Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy.)

Children and Young People

Martlet Kayak Club, recognising its duty of care, is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of its members and, to this end, the following procedures have been agreed specifically to protect the well being and to promote the interests of children and young people.

At MKC we believe that taking part in our sport should be a positive and enjoyable part of the lives of children and young people.

We aim to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm and that their rights, wishes and feelings are respected. Our primary concern is for young people who are participating in Club activities, under the leadership of Club coaches, helpers and other volunteers. However, we recognise that we also have a responsibility towards young people who may be at risk from people or activities that have nothing to do with canoeing at MKC.

Principles

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief 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.

Procedures

All Club coaches, helpers and officials working with young people should read and adhere to the BCU Child Protection and Harassment Policy. The Club will follow the guidance of the policy in the event of any concerns or allegations.

The Club will appoint one person whose role it is to deal with any issues relating to child protection and to whom members must report any concerns they have regarding child protection and, in particular, any children or young people they believe to be 'at risk'.

Child protection is the concern of every member of the Club – not just Club coaches. We appreciate that members are not experts in this field and that recognising situations in which abuse may occur or has already taken place is often difficult. For this reason any member who suspects there may be a child or young person 'at risk' must pass on this information to the appointed child protection person; even if it looks as if it might be a false alarm. By someone 'at risk' we mean anyone who could be suffering harm to themselves or who could be harming others. If you think that this is happening you cannot keep it confidential under any circumstances and you should not make promises of confidentiality to children where you suspect that harm could occur.

At regular intervals the Club will endeavour to hold open sessions for all members at which child protection issues will be discussed.

All Club coaches (including those holding BCU qualifications and those recognised by the Club as being experienced enough to coach even though they do not hold any formal qualifications) will attend a Club seminar on child protection before being allowed to work with children and young people. A record will be held by the Club of all those who have attended such a seminar.

At the Club's (committee's) discretion those involved with children and young people may be required to submit themselves to a 'police check'. Before the 'police check' is carried out the club will inform the individual and give the reasons for the check. However, the Club recognises that this in itself is no guarantee that an adult is a suitable person to be in charge of youngsters and the Club reserves the right to refuse a member access to young people even though he or she has 'passed' the 'police check'.

The Club will review this policy annually.

Appointed person: Chris Childs.

Backup to appointed person, if he or she is not available:

- Club Chair
- Local Paddlesport Development Officer
- NSPCC helpline: 0800 800 500

Involvement of Parents

Junior membership of MKC is only available with parental permission (or equivalent). When a junior joins the Club, a copy of this policy – together with the name of the appointed person – should be made available for both the member and the parents to read.

Parents are welcomed and, wherever possible, they are encouraged to join the Club with their children (Junior members under 12 are only admitted when a parent or guardian is also a full or a social member). At the very least we require parents or a known responsible adult to attend Club sessions with their child (if the child is under 16), and to be responsible for their own children whilst on land, the Club will then be responsible for the child whilst on the water.

All young people should complete a membership form, which includes details of their address and legal guardian, and an emergency telephone number. Any medical problems they may have (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes) and any disabilities must be declared.

Advice for Members

If you suspect the existence of actual/potential harm and/or a child makes a disclosure to you:

- Take what the child says seriously
- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality
- Do not question the child unnecessarily
- Make a full record of what was said etc as soon as possible

It is not your responsibility to decide if abuse has taken place, but you must take action i.e. pass on your concerns to the appointed person.

Appropriate behaviour/Good Practise

- You are advised not to spend excessive amounts of time with young people, away from others.
- It is Club policy not to take children on trips away from the Club without permission of a) parents b) Club committee/appointed person
- Don't take children to your home where they are alone with you.
- Transporting children in your car can lay you open to insurance problems/risk of accusations.
- Coaching canoeing can involve quite a lot of physical contact – especially during pool sessions. It is best to tell the person you are coaching about this and check that they are comfortable in this situation. All physical contact should be carried out openly. (Discussions with parents about this is a good practise.)
- It is not a good idea to be alone with a child when you or they are getting changed.