

# Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Squash

## Policy

### Policy Aims:

Sedgefield Squash Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children or vulnerable persons involved in the club, from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Sedgefield Squash Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in the club through adherence to

- the Child Protection guidelines and code of practice adopted by the club
- England Squash and Racketball Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Squash Policy

The aim of this Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children, young people and vulnerable persons with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Sedgefield Squash Club
- to allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific issues.

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

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over, who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability, or unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation (definition from the Department of Health 2002)

Sedgefield Squash Club will ensure that:

- everyone is treated with respect
- all people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- activities take place in a safe and secure environment
- the welfare of a child or vulnerable person is paramount
- there is a named Safeguarding Lead who is appointed by the Committee
- adults who work with young people are checked and cleared through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- opportunities exist for young people and parents/primary carers to talk to us about any concerns they may have
- young people and parents/primary carers feel comfortable and confident enough to discuss attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- adults associated with Sedgefield Squash Club will take appropriate action when young people or parents/primary carers express concern about abuse
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- through the adoption of good practice measures, the opportunity for abuse to occur within, or as a result of the club's activities, is minimised
- the appropriate authorities or charities are advised about any allegation/suspicion or claims regarding poor practice e.g. Social Services, England Squash and Racketball, Police, The NSPCC, Childline. It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Sedgefield Squash Club 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. Information about an alleged abuse will be shared on a "need to know" basis and treated in the strictest confidence. The alleged abusers right to confidentiality will also be upheld.

## **Government Guidance and Legislation**

The England Squash Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are based upon principles contained within U.K. and international legislation and government guidance. This section gives an overview of relevant legislation and guidance. England Squash has a legal and moral obligation and responsibility to contribute to making Squash a safe and child-friendly sport, our policies and procedures take into account the following:

- Every Child Matters 2003
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Police Act 1997
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- “Caring for the young and vulnerable” - Home Office guidance for preventing the abuse of trust 1999
- The ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ - Department of Health 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children - HM Government 2018
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - 1990
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

## **CHILD PROTECTION – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

### **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a child enters the club activity having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child’s self-esteem. In such instances the club activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### **Good practice guidelines**

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/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity

- always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted, and their agreement gained
- keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs
- ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur
- ensuring that at tournaments or 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
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- 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 injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

### **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 charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- spending time alone with children away from others
- taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

### **Practices never to be sanctioned**

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a player
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

### **Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers**

#### **Recruitment**

Sedgefield Squash Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- all volunteers/staff should register with England Squash and Racketball (ESR)
- consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the DBS
- evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
- checking that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures)
- their qualifications should be substantiated
- the job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- Child protection procedures are explained, and training needs are identified

- they should sign up to and understand the club's codes of conduct and Child Protection policy.

## **Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made
- recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse
- respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person
- work safely effectively with children.

Sedgefield Squash Club requires:

- all club coaching staff over the age of 16 must have an up-to-date England Squash DBS check
- a volunteer assisting with coaching must have had a valid DBS check within the last 3 years. An England Squash DBS check must be obtained if a valid certificate cannot be produced.
- all coaching staff to attend or complete an online recognised good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- non-coaching staff and volunteers over 16 years old to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection
- relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- all coaching staff to hold a relevant First Aid certificate
- a Level 1 coach operating solo to be a minimum of 18 years old
- any volunteer under 16 years old, assisting with coaching, to have a club induction session with a Level 2 coach before commencing on court activity
- training updates when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from Sports Coach UK, the NSPCC, and the Sport Council.

## **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Sedgefield Squash Club 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.

Sedgefield Squash Club 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
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

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.

## **Reporting concerns about poor practice**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the designated Club Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant England Squash and Racketball officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

## **Reporting concerns about suspected abuse**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer, who 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 Club Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services department who may involve the Police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from Social Services.

The Club Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant (Sport Governing Body) officer who in turn will inform the (Sport Governing Body) Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Club Chairman or in his/her absence the England Squash and Racketball Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Club Child Protection Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police
- the ESR Child Protection Officer

Social Services advice should be sought on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information gathered must be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## **Enquiries and further action**

Internal enquiries and possible suspension

The Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police inquiries, the Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This could be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, the Club Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## **Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

- a) Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Directory is available from BACP, 15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB. Tel: 01455 883300 E-mail: bacp@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk.
- b) Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Social Services or the Police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### **Bullying**

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. If anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment
- investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately
- reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- report any concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully (ies):

- talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- inform the bully's parents
- insist on the return of any 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim
- provide support for the victim's coach
- impose sanctions as necessary
- encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour
- hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- inform all organisation members of action taken
- keep a written record of action taken

Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated/Club Child Protection Officer as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

### **Reporting concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer)**

Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer, who should contact Social Services or the Police as soon as possible.

If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services or the Police immediately. Social Services and the Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers. The Club Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Club Governing Body. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in Sedgefield Squash Club and act accordingly.

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

### **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 child's name, date of birth, home address and contact number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- a description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also include any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- details of any 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
- whether or not the parents have been contacted, and if so, what has been said
- whether or not anyone else has been consulted, and if so, the details
- whether the child has been spoken to if they were not the one to report the incident
- details of the alleged abuser

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.

---

If you have any concerns about a child or young person call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), text 88858 or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) for immediate advice