



Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Athletics Club

Welfare Policy

2010

Policy Objectives

Everyone who is a member of Blackpool Wyre and Fylde Athletics Club (BWFAC) is entitled to an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this, BWFAC is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics setting.

BWFAC objective is to build a safer future in athletics for all our children and young people under the age of 18 years old.

Athletics is committed to devising, implementing and updating policies and procedures to promote best practice when working with children and to ensure that everyone in the sport understands and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means taking action to report any concerns about their welfare. It is not the responsibility of athletics to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, this is the domain of the child protection professionals.

Policy Statement

BWFAC fully accept their legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care to protect all children and vulnerable adults and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, impairment, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity.

- i. The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- ii. All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse
- iii. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- iv. All individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet this obligation, BWFAC will:

- i. Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the well being of all participants and protect them from abuse.
- ii. Ensure all young people and vulnerable adults who take part in BWFAC are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.
- iii. Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of young people, and/or vulnerable adults.

- iv. Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, child protection, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- v. Review policies regularly.

Best Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

i. Best Practice

Being open and conducting all interactions with children and young people and vulnerable adults in a public place and with appropriate consent.

- Avoiding situations where you are alone with one athlete except where this involves an elite athlete and where full consent and emergency contact details have been provided.
- If you have to meet or coach one athlete alone, ensure it is conducted in an open environment.
- If you are travelling alone with a young person or vulnerable adult, gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one child or vulnerable adult alone with you in the car and never sharing a room on your own with a child, young athlete, or vulnerable adult.
- Challenging bullying, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.
- Never ignoring bullying by parents, coaches or children. Listening to and supporting the person being bullied.
- Maintaining an appropriate relationship with children and vulnerable adults. This means treating people fairly, with respect and avoiding favouritism.
- Being friendly and open and ensuring that relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust.
- Respecting all athletes and helping them to take responsibility for their own development and decision making.
- Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or disturbing to the athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and appropriate parental consent.
- Being qualified and insured for the activities you are coaching and ensuring that your licence remains valid. Ensure that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the individuals welfare, it also protects you (the coach) from possible wrongful allegations. Children and vulnerable adults very rarely make false allegations. If they do it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else's behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

ii. Poor Practice

The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.
- A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.
- A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.
- A coach taking a group of young athletes away to a weekend event on their own.

This list is not exhaustive and many other examples exist. If any of the following incidents should occur you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident.

- If you accidentally hurt an athlete
- If a child or vulnerable adult appears distressed in any manner
- If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

iii. Abuse

Abuse can occur wherever there are young people or vulnerable adults.

There are four main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse. This includes being hit, kicked, shaken or punched, or given harmful drugs or alcohol.
- Emotional abuse. This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a individual's emotional development. This includes being called names, being threatened or being made to feel worthless
- Sexual abuse. This is where children and/or vulnerable adults are used by adults or other children to meet their own sexual needs. This includes being touched inappropriately or where the individual feels threatened or uncomfortable, sexual innuendo, being asked or forced to have sex or being exposed to images of a sexual nature.
- Neglect. This is when an individual is not looked after properly, including having no place to stay, or not enough food to eat, or clothes to keep them warm. It also includes when a child's or vulnerable adults safety is not considered or medical attention is not sought immediately when it is required.

Bullying and racism are also forms of abuse. Bullying is deliberate harmful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time. It includes hitting, threatening

violence, taking property or name calling and deliberately humiliating or ignoring the person. Bullying between children typically takes place when adults are not present, such as in a changing room or on the way to or from a meeting. Racist behaviour may take the form of bullying when references are made to ethnic origin, skin colour or religious belief.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

It is not the responsibility of any BWFAC member (coaches, athletes or staff) to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, however, it is their responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child and/or vulnerable adult. These concerns may arise due to:

- An individual disclosing that they are being abused.
- The behaviour of an adult towards a child or vulnerable adult.
- A number of indicators observed in a child or vulnerable adult over a period of time.

i. How to respond to a disclosure

Don't

- Probe for more information than is offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Show shock or distaste
- Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported appropriately. It is acknowledged that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases of possible sexual abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

ii. Reporting procedures

Any person with information of a disclosure, allegation or concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must immediately reported to the club designated Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who will refer the matter to UKA's CPLO or Home Country lead welfare officer. It is not the responsibility of the BWFAC Club Welfare Officer to decide if a disclosure is abuse, however it is their responsibility to report it.

