



Gateshead Harriers & A.C.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Aim of the Policy

Our aim is to create an environment in which the young athlete (child) and their parent(s), guardian, responsible adult, carer, closest relative; can feel confident that our Athletic Club is providing a safe and wholesome setting for all participants in the sport of athletics.

As a club, we can support and offer advice to every athlete, coach, helper, official and officer of the club in order to protect them from neglect, exploitation and abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse against young athletes will be responded to, and followed up appropriately in accordance with this policy and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidelines and procedures.

Key Principles

1. All people under the age of 18 years are defined as children for the purpose of this policy.
2. All children regardless of their gender, racial origin, culture, ability, religious belief and sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse.
3. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will be responded to by any officer of the club, who through the Club's child protection officers will refer the matter to the Social Services Department in whose area the incident or suspicion occurred.
4. All coaches and officers who come into active contact with children will be subject to a police reference.

Code of Practice for people working in Athletics with children (See individual codes)

- Avoid when possible, situations when you and an individual child are alone.
- Avoid physical contact. Teach techniques by demonstration.
- Coaches are expected to hold appropriate qualifications recognised by UK Athletics. Otherwise they must work under the direct supervision of a qualified coach.
- Adults should never over-criticise young athletes, or use language or actions which may cause children to lose self-esteem or confidence.
- Coaches and adults should not take unrelated children to their (i.e. the coach or adults) home. Permission must be obtained from the child's parent or guardian for car journeys. The presence of a further person should be sought. It is sensible to seat any child in the rear of the car.

- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in all conversations; so coaches and adults must not give children a promise or expectation of confidentiality.

Actions to be taken by Child Protection Officers of Gateshead Harriers & Athletic Club, or in their absence, any officer of the club.

1. Advise the child that you will not be able to maintain confidentiality.
2. Listen to the child rather than question him/her.
3. Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
4. Make a note of what is said, taking care to record the time, date, setting and people present.
5. Any person with a suspicion or allegation of child abuse shall report to the Child Protection Officers or any club officer who should without delay, refer the matter to the Social Services Department where the alleged incident occurred.
6. Telephone numbers: Gateshead Civic Centre 0191-4333000,
Out of hours 0191-4770844.
7. The person reporting the suspicions or making the allegations must be prepared to speak to the Social Services to clarify their concerns.
8. Any person suspected of abusing a child should not be approached by another member of the Club concerning the abuse issue.
9. Other Club officials should deal with matters if the person who would otherwise deal with the matter is compromised by a relationship or friendship with the person against whom the suspicion has emerged.
10. Any child, parent or person is encouraged to contact the Social Services or the police local to them, directly, without referring the matter to the Welfare Officers of the Club.
11. Any coach or member of the club who has been accused of abusing a child will be suspended by the Club "without prejudice" pending the investigation.

Definitions of Child Abuse

- Physical Abuse. Occasions when adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries upon a child, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. This could include the nature of the intensity of training or competition. Offering alcohol or drugs.
- Emotional Abuse. Where adults or other children fail to show due care or attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child causing them to lose confidence, self-esteem and become nervous or withdrawn.
- Neglect. Where adults fail to provide help and care to the child. This also includes leaving a child without proper supervision or placing the child at risk of injury.
- Sexual Abuse. Where adults or children use children to fulfil their sexual needs.

The coach, volunteer, official or Officer of the Club may be placed in a position of trust by the child who may feel able to disclose incidents which have occurred at school or at home. These must be taken seriously and referred immediately to the Social Service Department. It may not be safe for the child to return home.

Gateshead Harriers & Athletic Club Committee approved this policy on 14th May, 2012.

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