West Yorkshire Sport

Is your child safe?

Creating a Safe Sporting Environment

A Guide for Parents and Carers

It's important for you to check that any sports club or activity that your child attends has your child's safety as its priority. Even if the club seems professional, there are questions that you should ask to make sure that they have all the necessary safeguarding measures in place.

SAFE ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

When attending a new or existing sporting activity, there are a number of questions you should ask and things you should look for.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A good organisation will have robust and up-to-date policies & procedures in place. They will be able to provide you with information on what to do if your child has any concerns. Established codes of conducts will be in place for coaches, volunteers and young people.

> Don't be afraid to question. A good and professional organisation will already have these in place and will welcome the chance to demonstrate that they are providing a safe environment.

WELFARE OFFICER

The club will have a designated Welfare Officer, who may also be present to answer any questions you may have. This is the person responsible for putting into place procedures and dealing with any concerns.

SAFE RECRUITMENT

Every organisation providing sporting activities to young people must ensure they have the correct recruitment processes in place which includes interviews, references and have undertaken the appropriate police checks for their volunteers and staff.

PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Enquire about how the organisation promotes the welfare of children and young people. This will include: first aid provision; taking registers at beginning and end of sessions; ratios of staff/volunteers to young people; appropriate transport arrangements if required; and how they listen and respond to the views of young people.

CLUB ACCREDITATION

Find out if the club has an accreditation award such as Clubmark or a National Governing Body equivalent. This will indicate that the club has achieved the minimum standard for providing a good sporting experience for young people.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Ask if coaches and volunteers have undertaken appropriate training to deliver safe sporting sessions. This should include recognised National Governing Body awards and safeguarding awareness training; in addition to any other awards the club may have achieved to enhance the experience of young people.

COMMUNICATION

A good club will have open communication with children & young people and their parents or carers. They should have in place guidelines on the use of text messaging and social media and the appropriate language that all their staff and volunteers should adhere to. Parents and carers should be kept well informed of club activities.

Even though safeguarding principles are the same across all sports; each sport has their own policies and procedures which cover matters such as staffing ratios and physical contact guidelines.

These are specific for their clubs and coaches to help them provide a safe environment for their sport. You should seek this specific information from the governing body.

What else should you look out for?

- Activities where parents or carers are discouraged from watching the sessions or becoming involved.
- Behaviour or activities that encourage rough play, sexual innuendo or humiliating punishments.
- Individuals who take charge and operate independently to organisational guidelines.
- Individuals who show favouritism or personally reward specific young people.
- Encouragement of inappropriate physical contact.
- Poor communication and negative responses to questions about safeguards for your child.
- A 'win at all costs' attitude towards the sport or activity.
- Children who drop out or stop going for no apparent reason.
- Invitations for children to spend time alone with staff or volunteers (or even visit their home).
- Text messages or internet communication direct to young people and does not include parents or carers.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED?

You may feel reluctant to raise a concern and worried about the impact it may have on your child and other people attending the club, but if you are concerned you must take action:

- Listen to your child and ask them questions about the activities they are involved in.
- Speak to other parents and carers.
- Speak to the Welfare Officer or lead person in charge of the sessions.
- If you are not confident that they are the most appropriate person, speak to someone in a higher position in the organisation.
- If the response you receive is not appropriate, or you are still concerned, please contact one of the organisations below.

West Yorkshire Sport
0330 20 20 280
www.wysport.co.uk/safeguarding

If you are concerned about a child in Wakefield call
0345 8503 503

Child Protection in Sport Unit
www.thecpsu.org.uk

If you have any serious concerns about the safety of a child, do not delay and call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

0808 800 5000