



Scottish Power Kite Association Child Protection Policy

Summary

Policy statement

The Scottish Power Kite Association (SPKA) has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in SPKA activities 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. The SPKA will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in kite sports activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by SPKA.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 16 years in Scotland [Children (Scotland) Act 1995], or 18 years in the rest of the United Kingdom (The Children Act 1989). Due to the complexities of Scottish law the Association will assume a 'child' is deemed to be less than 18 years of age.

Policy aims

The aim of the SPKA Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice in:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the SPKA.
- Allow all members/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

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 judgment 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.

Introduction

All sporting organisations, which make provision for children and young people, must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs 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.
- All Association members (paid/unpaid) working in the sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the SPKA Child Protection Officer (CPO).

SPKA members/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

Good practice guidelines

All SPKA members/volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. 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.
- 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. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in 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 groups are taken away, a male and female member of the SPKA should always accompany them. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at 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 children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Keeping up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in the sport
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children 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 SPKA members/volunteers are required to transport children 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 Association 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:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Avoid taking or dropping off a child to/from an event without prior parental consent.

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.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- 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 SPKA members 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 children 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 another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a member.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a member appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a member 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 children and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All SPKA members/volunteers should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the CPO or the SPKA committee.

N.B. Videoing as a teaching aid: there is no intention to prevent the SPKA using video equipment as a legitimate teaching aid. However, students and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is occurring and such films should be stored safely.

SPKA membership

SPKA membership will be renewable on an annual basis. As part of this renewal and the process for accepting new members:

- The SPKA Child Protection Policy will be made available by way of paper copy, email, or website).
- Applicants will be required to declare that they (including family members) are familiar with and agree with this process and that the SPKA Committee has the right to refuse membership.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the SPKA in a paid or unpaid capacity (member or volunteer) to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

The SPKA will assure all members/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 or disabled person.

Where there is a complaint against a member/volunteer of the SPKA, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A misconduct investigation.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the SPKA committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the SPKA Committee, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the SPKA CPO officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member/volunteer of the SPKA should be reported to the SPKA CPO, or Committee Member, 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 SPKA Committee will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

The SPKA Committee or CPO should also notify the relevant SPKA officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the SPKA Committee is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made direct to the SPKA CPO 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 SPKA CPO.
- The SPKA Committee.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

The SPKA may seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should 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).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The SPKA Committee 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 SPKA Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of the SPKA or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the SPKA 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

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and SPKA members may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Directory is available from:

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
BACP House
15 St John's Business Park
Lutterworth
Leicestershire LE17 4HB

Tel: 0870 443 5252
E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk
Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk/>

Consideration should also be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged abuser.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who alleges abuse as a child by an SPKA member/volunteer who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the SPKA will 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 the 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.

- Report any concerns to the SPKA CPO.