

Kite Club of Scotland



Child Protection Policy

Summary

Policy statement

The Kite Club of Scotland (KCoS) has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in any KCoS activity from harm. All children, including disabled / vulnerable groups have a right to protection.

KCoS will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in kite flying through adherence to the following Child Protection guidelines.

Due to the complexities of Scottish law KCoS will assume a 'child' is deemed to be less than 18 years of age.

Policy aims

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

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved with KCoS.
- Allow all members 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. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

Introduction

By making provision for children and young people, we must remember 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 club members have a responsibility to report concerns to the KCoS Child Protection Officer (CPO).

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

Good practice guidelines

All KCoS members should be demonstrate best behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples.

Good practice means:

- Always work in an open area (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people equally, with respect and dignity. Always put the child's welfare first.
- Making kite flying enjoyable.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly with the consent of the parents / guardian whose views should always be carefully considered.
- Involving parents/guardians, working in pairs and maintaining a safe and appropriate distance..
- 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.
- Recognising the needs and ability of children and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent 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.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises 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 / guardian. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital.

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

Practices never to be sanctioned

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- 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.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for KCoS members 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 / guardian 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. It would always be preferable to seek assistance from the child's parent / guardian.

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 child or if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child 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. All KCoS members should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the CPO or the KCoS committee.

KCoS membership

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

- The KCoS 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 KCoS Committee has the right to refuse membership.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of any KCoS member 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.

KCoS will assure all members 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 KCoS, 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 KCoS committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

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

Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a member of KCoS should be reported to the KCoS 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 KCoS 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 / guardian of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

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

If the KCoS Committee is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made direct to the KCoS 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 on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The CPO.
- The KCoS Committee.
- The parents / guardian 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).

KCoS 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 KCoS 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 KCoS Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of the KCoS 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 KCoS 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 KCoS 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 Counseling and Psychotherapy Directory is available from:

The British Association for Counseling 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.

Where such an allegation is made, KCoS 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 KCoS CPO.