

O-Safe

A Guide to Child Welfare

British Orienteering is committed to ensuring that all young people who participate in Orienteering have a safe and positive experience.

This guide is intended for all people involved in orienteering. It should be read by all coaches, volunteers, officials, parents and anyone involved in orienteering. It will provide an overview of child welfare and protection, child abuse and how to act on any concerns you may have. It will also provide some good practice advice for all those involved with young people and orienteering.

British Orienteering believes that the welfare of young people is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting young people from abuse. However, it is important to remember that it is not the responsibility of those working in orienteering to determine if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse is a powerful and emotive term. Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children can be harmed by adults and other young people, and often by those they know and trust. The coach often holds this trust and may be at risk of mis-using their power over a young person, quite unaware.

Abuse can be any of the following:

Physical Abuse

When adults or other young people deliberately inflict injuries on a young person, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes being kicked, punched or hit. It also includes forcing a young person to train/compete beyond his/her capabilities.

Emotional Abuse

When adults persistently fail to show young people due care, love or affection, where a young person may be constantly shouted at, threatened or subjected to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. It includes constant criticism, name-calling and ridiculing the young person.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is where girls and boys are abused by either male or female adults, who use young people to meet their own sexual needs. This includes making sexually suggestive comments and touching in an inappropriate manner.

Neglect

Neglect is where adults fail to meet a young person's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing and medical attention. It includes exposing young people to undue cold, heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Bullying

Where another young person uses deliberate, aggressive, hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can include hurtful text messages, violence, tormenting, name-calling and the spreading of rumours.

Safeguarding the welfare of our young participants is paramount. Coaches and volunteers have a moral and at times legal responsibility to provide the highest possible standard of care to all young people involved in Orienteering.

Good Practice Guidelines

All those who work within the orienteering environment should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times in order to protect children and themselves from allegations.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and environment within orienteering:

- Always be publicly open when working with young people;
- Situations may occur when in order to keep the young person safe or deal with an injury, it will be necessary to make contact with the young person. Always inform the young person beforehand and ask if they have any objections;
- If groups are to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure that adults work in pairs, and that the gender is appropriate;
- Where mixed groups compete away from home they should always be accompanied by at least one male and one female adult;
- Coaches must place the well-being and safety of the participant above the development of performance.

You Should:

- Avoid overtraining and over competing of participants;
- Ensure development comes first, winning second;
- Never allow injured participants to train or compete if it is inappropriate;
- Ensure all equipment, facilities and terrain are safe and appropriate;
- Never overtly criticise young people - their confidence is paramount.

You Should Avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
- Taking young people alone on car journeys, however short;
- Taking young people to your home.

You Should Never:

- Engage in inappropriate physical contact including horseplay
- Share a room with a young person unless a member of your own family;
- Permit young people to use unacceptable or explicit language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun;
- Agree to meet a young person on your own, outside the context of the normal coaching or mentoring process;
- Allow allegations made by a participant to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Remember you are a role model and mentor to young people

O-Safe – A Guide to the Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults

British Orienteering has produced O-Safe, our Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable adults policy, as part of its commitment to ensuring that the sport provides a safe, friendly and enjoyable experience for young people

O-Safe provides the sport with the tools to ensure that the whole sport takes up the challenge of continuously improving the participation conditions for young people.

O-Safe enhances the value of existing activities and practices throughout British Orienteering's club network ensuring that the many hundreds of coaches and volunteers integral to the sport are continually supported.

The policy is supported by a comprehensive implementation plan and a sensitive process to respond to concerns.

How will child protection affect me?

Child welfare and protection in orienteering is mandatory to all. 'O-Safe – A Guide to the Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults' has been developed to provide a comprehensive and complete guide to all those who orienteer, coach, assist and volunteer in orienteering.

How does child protection affect my club?

Abuse can occur anywhere there are young people of any age. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where young people are simply in order to abuse them; this includes orienteering clubs. It is therefore imperative that each and every club adopts and implements British Orienteering's child welfare policy.

What does my club need to do?

Child welfare and protection will not be implemented overnight. It is a long-term process. It is the responsibility of the whole club to implement the child welfare policy and procedures.

Club Welfare Officers

- A club must nominate a Club Welfare Officer who will advise and ensure that child welfare and protection is being adhered to in the club.
- They will be the point of contact for all Child Welfare concerns and queries.
- The Club Welfare Officer must be CRB checked.
- The Club Welfare Officer may need to attend relevant training to enable them to fulfil their role.
- British Orienteering requires all coaches, officials and volunteers involved with young people to read and have knowledge of O-Safe the full British Orienteering Child Welfare Policy and Procedures - available from British Orienteering national office or as a download from:

www.britishorienteering.org.uk

Acting on Concerns

It is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has taken place, however, it is your responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

If you have any concerns regarding a young person or if a young person informs you directly that he/she, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them you should:

- React immediately;
- Remain calm, so as not to frighten or deter the young person;
- Tell the young person that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell;
- Make a detailed note of your observations and/or what was said exactly;
- Contact the Club Welfare Officer immediately, if they are unavailable, or part of the concern, contact the British Orienteering Lead Child Protection Officer on 01629 734042;
- You can use the 24 hour free telephone helplines for advice
NSPCC 0800 800 500 or Childline 0800 1111

Always remember, you are responsible for the welfare of young people in your care

Useful Contacts

British Orienteering Lead Child Welfare Officer: 01629 734 042

NSPCC 0800 800 500

Childline 08001111

Local Club Welfare Officer (please complete)

Local Safeguarding Children Board Contact (please complete)