

GARSTANG CAMERA CLUB

Child Protection Policy

Garstang Camera Club policy for anyone under the age of 18:

- Members and visitors under 18 years of age must be accompanied at all meetings and other events by a parent or guardian. Another adult can accompany the minor if the parents or guardian gives Garstang Camera Club (GCC) agreement in writing that the adult can accompany the child. The parent/guardian or designated adult shall be responsible for the minors safety at all times. When joining the Society, the membership application form in respect to a minor must be signed by their parent / guardian to signify acceptance of this policy. If the minor is not to be accompanied at meetings by their parent / guardian, the designated responsible adult(s) taking their place should be named on the membership form.

Introduction

This policy makes provision for children and young people to 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 and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- Members are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, however, all members have a responsibility to report concerns to Garstang Camera Club

Garstang Camera Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its licensed 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. Garstang Camera Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Garstang Camera Club

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of Garstang Camera Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in its care;
- Allow all members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote the welfare of children and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. 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 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 with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Making the events fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people; 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 club officials are required to transport young people 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 club 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 time alone with children away from others. The golden rule is safety in numbers – no adult should be in a one to one situation with a child.

- Avoid while alone taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never 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
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Garstang Camera Club in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Garstang Camera Club will assure all staff/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.

Action if there are concerns

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused should be reported to Garstang Camera Club 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.
- Garstang Camera Club will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- Garstang Camera Club will deal with any media enquiries

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 Event Organisers.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

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

- Garstang Camera Club may 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 Garstang Camera Club will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member 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, Garstang Camera Club 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 members may need.
- Allegations of previous abuse - Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, Garstang Camera Club 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 sphere of activity, 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 provisions of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to Garstang Camera Club

Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by staff and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to Garstang Camera Club in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to Garstang Camera Club who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
- Social Services will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111

