

## PADDLE NORTHERN IRELAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STATEMENT

Safeguarding children is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. (NSPCC 2022)

Paddle Northern Ireland recognises the need to promote the **welfare and interests** of **children** in all circumstances. This policy aims to ensure that inclusive of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation **ALL** children are able take part in paddlesports safely and are protected from **ANY form of bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse**.

Safeguarding is a collective responsibility. **Everybody involved in paddlesports has a duty of care to safeguard and protect children**, both inside and outside our sport. Paddle NI & Paddle UK have safeguarding staff, policies and procedures and safer recruitment procedures in place to underpin this. **Safeguarding training** is mandatory for anyone working with children and Paddle Northern Ireland will ensure that all those working or volunteering in regulated activity have access to appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.

Policies and procedures relating to safeguarding will be widely promoted and **are mandatory for everyone involved in paddlesports**. Failure to comply with these policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal or exclusion from the organisation.

We will respond effectively to any safeguarding concerns transparently, consistently and fairly. We are committed to ensuring compliance with dynamic statutory frameworks, government guidance, codes of conduct and best practice and will manage any breach of these in line with our **Paddle NI Safeguarding Complaints & Disciplinary Procedure and/or HR policies** where applicable. We acknowledge that some children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we will take reasonable and appropriate steps to protect their welfare, ensuring that **everyone has a positive, enjoyable experience in our sport in a safe and inclusive environment**.

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<sup>1</sup> Paddle Northern Ireland is a trading name of The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) which is a Company registered at Companies House with the registered number NI637999.

# HOW TO REPORT CONCERNS

**IF YOU OR ANYONE ELSE IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM OR IN NEED OF MEDICAL ATTENTION CALL 999**

If you have a safeguarding concern or worry about a child, whether it relates directly you, is something you have witnessed, or is something that someone has reported or disclosed to you, even if it does not relate to paddlesports – **don't keep it to yourself.**

Even if you think that it is a **lower level concern** or are not sure - **REPORT IT.** Small pieces of information can help to create a big picture. **IF IN DOUBT – PASS IT ON.**

## REPORTING A CONCERN

Tell the appointed safeguarding person, **Club Safeguarding Officer** / Event Safeguarding Officer or trip organiser and follow up with a **concerns form** within 24 hours where possible.

If you are **unable** to speak to a Club Safeguarding Officer or **there may be a conflict of interest**, please contact the Paddle Northern Ireland Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

## FOR CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

If you have a concern that requires escalating to the Paddle Northern Ireland Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a **referral to statutory agencies** is needed (or if you are unsure) please contact the Paddle NI DSL **as soon as possible.** If you have made a statutory referral, please also let the Paddle NI DSL know this **within 24 hrs.**

## EXTERNAL HELP

If you are unable to make contact with the appropriate person(s) and need **urgent advice**, you can contact your Local Health Trust Gateway Team ([Contact details for NI Trusts](#)) **OR** contact The NSPCC [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) (Mon-Fri 8am-10pm/Weekends 9am-6pm) In these instances, document the advice given and any action taken and complete **concerns form** to the Paddle NI DSL within 24 hours.

## CONCERNS ABOUT PADDLE NI STAFF, COACHES OR VOLUNTEERS

**All concerns** about the behaviour of **volunteers, coaches or other staff** involved with paddlesports, **must** be reported to Paddle NI DSL (or Paddle UK Safeguarding Team) either directly, or via the Club Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

To contact Paddle Northern Ireland DSL or the Paddle UK Safeguarding Team you can use the [concerns form](#), call **07514 500312** or **0115 8655354** or email [safeguarding@paddleni.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@paddleni.org.uk). Visit the Paddle Northern Ireland Website [here](#) for further contact details or the Paddle UK website [here](#).

## **SELF-CARE**

Dealing with difficult situations and listening to disclosures can be difficult. It is important to make sure you look after your own emotional well-being and mental health. If you are struggling with something you have seen or heard, please talk to someone without disclosing any sensitive information or you can contact [The Samaritans](#): 116 123 or [Lifeline](#): 0808 808 8000

## **ALLEGATIONS**

If you have allegations made against you as a member of staff or volunteer and you wish to discuss the matter with an impartial person, please contact Paddle Northern Ireland Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will arrange contact with a Safeguarding Support Officer who can inform you of the investigation process and what you can expect as well as signposting for support and advice.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Paddle Northern Ireland will take seriously and respond to all safeguarding concerns reported in good faith. All information reported to the Club Safeguarding Officers or Paddle Northern Ireland will be treated confidentially and will only be shared with others where there is a need to do so, such as for the safety of others or prevention or detection of a crime.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you are unhappy with how a safeguarding concern has been responded to, in the first instance please contact the Paddle NI DSL. ([See also Whistleblowing Policy](#)) or you can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on **0800 028 0285** or email [\*\*help@nspcc.org.uk\*\*](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## **OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND REVIEW**

**This policy operates in conjunction with all Paddle Northern Ireland (or adopted Paddle UK) policies**, including:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Disciplinary and Appeal Regulations

Further details can be found on the Paddle Northern Ireland website.

This policy should also be read alongside the **Appendices** contained below.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances: changes in legislation and/or government guidance or as required by the local safeguarding partnership, UK Sport and/or national association sports councils as a result of any other significant change or event.

# **APPENDIX A - RECORDING CONCERNS**

## **RECORD AND REPORT CONCERNS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

Report all concerns to the Club Welfare Officer or Paddle UK Safeguarding Team within 24 hours. **You should include:**

**The Concern** – Did you witness it or is this a report from the individual or someone else? Times, dates, people, circumstances. How did the child present? Scared? Under the influence of substances? What makes you think this? Try to use exact words/phrases when recording.

**Any evidence of harm or abuse?** Bruises - what size, location, colour? (Don't take photos of the child or ask to see bruises in places usually covered by clothes) Has the child got evidence on their devices or at home? Advise them to keep it and not destroy/delete it.

**How was it responded to?** What did you say/do? Did you ring anyone such as a parent or Club Safeguarding Officer or NSPCC? What advice were you given? How did you make sure the child was safe when they left you? What advice or support did you give them?

**Who was it reported to?** Did you report to the Club Safeguarding Officer and have you informed the Paddle Northern Ireland Designated Safeguarding Lead? Did you refer to statutory agencies or signpost for support?

**Remember** - your report may be required as part of legal/disciplinary procedures. In all recording, proper consideration must be given to the requirements of current data protection legislation.

**REMEMBER** – it is not your responsibility to investigate allegations or to decide whether abuse has taken place. It is your responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person. **Even if you feel the concern is LOW LEVEL please REPORT IT.**

**Small pieces of information can help to create a big picture. IF IN DOUBT – PASS IT ON**

## **APPENDIX B – POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Below are signs that the NSPCC have highlighted that **may** indicate something concerning happening in a child's life:

- ❖ being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- ❖ knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs and/or sexual behaviour
- ❖ having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others
- ❖ becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy or depressed
- ❖ self-harming or having thoughts about suicide
- ❖ showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders
- ❖ regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems
- ❖ regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes
- ❖ running away or regularly going missing from home or care
- ❖ not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries

These are only indications, there may be other explanations and children may have learned to hide their signs of abuse and harm.

## **APPENDIX C – TYPES OF ABUSE**

The NSPCC (2022) identifies a number of types of abuse that may affect children, including: bullying and cyberbullying, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child trafficking, criminal exploitation and gangs, domestic abuse, emotional abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), grooming, neglect, non-recent abuse, online abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse. Some of these are expanded below:

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, controlling, intimidation. **This could include a parent or coach ridiculing or punishing a child for not achieving or performing well or using threats, aggressive/inappropriate language as an attempt to motivate them.**

**EXPLOITATION (CSE and CRIMINAL)** – by individuals or by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation, county lines, and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. A young person may start missing coaching sessions or competitions, they may have money/possessions they didn't previously. **They may gain new ideologies/beliefs or may start to get into trouble with parent or at school or with the Police.**

**GROOMING** - Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know. Attempts to befriend and isolate young people in order to exploit them. Gaining their trust and building a relationship for ulterior motives, sexual or criminal.

**NEGLECT** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or emotional/psychological needs. It may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failing to protect a child from physical/emotional harm/danger (forcing a child to train when injured or in adverse/unsafe conditions).

**SEXUAL ABUSE** - can be contact offences such as rape and sexual assault. Or non-contact offences such as grooming, forcing or encouraging children to watch sexual content, or filming children in sexual content. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by males and females and by adults and other children.

**SEXTING** - when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes a child (under 18) taking the images of themselves or forwarding images to others. Sending explicit material can be a sign of serious crimes such as grooming and sexual exploitation. **Sending, receiving, or possession of ANY indecent images of children under the age of 18 is an offence.**

**DOMESTIC ABUSE** - Can include all the different types of abuse, emotional, sexual, financial and physical and is prevalent across the 16-19 age group.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE** - for example hitting, pushing, punching, shaking or strangling. There may be signs of harm, such as bruises or marks that can't easily be explained or there is no consistent explanation. **A child may also show fear/dislike of a coach or parent, where a positive relationship could be assumed.**

## **APPENDIX D – RESPONDING TO CONCERNS**

**LISTEN** – carefully to what is said, allowing the person to continue at their own pace.

Present as believing what is being said and show that you are taking concerns seriously.

Be open and encouraging, use body language to show that you are listening.

**EXPLAIN** – that you can't keep the information secret and you have a duty to report this but that you will not tell anyone other than people you need to tell, this may be a parents or social care or the police. If there is any evidence of abuse either physical or virtual, ask the young person to keep it and not delete or destroy.

**CLARIFY** – Check the person's account and that you have correctly understood what they have told you.

**REASSURE** – the person that they have done the right thing by talking to you and it's a step towards making things better. Before they leave you, try to make sure they are calm and to the best of your understanding, are not at a risk of harm from others or themselves.

**AVOID** showing any negative feelings.

**DON'T** interrupt, ask lots of questions, or leading questions.

**DON'T** dismiss the concern, minimize it or attempt to explain it on behalf of someone else.

**AVOID** doubting the person, looking bored or disinterested, you may prevent them from fully disclosing something very painful.

**DON'T** allow any previous negative experiences with statutory agencies to influence reporting or sharing concerns.

**DON'T** panic or allow shock or distaste to show.

**AVOID** probing for more information than is offered, or conducting an investigation of the case.

**AVOID** allowing any personal feelings/experiences towards the person reporting or person of concern.