

**The MSA Policy Statement on Child Protection is as follows:**

The child's welfare is paramount.

All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

As defined in the Children's Act 1989 anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

# Child Protection

## 1.0 Foreword

The MSA have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, coaches, instructors and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Through the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for the MSA, and the support of its coaches, instructors and volunteers, the MSA alongside a growing number of governing bodies, will maintain the professionalism and safeguards of good practice, which are associated with our sport.

The policy outlines the following key areas:

- It recognises the responsibility of all those involved in Motor Sport (professional and volunteers) to safeguard and promote the interests and well being of the children and young competitors with whom they are working;
- It provides a framework on the recruitment, selection, suitability and deployment of individuals working with young people.
- It emphasises the value of working closely in partnership with other coaches, officials, parents, professionals and volunteers to protect children and young competitors from harm and discrimination;
- It acknowledges that abuse does take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the young drivers, coaches, instructors and all others working within Motor Sport.

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## 3.0 Introduction

These guidelines have been produced by the MSA to help your club take appropriate action to enable children and vulnerable adults to enjoy the sport of motor sport in all its disciplines, in a safe environment, within the context of the 'Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport' (CPSU2002).

They are designed to help you to decide what paperwork and systems, if any, your club should adopt. They can be copied, quoted and adapted for your own use.

## 4.0 Protecting children from inappropriate behaviour

The MSA has been required to put a formal child protection policy in place since 2005. Your club should use the MSA Child Protection Policy and its procedures or adapt the policy and procedures and put a similar policy in place. In addition, from January 2007, each Region/Club are required to appoint a Child Protection Officer who will be responsible for coordinating the MSA Child Protection Policy and procedures in conjunction with the Child Protection Co-ordinator at MSA Head Office. Many funding bodies now require organisations to have a working Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The Lottery Sports Fund has required this since April 2001.

Your club is advised to take the following 2 steps

1. A policy statement. This will state your commitment to providing a safe place for children to take part and/or learn, and to preventing the abuse of children. You can use or adapt the MSA Policy Statement below, if you wish.

2. A simple code of practice and procedures governing how the club runs. This should cover:

(i) Recruitment of staff or volunteers who will be in contact with children.

(ii) The prevention of abuse of children whilst at your event/club.

(iii) What to do if abuse is alleged/suspected to have occurred, either at your event/club or elsewhere.

## 5.0 Policy Statement

This is a statement defining your club's stance on child protection issues. It should define what your club is committed to in providing a safe environment for children.

The MSA Policy Statement on Child Protection is as follows:

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- As defined in the Children Act 1989, anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

## 6.0 Basic Principles

The guidance given in the procedures is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of young people, (the Children Act 1989 defines a young person as under 18 years of age) and disabled adults is the primary concern.
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- All incidents of suspicious poor practice and allegations should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

## 7.0 Good Recruitment Practice

As a general principle, if a good recruitment policy (where appropriate) is adopted by organisations for paid or voluntary, full or part time positions, and the issue of child protection covered in the organisation's risk assessment, both children and staff/volunteers should be adequately protected. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well-run organisation, with good quality management and training.

## 8.0 Criminal Records Bureau

Whilst being able to access criminal records can be seen as a positive move for organisations in the private and voluntary sectors, it is important not to see it in isolation. The CRB has been set up to increase access to information, in order to help provide protection for children and vulnerable people against those who might wish to harm them. The aim is to make justifiable levels of information available to people responsible for recruitment decisions so that they can decide for themselves if someone has an unsuitable background. Checks can only be accessed via the MSA.

Where clubs have concerns regarding an instructor/volunteer, the instructor/volunteer should be asked to apply via the MSA to the CRB for a Disclosure Certificate. The CRB will charge paid employees the current fee, but there will be no charge for volunteers. Applications must be countersigned by the MSA Head Office as a 'registered umbrella body'. The instructor / volunteer will be sent a certificate, which will be copied to the MSA. The MSA will then contact the appropriate person at the organisation concerned to let them know whether the person's record contains any relevant offences.

For further guidance contact Allan Dean-Lewis MSA Child Protection Co-ordinator, on 01753 765073 or e-mail [childprotection@msauk.org](mailto:childprotection@msauk.org) 01753 7675073 (Allan Dean-Lewis MSA Child Protection coordinator)

### **Criminal Records Bureau**

Information line: 0870 90 90 811

Website: [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

## 9.0 Prevention of abuse

This section offers advice to organisations, instructors, volunteers and parents to ensure they do everything they can to protect children from abuse.

### **Good Practice Guide for Senior Officials**

- Child abuse is a very difficult situation for senior officials. Having the right systems in place can help all concerned. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well run organisation with good quality management and training.
- Plan the work of the club so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children can occur. Usually this involves taking some simple steps - see Good Practice examples in following section.
- Appoint a member to fulfil the role of Child Protection Co-ordinator (see section 10.0).
- Train staff and volunteers, line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.
- Give all staff and volunteers clear roles.
- Issue guidelines on how to deal with the discovery of abuse.
- If children tell senior officials about abuse, follow agreed procedures. Develop systems which allow children's complaints to be heard.

### **Good Practice Guide for Instructors/Volunteers/All Staff**

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 judgement about any 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 may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All

suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the MSA.

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

All personnel in sport 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 within sport:

#### **Good Practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment (eg. Avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment (eg. 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 with performers (eg. It is not appropriate 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 sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the MSA. Care is needed as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (eg for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials/instructors work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. (NB. However, same gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that at tournament, championship or residential, 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 young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to acting in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Awareness of any medicines being taken by participants, or existing injuries.
- 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.

#### **You should never:**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

However, it may be sometimes necessary for your staff/ volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure all staff/volunteers are sensitive to the child and

undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

In addition, medical consent should be obtained in the event where medication or treatment is required to be administered in the absence of the parent/guardian; this includes hospitalisation. Such procedures would cover the organisation from accusations of neglect.

## 10.0 Club Child Protection Officer

MSA clubs are required to identify a designated person to be titled the Club Child Protection Officer to handle child protection issues. Prior to appointment, this person will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Check (Enhanced level). This person must have a formal role on the club's management committee.

Once clearance has been received from the MSA Child Protection Coordinator, an MSA registration card will be issued to validate the appointment. The Club Child Protection Officer will require support from the club, and access to designated training will be arranged via the MSA.

The role of the Club Child Protection Officer is crucial in ensuring that the MSA Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedures work in practice.

The Club Child Protection Officer acts as the first point of contact for anyone in the club (staff, volunteer, parents or children) who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse by adults working with children.

The Child Protection Officer therefore needs to be perceived as being approachable and as having a child-focussed approach.

The Child Protection Officer does not need to be a child protection 'expert'. That is the role of the statutory agencies (Police and Social Services). Ideally, they should have a background in working with children such as teachers, childminders, social workers, Police child protection team officers, child health workers.

*A sample job description for the Club Child Protection Officer is appended.*

## 11.0 What to do if abuse is suspected/alleged to have occurred

### ***What should I do if I suspect abuse is taking place outside the setting of the MSA?***

If a young person informs you directly that he/she is being abused outside the MSA environment (ie. at home or some other setting away from the MSA) or through your own observations or through a third party you become aware of possible abuse outside the MSA environment, you must REACT IMMEDIATELY (See section on 'Recognising Abuse' on page 13).

- Ensure the safety of the young person - if the young person needs immediate medical treatment, take the young person to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of your concerns and ensure they are aware it is a child protection issue;
- If available, contact the Club Child Protection Officer immediately who will follow the reporting procedures detailed below. If the Club Child Protection Officer is unavailable or cannot be contacted, the person that has concerns about a young person's welfare should follow the following procedures:

### **Reporting Procedures**

- Seek advice immediately from the local Social Services or Police who will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting parents. Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.

- Make a full and factual record of events utilising the Incident Referral Form and forward a copy of the recorded information, as directed by the Social Services and/or Police, and also to the MSA Child Protection Officer at your respective Centre/Club and to the MSA Child Protection Coordinator at MSA Head Office.
- If the individual being accused is from within the MSA environment, the MSA Child Protection Coordinator will consider suspension of the individual concerned following contact with the Social Services or Police. The case will be referred to the MSA Child Protection Committee following completion of the Police/Social Services investigation.

It is never easy to respond to a young person who tells you that they are being abused and you may feel upset and worried yourself. Make sure that you are offered adequate support by discussing the matter with your Centre/Club Child Protection Officer or the MSA Child Protection Coordinator.

### **Reinstatement and Aftermath**

**Reinstatement.** Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police Enquiries, the MSA Child Protection Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff 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 MSA Child Protection 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. **IN ALL CASES THE WELFARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS REMAIN PARAMOUNT.**

**Aftermath.** Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to young people, parents and members of staff. Use of Helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource. (The British Association of Counselling Directory is available from the British Association of Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PJ. Tel 01788550899. Fax 01788 562189. Email: [bac@bac.co.uk](mailto:bac@bac.co.uk) . Internet: <http://www.bac.co.uk> . Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

### ***What should I do if there are allegations of abuse?***

Always:

- Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what s/he says seriously.
- Reassure the child and stress that s/he is not to blame.
- Be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event.
- Maintain confidentiality - only tell others if it will help protect the child.

**Never:**

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any impending police investigation.
- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge or someone you can trust) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

### ***If I do something, might it make things worse?***

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a young life.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating, especially if children

are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can develop behavioural difficulties, problems at school, their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood.

## 12.0 Recording information

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation, into beginning an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with child complainants could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court.

There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children with limited communication skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without "leading" the child.

The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won't be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the child wants. The rule is to let the child initiate any actions and to remain positive and supportive throughout.

## 13.0 Recognising abuse

This section explains what child abuse is, how to recognise it and what to do if you have concerns.

### **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment. Child abuse can take many forms:

### **Physical abuse where adults or other children:**

- Physically hurt or injure children (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning).
- Give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Attempt to suffocate or drown children.
- In sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

### **Neglect includes situations in which adults:**

- Fail to meet a child's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, warm clothing, essential medication).
- Consistently leave children alone and unsupervised.
- Fail or refuse to give children love, affection or attention.
- Neglect in a sports situation might also occur if a teacher or coach fails to ensure children are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

**Sexual abuse. Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:**

- Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling.
- Showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.

- Sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

**Emotional abuse can occur in a number of ways. For example, where:**

- There is persistent lack of love or affection.
- There is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising.
- Children are frequently being shouted at or taunted.
- There is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches (instructors) subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

## **Bullying**

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

## **14.0 How would I recognise if a child is being abused?**

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused even for the most experienced carers. However, some of the more typical symptoms, which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Sexually explicit language or actions.
- A sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- A change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt).
- A general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially with whom a close relationship would be expected.
- An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact.
- Difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

However, it is important to note that a child could be displaying some of all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying - this does not necessarily mean the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, you may just feel something is wrong.

*If you are worried, it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.*

## **15.0 Where can I get further help?**

If you want to talk things through to gain some advice, you can phone the following 24 hour free telephone numbers. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.

**NSPCC helpline:**  
0808 800 5000

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**ChildLine:** 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

If you have had an allegation made against you, advice and support can be gained from the following sources:

**Local Citizens' Advice Bureau:**

Refer to Yellow Pages for contact details

**MSA Head Office**

Email: [childprotection@msauk.org](mailto:childprotection@msauk.org)

**Sportscoach UK (if a member):**

0113 274 4802

[www.sportscoachuk.org](http://www.sportscoachuk.org)

## 16.0 Complaints Procedure

Any individual or organisation wishing to make a complaint against an MSA coach, official/competitor, within the context of the Child Protection Policy should follow the procedure below:

- Report the matter to the employer of the person concerned and to the MSA Child Protection Coordinator. (NB. Employer in this instance refers to the parent club/organisation at which the event is taking place).
- Complaints that refer to the protection of children should be dealt with in accordance with the procedures laid down in the MSA Child Protection Policy.

## 17.0 Training

Checks are only part of the process to protect children from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse.

It is mandatory that all Club Child Protection Officers have access to and attend training in one of the following areas (some grant aid may be available from the British Motor Sports Training Trust to defray costs incurred by MSA Clubs in this respect):

- Child protection awareness (e.g. Sportscoach UK workshop on Good Practice and Child Protection/NSPCC Educare Programme)

It is recommended that all staff working with children should be up to date, or receive awareness training in the following additional areas:

- Child protection awareness (e.g. Sportscoach UK workshop on Good Practice and Child Protection/NSPCC Educare Programme)
- First Aid (eg NCF/BRC Emergency First Aid for Sport, St John or St Andrew's Ambulance first Aid qualifications).
- How to work effectively with children (e.g. Sportscoach UK workshops on Working with Children, Coaching Children and Young People, Responsible Sports Coach)
- Child-centred coaching styles (Sportscoach UK workshop Coaching Methods and Communication).

## 18.0 Guidelines for 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 young and disabled sportspeople in

vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all sporting organisations adhere to the appropriate guidelines given below:

Students or amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record the event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their student club or registration card and a letter from their club/educational establishment outlining their motive for attending the event.

All other spectators wishing to use photographic/film/video equipment with a telescopic or zoom lens should register their intent with the promoter of the event.

Accreditation procedure: a system should be adopted whereby a record should be made of the individual's name and address and club. Professionals should register prior to the event and their identification details should be checked with the issuing authority prior to the event. On registering, promoters of events should consider issuing an identification label on the day, which can serve to highlight those who have accreditation but must ensure that where regular events occur, the identifying label is changed to prevent unofficial replication.

Public information: the specific details concerning photographic/video and filming equipment should, where possible, be published prominently in event programmes and must be announced over the public address system prior to the start of the event.

The recommended wording is:

*In line with the recommendation in the Organisation's Child Protection Policy, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with staff at the spectator entry desk before carrying out any such photography. The promoter reserves the right of entry to this event and reserves the right to decline entry to any person unable to meet or abide by the promoter's conditions.*

If you have concerns: if you are concerned about any photography taking place at an event, contact the promoter or event organiser and discuss it with them. If appropriate the person about whom there are concerns should be asked to leave and the facility managers should be informed.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches, instructors and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

## **19.0 Geographical variations**

The MSA Policy has been written as an umbrella document for universal application across the United Kingdom and its British Islands. However, it is acknowledged and understood that different legislatures may impose varying interpretations and indeed content to the requirements of the Children Acts specifically for England and Wales.

In such cases, the requirements of the MSA Child Protection Policy should be viewed as a minimum requirement, and it is the responsibility of the individual Associations and Clubs concerned to ensure that they additionally comply with any supplementary requirements of child protection legislation generally across the UK.

## **20.0 Review period**

The Policy and Guidelines as agreed are seen as a live document, capable of being reviewed and amended according to need on an ongoing basis. For the sake of continuity and consistency, any review period other than that occasioned by changes in the enabling Act(s) should not be less than one year.

The MSA welcomes any written comments or suggestions regarding the Policy and Guidelines, and their application, at any time.

