

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, Inverness Canoe Club.

In Scottish law a 'child' is generally defined as under 16 years of age, however, for the purposes of this guidance, a 'child' is defined as being under the age of 18 years. This is in accordance with legislation covering the recruitment of adults to work / volunteer with children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

Inverness Canoe Club is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18.

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

This document outlines Inverness Canoe Club's commitment to protecting children.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- **The welfare of children is the primary concern**
- **All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, race, origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse**
- **Child protection is everyone's responsibility**
- **Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so**
- **Organisations shall work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.**

Inverness Canoe Club will:

- Accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults in positions requiring disclosure checks have been appropriately vetted. This will include coaches and other adults working with young people. **For further information see appendix 1.**
- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in kayaking and canoeing safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures. Respond to allegations of misconduct or abuse of children, in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Observe guidelines issued by local Child Protection Committees for the protection of children.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy and these procedures.

We believe that every child, regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that result in a children being physically or psychologically damaged.

All volunteers are encouraged to share any concerns with the group's Child Protection Officer. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have serious doubts about a child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately. It is important that all volunteers communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers will follow the procedures below;

1. Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicions, it is necessary to make an accurate and detailed written record of what they have seen, heard or known, at that time the event occurs.
2. Share their concerns with the Child Protection Officer for the Club and agree what action to take.
3. Avoid asking any more questions than are necessary to clarify whether there is a concern. Always refer to the statutory services to undertake in depth investigation of any suspicions or allegations.
4. All volunteers will work within the SCA code of conduct and guidelines for volunteers found under child protection at www.canoescotland.com.

If we have concerns, we must act. Please remember to record and report NOT investigate.

Out of hours Social Work Emergency Service 08456 014813

General Child Protection Enquiries 01463 703488 or new free phone number for Highland Council Child Protection 0800 0938100

Child Protection and Youth Development Officer Inverness Canoe Club. Please contact Liz Downing on cpo@invernesscc.org.uk

If a child or young person is in immediate danger phone the police on 999

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protections of children or following any changes within Inverness Canoe Club.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within the Inverness Canoe Club.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

Appendix 1

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)

Membership of the PVG Scheme:

If you wish to work with children in any capacity within the Inverness Canoe Club then you will need to be disclosure checked under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme. This is

arranged by the Club through the Scottish Canoe Association and is necessary for us to comply with legislation. This includes any coaches working with children and also others in a position that involves them working with children. No disclosure is required for individuals who work with children in on an unplanned, one off basis. However, use of this provision should only be in highly extenuating circumstances and not resorted to on a routine basis.

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (Scotland) Act ("The PVG Scheme") created new arrangements for the protection for children in 2011. The legislation applies to all those involved in "regulated work" with young people. Regulated work includes both paid and voluntary work and it is relevant to clubs, centres and others involved in the sport of canoeing. It replaces and improves upon the previous disclosure arrangements under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act. The scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland.

Sports and activities such as canoeing offer a great opportunity for people to get involved in physical activity, learn a new skill and meet new people. Sports coaches and leaders will be only too familiar with the need to have child protection policies and safe recruitment practices in place. Of course, the vast majority of people who work and volunteer with vulnerable groups are responsible and caring. But there are some who may choose to use their position of responsibility to do harm. Ensuring that children are protected from those who could cause them harm is a priority for us all. People who work with vulnerable groups must join the PVG Scheme and anyone with a known history of harmful or abusive behaviour towards children or protected adults will not be able to become a PVG Scheme member which means they will not be able to work with one or both groups.

The PVG Scheme continuously updates its members' records, adding any new criminal convictions and any information held by the police that they consider relevant to an individual's role. This means that any new information indicating that a person may pose a risk can be acted upon promptly by Disclosure Scotland and by employers. As well as strengthening protection for vulnerable groups, the PVG Scheme will be quick and easy for people to use, reducing the need for people to complete a detailed application form every time a check is required. PVG Scheme checks for volunteers are processed free of charge.

Further information can be found at <http://canoescotland.org/child-protection>