



Safeguarding Policy

Revision V5.0

Last revised: April 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Manvers Waterfront Boat Club (MWBC) is committed to ensuring that everyone who participates in its activities is protected and kept safe from harm while they are with Club coaches and other MWBC members. This applies particularly to children and vulnerable adults. The Club recognises that it has a particular duty to ensure that it provides the highest standards of care for those participating in activities through the Club. MWBC has a 'duty of care' to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse and is committed to providing help and support for Coaches, Club Officers and volunteers with regard to this. In this respect all Officers and Coaches must have a clear understanding of operating within an appropriate code of ethics and be aware of what their 'duty of care' is with regard to providing activities and being responsible for the participants.

DEFINITIONS

'Duty of care' is 'the duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to check that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible'.

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 1989). A vulnerable adult or an 'adult at risk' (Care Act 2014) is a person over 18 who has needs for care and support (whether or not these needs are being met) and as a result of these needs is unable to protect him/herself from the risk of abuse or neglect.

An 'adult at risk' could include any adult given their circumstances at a particular time.

This Policy and the guidelines which follow have been produced by MWBC to help you enjoy all aspects of the Club in a safe environment, to demonstrate how to protect children and vulnerable adults, and what you need to do if you have any concerns.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

At Manvers Waterfront Boat Club:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in the activities at the Club in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Everyone involved in Club activities has a responsibility in safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- All reasonable steps will be taken to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination and any form of abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All Coaches, Club Officers and other members who work with children and vulnerable adults are required to be DBS checked and will be provided with training, guidance and information in good practice and Safeguarding procedures.

3. PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

The abuse of children and vulnerable adults creates a very difficult situation for coaches, club officers and volunteers. Having the right systems in place can help all concerned. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well-run club/organisation with good quality management and training.

At MWBC we plan the activities of the Club to minimise situations where abuse can occur.

- The Club has appointed three Club Welfare Officers, Gavin King, Teresa Hubery and Sarah Valentine-Bull. To report a concern to a member of the Club Safeguarding Team you can do this in person, or by using the [Safeguarding Report Form](#).
- Coaches and any other Club members who work with children or vulnerable adults must be DBS checked every 3 years.
- The Safeguarding policy should be available at all times on the website.
- The guidelines of the MWBC Safeguarding Policy should be followed.
- All Club members should know how to deal with complaints and concerns. The Club will adhere to the MWBC anti-bullying policy.
- The Club will provide training opportunities for coaches and other personnel who work with children and vulnerable adults, including information about Safeguarding courses.
- The Club Welfare Officer and Coaches will be encouraged to attend a Safeguarding course.
- Training programmes should take the varying abilities of all Club members into consideration.
- Club members and parents/carers should be made aware of how the Club operates and also of the correct procedures if they wish to express a concern.
- Medical consent should be obtained in writing in the event where medication needs to be given in the absence of the parents/carers. The written consent of parents /carers should be obtained regarding travel arrangements and overnight stays.
- Keep a written record of any Club business relating to children and vulnerable adults such as medical consent forms and written information from parents. This type of information should be stored in a secure place in case of any queries.
- Children and vulnerable adults should be contacted via the email of their parents or carers.
- It is strongly advisable to have private settings on any Club communications via social media such as the Club website or Facebook page.
- Club activities can be very visual sports and it is of the utmost importance to ensure that parental consent is obtained in written form for photographs and videos of children within the club. Videos are often used for coaching purposes, but may also be used to promote the Club.
- The Club should provide coaches with feedback, in particular making sure that they are aware of good practice and poor practice.

4. AWARENESS OF POOR PRACTICE

Coaches, Club Officers and volunteers should avoid:

- spending time alone with children or vulnerable adults, away from other Club members.
- taking children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short.
- communicating with a child or vulnerable adult outside the Club sessions, including phoning, texting, emailing or contact via social media.

Where any of these situations are unavoidable ensure they only take place with the full knowledge and consent of a Club Officer and/or the parent/carer. This will protect the child or vulnerable adult as well as the coach or other Club member.

If you accidentally hurt a participant or cause distress in any manner, or the participant appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident to the Club Welfare Officer or another Club Officer supported by a written report as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the occurrence.

Practice that is prohibited by the Club

Individuals should NEVER:

- Take children or vulnerable adults to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone.
- Engage in rough, physical games, or rough boisterous play.
- Share a room with a child or vulnerable adult (unless the individual is the parent/carer of that person).
- Allow any form of inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive remarks, even in fun.
- Use inappropriate language or allow young or vulnerable participants to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Allow allegations by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves, unless you have been requested to do so by the parents/carer.
- Leave the Club until all the safe dispersal of all children and vulnerable adults is completed.
- Cause a person to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining them.
- Treat some people more favourably than others.
- Agree to meet a child or vulnerable adult on your own on a one to one basis.

Positions of Trust

Those who work with children and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents/carers, the sport and the individual participants. This relationship might be regarded by some as one in which the person in charge is in a position of power. Instead it should be viewed as a position of responsibility.

Most adults in a position of trust recognise that there are certain boundaries which must not be crossed by coaches/volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults. This relationship is no different to that between school teachers and their pupils.

In this respect it is important to remember that a person aged 16 or 17 is still legally a child.

5. RECOGNISING ABUSE

Abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children or vulnerable adults are harmed, usually by adults and often by someone that they know and trust. It can cause damage to a person's physical and mental health. Abuse can occur in many situations including home, school and in a sports or community environment. Some individuals will actively seek access to children through sport in order to harm them.

All children and adults have the right to live free from abuse and harm.

In order to provide young and vulnerable participants with the best possible experiences and opportunities in the club, it is imperative that all club members operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour.

This not only ensures that the club makes a positive contribution to the development of young people and vulnerable adults and safeguards their welfare, but also protects all club personnel from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate between poor practice and abuse. It is not the responsibility of adults within the club to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult.

There are four main types of abuse:

Physical abuse occurs where adults or other children:

- hurt or injure another person e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting.
- give a child or vulnerable adult alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- attempt to suffocate or drown someone.

It may also occur in sport where:

- the nature or intensity of training or racing exceeds the capability of the participant.
- coaches, crew managers or volunteers expose competitors to excessive training or racing.
- the use of performance enhancing drugs is tolerated, recommended or encouraged.
- competitors are given the opportunity to drink alcohol when they are below the legal age.

Neglect occurs when adults fail to:

- meet the basic needs of children or vulnerable adults such as the provision of food, warmth, adequate clothing or essential medication.
- protect children and vulnerable adults from harm
- give appropriate attention to children and vulnerable adult.

While training or competing neglect may occur if children or vulnerable adults:

- are left alone without proper supervision.
- are exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection.
- are exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

Sexual abuse occurs when children or vulnerable adults are used by adults (male or female) to meet their own sexual needs. This includes:

- any form of sexual contact.
- making sexually suggestive comments.
- the use of pornographic material.
- taking photos or making videos for pornographic purposes In sports situations the close proximity of coaches and volunteers to children and vulnerable adults provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust which can lead to sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse occurs where:

- there is a persistent lack of love and affection.
- there is an absence of help and encouragement.
- a person is constantly shouted at, taunted or ridiculed.
- a child or vulnerable adult is over-protected and prevented from socialising.
- there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse can occur in sport when coaches: • continually provide negative feedback • repeatedly ignore a person's efforts to progress • repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which a person is capable • over-emphasise the winning ethic.

6. INDICATIONS OF ABUSE

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise concerns about the welfare and safety of a child or vulnerable adult. These are only indicators that abuse could be taking place, not confirmation.

Examples are where a child or vulnerable adult:

- Says that he/she is being abused (or another person says they believe, or actually know, that abuse is occurring).
- Has an injury with which the explanation does not seem to fit.
- Shows a change in behaviour pattern, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.
- Appears not to trust adults, for example, a parent or coach with whom he/she would be expected to have or once had, a close relationship.
- Has an unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact.
- Has difficulty in making friends or socialising with others.
- Shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.
- Becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.

Sometimes there are no specific signs. You may just become aware that something is wrong.

Abuse may not be happening within a Club situation but may have occurred at home or somewhere else that the person frequents.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child of any age. The effects can be so damaging that without appropriate intervention they may continue to have a very negative impact upon an individual into adulthood. Abuse can equally have a devastating effect on the life of a vulnerable adult.

An individual who has been abused may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable or trusting relationship and may go on to abuse another person.

Children and adults with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, powerlessness to protect themselves, and the inability to communicate that abuse has taken place.

Please remember that it is not your personal responsibility to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, but you are required to fulfil your legal duty to act on your concerns. Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but do not delay in passing on the information to the appropriate people or organisations.

7. RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

MWBC will take all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously and appropriate action will be pursued.

Allegations will often relate to poor practice where an adult's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern. Such concerns should be shared with a Club Officer so that necessary action can be taken to protect the child or vulnerable adult. This applies to suspected or alleged abuse both within and outside the club.

If a child or vulnerable adult indicates or tells you that they are being abused, you should:

- Stay calm.
- Do not promise the child or vulnerable adult that you will keep it a secret.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult and stress that they are not to blame.
- Listen to what the child or vulnerable adult says, showing that you are taking it seriously.
- Only ask questions if you need to establish a clear and accurate understanding about what you are being told.
- Make a detailed note as soon as possible of what the child or vulnerable adult has told you.

- Pass on the information to the appropriate person and/or organisation without delay.
- Maintain confidentiality - only share the information if it will help to protect the child/adult.
- You can get help and guidance from the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000.

Think before you act so that you do NOT:

- rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- make promises you cannot keep.
- ask inappropriate questions which may jeopardise an impending police investigation.
- take sole responsibility - talk to the Club Welfare Officer or another Club Officer, so that you can begin to protect the child/vulnerable adult and gain support for yourself.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis, though normally the Club Welfare Officer or another Club Officer should be informed.

It is important to have procedures in place for enabling a person to share, in confidence with a designated person (normally a Club Welfare Officer or another Club Officer), concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour. All Club members are encouraged to talk to the Club Welfare Officer or one of the other Club Officers if they become aware of anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

MWBC recognises that:

- It is often difficult for children vulnerable adults to disclose abuse. Children and vulnerable adults from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism which may lead them to believe that certain groups including those in roles of authority do not really care about their well-being.
- Children or adults with disabilities may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced.
- There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices which block our willingness to believe they may be a victim of abuse.
- It is possible that their disability or medical condition could be used to explain away indicators of abuse which would normally give cause for concern in a person who does not have a disability.

In all cases every effort must be made by the club to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis. This will / could include the following people:

- The Club Welfare Officer, Club Chairperson or another Club Officer.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services and police.
- Parents/carers of the child/vulnerable adult alleged to have been abused (only if they are not the alleged abuser).

Where there is a suspicion or allegation concerning a Club Officer or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation in which case the Police are immediately involved.
- A Child Protection investigation (or Protection of Vulnerable Adults investigation) in which case Social Services and possibly also the Police will

be involved.

- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation in which case the Club and also possibly the section National Governing Body (NGB) will be involved.

The results of the police and social services investigation may influence the disciplinary investigation.

NOTE: Allegations of abuse are sometimes made some time after the event. Where such allegations are made the same procedures should be followed and the matter reported to Social Services or the police. This is because other children or vulnerable adults within the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children or vulnerable adults is automatically excluded from working with them.

9. RECORDING INFORMATION

A detailed record of the suspicion or allegation should be made at the time, using only the facts.

- Try to make sure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won't be overheard.
- You also need to be careful of making physical contact during your conversation as the child or vulnerable adult may not want this.
- Remain positive and supportive throughout the conversation and let the child or vulnerable adult talk.
- The details should then be recorded on the Club Welfare Incident report form.

Information should include the following:

- The name, age and date of birth of the child or vulnerable adult.
- Their home address and phone number.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or someone else's.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information.
- A description of any visible bruising or injury.
- Any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's/vulnerable adult's account (if possible) of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/carers been contacted? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation. It is not your job to begin an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with a child or vulnerable adult with regard to a complaint could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court.

Records and Audits Records of all incidents or suspected incidents of abuse should not be destroyed, but securely stored by the Club Welfare Officer.

10. REPORTING A CONCERN

It is important that Clubs have a means to address misconduct. Disciplinary procedures should be in place.

You may be upset about what a child or vulnerable adult has said or worry about the consequences of your actions, but you cannot ignore what you've been told, as the effects can be devastating if the child or vulnerable adult is left unprotected.

All suspicions and allegations must be reported as soon as possible, usually by contacting the Club Welfare Officer and/or the Club Chairperson or another Club Officer.

If these Club Officers cannot be contacted you can seek advice from the NSPCC, helpline 0800 500 8000.

You can also contact the Duty Officer at your local Social Services or the police.

If the issue appears to relate to poor practice:

- compile full written record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible.
- the Club Welfare Officer or another Club Officer should be informed immediately.
- the Club Welfare Officer should report the matter to the NGB's Welfare Officer
- following guidance that the issue is 'poor practice' then the Club should follow club disciplinary procedures for a first report of poor practice (see Club Procedures for Poor Practice).
- forward the written report and action taken to the NGB's Welfare Officer.
- if an individual is identified by the club as being guilty of poor practice on subsequent occasions, then the Clubs Welfare Officer in consultation with the Chair may conclude that the issue constitutes abuse and should be referred to the NGB's Committee.

Non action is not an option. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

If there is a report of behaviour by a Club member towards a child or vulnerable adult which constitutes abuse:

- Decide if the child/vulnerable adult requires immediate medical attention.
- Call an ambulance if needed.
- Inform the paramedics that the concern relates to Child Protection/Protection of Vulnerable Adults.
- Refer the allegation to Police or Social Services who will give advice on whether to contact parents/guardians/carers.
- Inform the Club Welfare Officer and forward a written report using the Club Welfare Incident Report Form.
- Delay in acting can increase the risk to the person being abused. Note: A member or volunteer reporting a case of abuse, particularly by a colleague, may undergo a very high degree of stress, including feelings of guilt for having reported the matter. It is important to ensure that appropriate counselling and support is available.

11. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers.

Guidelines for Clubs with regard to members taking on a role of responsibility:

- Photographic evidence of identity should be provided by applicants.
- The requirements and responsibilities of the role should be clarified.
- The applicant should be familiar with the Club Safeguarding Policy and the Codes of Conduct and Codes of Practice.
- Coaches should be qualified through the NGB Coaching Scheme.

- Coaches, Club Officers and also volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults must have a current DBS check.
- Anyone who works with children or vulnerable adults must complete a Safeguarding course.

12. USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000.

Childline: help@nspcc.org.uk 0800 1111

Police emergency number: 999

Police non-emergency number: 101

RMBC Social Care 01709 382121

[Report abuse or neglect of an adult at risk – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

National Governing Body safeguarding contacts and information:

Paddle UK [Safeguarding Information | Paddle UK](#)

British Triathlon - [Safeguarding – British Triathlon](#)

England Athletics - [Safeguarding - England Athletics](#)

British Dragon Boating Association - [Safeguarding | Dragon Boat Racing](#)

Angling Trust - [Safeguarding - Angling Trust](#)

British Cycling - [Safeguarding](#)

Royal Yachting Association - [Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines | About Us | Policies | RYA](#)