

Child Protection Policy

All coaches and committee members will have a working knowledge of this policy and new committee members will review it annually.

The contents of this policy will be made available to every parent who has children attending the club. Parents will be asked to sign a statement confirming that they have read and understood this document.

We wish to create in our club an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

In order to achieve this, we will:

1. Ensure recruitment and selection procedures are robust

- All applicants to coach with our club, whether voluntary or paid, will be asked to provide at least two written references which should be both personal and work related.
- All such references are subject to be checked by the committee.
- Permission to coach during club ice time will be subject to a probationary period of 3 months and will not be confirmed unless the committee is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children. Full permission to coach will not be granted until their PVG certificate has been received from Disclosure Scotland or the Central Registered Body in Scotland.

2. Exclude known abusers

It will be made clear to applicants for coaching posts that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and is subject to a PVG check undertaken through the Central Registered Body in Scotland or Disclosure Scotland. Reference will be made as part of this process to the Disqualified from Working with Children List. * (See Appendix 1)

Before applying for PVG checks from the CRBS or Disclosure Scotland the club will have the following policies in place in addition to this Child Protection Policy: *(See Appendix 1 & 2)

- Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders (Appendix 1)
- Policy on secure handling, use storage and retention of disclosure information (Appendix 2)

3. Seek and supply training

When appropriate we will seek out training opportunities for all coaches and Child Protection Officers to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible child abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse and are aware of child protection procedures. The committee will keep documentary evidence of courses attended.

4. Prevent abuse by means of good practice

- Adults who have not been vetted through Disclosure Scotland and through careful selection procedures will not take children, other than their own children, unaccompanied to the toilet or be left in sole charge of children.
- Coaches and Child Protection Officers will be made aware of the requirement to notify the committee about any occurrence which may affect their disclosure status.

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- The committee is aware of its obligation to refer to Scottish Ministers, any individual working with children who harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm and is dismissed or removed away from access to children as a consequence. In addition, the committee is aware that it must also refer to Scottish Ministers any person in a childcare position who harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm and would have been dismissed if they had not resigned, retired, been made redundant or left at the end of a temporary contract.
- Children will be supervised at all times by a responsible adult, including when taking part in any external activities, unless accompanied by their parent.
- Children will not be left alone for long periods with individual children.
- Children will not be left alone with visitors.
- Coaches turning up to coach under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be instructed to go home. They may also face disciplinary action, with possible retraction of permission to coach during club ice time.
- There are no circumstances in which children will be punished by smacking, slapping, or shaking by anyone in the group. Neither will humiliating nor frightening methods of punishment be used; for example ridicule.

5. Recognition of Abuse, Poor Practice, Bullying and Abuse of Position of Trust

All adults have a duty to respond to suspicions of abuse, inappropriate behaviour, and poor practice. However, it is not the responsibility of these adults to decide whether, or not, abuse has taken place. There is a responsibility to act on any concerns and Moray Figure Skating Club provides a confidential communication line through which concerns can be expressed, to a designated Child Protection Officer to whom concerns should be expressed in confidence.

- **Abuse and Neglect**
Somebody may abuse a child or a young person by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused within their own family, at school and sometimes in sporting environments. Peer abuse is also an increasing concern for young people. Abuse may take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. Changes in children's behaviour or appearance will be monitored, recorded, and acted upon. To prevent any investigation into allegations being compromised, advice will be sought from an appropriate source before considering informing the child's parents or carers of their suspicions. Suspicions will be referred to the Social Work Department or Police. All such suspicions will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Suspicions will also be reported to the club's chairperson providing their child is not directly involved.
- **Poor Practice**
Poor practice may be defined as any action or behaviour that contravenes the following:
 - Best coaching practice as advocated through Moray Figure Skating Club and NISA policy.
 - Moray Figure Skating Club Code of Conduct.
 - The accepted roles and responsibilities of Moray Figure Skating Club's officials.
- **Racial Discrimination and Equality**
Although racism clearly causes harm it is not a clear category of abuse, however it may be considered emotional abuse and recent legislation has made racism illegal. Equal treatment must be provided for all regardless of gender, race or culture and we must protect our members from any form of harassment and discrimination.

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- **Young People with a Disability**
Young people with a disability or impairment may be vulnerable to abuse or poor practice, since they may not be able to express their concerns, protect themselves or understand what is happening. Moray Figure Skating Club will be vigilant in caring for these vulnerable young people.
- **Bullying**
It is important to recognise that in some cases it may not be an adult who is carrying out the bullying but another young person. Bullying can be defined as deliberate harmful behaviour, in the form of physical, emotional, or aggressive verbal conduct against another person.
- **Abuse a Position of Trust**
It is essential that those who may be in a position of responsibility and trust recognise vulnerability and ensure it is not exploited. The power and influence that a coach has over someone attending an activity such as skating cannot be underestimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and the coach is responsible for the young person's success or failure to some extent, then the dependency of the younger member on the coach will be increased. It is therefore vital that all coaches/personnel recognise the responsibility they must exercise in ensuring that they do not abuse their position of trust.
A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another by virtue of their position. A genuine relationship can develop between two people within a relationship of trust, but this must remain within appropriate boundaries.

6. Keeping of records – Child Protection officer, observer of any form of abuse

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual ongoing records of the club. The record will include:

- The name, address and age of the child
- Timed and dated observations describing objectively the child's behaviour and appearance, without comment or interpretation: where possible, the exact words spoken by the child
- The date, name and signature of the recorder
- Such records will be kept in a separate locked file and will not be accessible to people in the club other than Child Protection Officer and Chair Person.
- No digital records will be kept or circulated by email. Paper copies only.
- The club will specify clearly at the end of this policy the person/s identified as having access to information and to the secure files. These names will be reviewed, annually at least and any changes recorded appropriately.

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7. Liaise with other bodies

- Confidential records, kept on children about whom the club are suspicious, will be shared with the social work department if the club feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided.
- If a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child's parents will be informed at the same time as the report is made, unless there are suspicions that the parents are implicated.
- Once reported the club will maintain ongoing contact with the local authority, including names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers, to ensure that it would be easy in an emergency for the club and the social work department to work together.
- Contact details will also be kept of the local social work department and other agencies and individuals as appropriate.

8. Support Families

The coaches and committee will take every step to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff volunteers in the club.

Where abuse at home is suspected, the club will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations are carried out.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the club will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

This policy will be displayed alongside the daily register.

In collecting, holding and processing personal data the club will comply with current data protection rules and guidance.

Useful contact numbers

Moray Social Work

01343563900

Moray Council out of hours emergency contact

03457565656

Police

101 (ask to speak to a local officer)

Appendix 1 Policy on Recruitment of Ex Offenders

The Rehabilitation Offenders Act provides the current framework on the use of prior convictions. In general terms it provides for convictions to become spent after a specified period related to the length of sentence. For instance, a conviction becoming spent means that it does not require to be declared, for example, for the purpose of a job application. However, there are some areas of activity that are exempt from these provisions, in particular those involving substantial access to children. These exemptions are set out in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975 as amended. For those applying to work in these areas, all convictions, no matter how old, require to be declared.

The Police Act 1997, Part V provides the mechanism whereby those wishing to work with a child may obtain a standard for P.V.G. Activities that may include regular contact with a child may require a standard disclosure. Those activities involving regular caring, training, supervision or being in sole charge of a child/children attract the need for an enhanced disclosure. An enhanced disclosure would be the preferred option for those working in the pre school sector. A child, for this purpose, is a person under the age of 18 years. Standard disclosures provide information on both spent and unspent convictions, or indicate that there are no convictions. Enhanced disclosures provide the same information as the standard disclosures but in addition provide information on relevant non-conviction information, for example police intelligence.

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 (PoCSA) aims to further improve safeguards for children by preventing unsuitable people from working with them. The Act provides for Scottish ministers to maintain a list of persons who are unsuitable to work in a childcare position as either paid employees or unpaid volunteers. The list is known as the Disqualified from Working with Children List.

The Act places a duty on employers to refer people to the list if they have harmed children or put children at risk of harm and have been dismissed or moved away from contact with children as a consequence. It will be an offence to knowingly employ anyone on the list to work with children. The fact that someone is on the list will be released as part of a disclosure check available through Disclosure Scotland. It is important that when a disclosure application is being completed that you prefix the name of the position with the word childcare in the "position applied for" section (C2). This is the trigger for Disclosure Scotland to check "The Disqualified from Working with Children List".

This new Act will significantly enhance the protection of children, but it is important to stress that it compliments rather than replaces other child protection measures. All organisations entrusted with the care of children need to practice the full range of pre-employment checks. This includes interviews, the full investigation of the applicant's employment history and the taking up of references. Supervision within any probationary period is also recommended.

Following this guidance, it would be inappropriate for the club to employ any person with current or unspent convictions involving child protection, in the role of coach or Child Protection Officer.

Appendix 2 Safe storage of PVG Information & References

All PVG records and references will be kept in a separate locked file and will not be accessible to people in the club other than the Chairperson and Child Protection Officer(s).

Agencies making a child protection referral should ask to speak to the Senior Social Worker or if contacting the Police, an officer of the Female and Child Unit. If the Senior Social Worker is unavailable, then the Duty Social Worker is the alternative point of contact.