

G8 – Guidance for Clubs and Centres – Interim Suspension of Individuals Pending an Investigation

The policies and guidelines referenced within this document are those of British Canoeing and its Home Nation associations.

This guidance document outlines the procedures and considerations for clubs and centres that have a coach, volunteer or member of staff who has received an Interim Suspension pending investigation from British Canoeing due to a Safeguarding concern or allegation.

1. The concern or allegation may have been reported within or outside of the sport. In either case the Club/ Centre Welfare Officer and/ or the Club Chair/ Centre Manager, will be the main point of contact and will be kept informed by British Canoeing throughout the investigation on a “need to know” basis.
2. It is important to stress that if someone has been issued with a British Canoeing Interim Suspension it is because we have received information which gives us cause for concern and need to investigate further. The suspension is a neutral act to protect all parties and does not indicate guilt.
3. The individual will receive a letter informing them of the Interim Suspension and explaining what activities they are prohibited from participating in for the duration of the investigation.
4. The Interim Suspension will exclude the individual from all water sport related activities as well as access to the club/ centre pending the outcome of the investigation.
5. You should, if the occasion arises, challenge any club/ centre ‘gossip’ regarding the individual. It is important to keep information ‘controlled’ and people should simply be told an Interim Suspension has been issued.
6. It is very important to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times and information is shared on a strictly “need to know” basis.
7. The individual will be provided with contact details for the Safeguarding Support Officer who is available to offer impartial telephone support and advice to the individual throughout the investigation. The Support Officer will be neutral to the case and will not be the designated contact for the individual(s) who have raised the concern nor will they be a member of the British Canoeing Safeguarding Case Management Group or the Home Nation Safeguarding Group who will be assessing the case.
8. During the period of Interim Suspension from club/ centre activities it is important to keep in touch with the individual and ensure they are kept informed of any club developments. If they don’t already know, inform them that support is available to them through the British Canoeing Safeguarding Support Officer.
9. Whilst every effort is made to complete the investigation as quickly as possible, it can take time to gather information. If the Police or Statutory Agency are involved British Canoeing will be unable to proceed with their investigation until their conclusion is reached, which can take many months.

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10. Once the British Canoeing Safeguarding Case Management Group has concluded their investigation a decision will be reached about the individual's future involvement in the sport.

If the British Canoeing Safeguarding Case Management Group decide to lift the Interim Suspension, both the individual and club/ centre will be informed and the individual will be able to return to their usual club or centre activities. Although cleared by British Canoeing you, as the club/ centre, have an option of completing your own disciplinary action.

The British Canoeing Safeguarding Case Management Group may decide to keep the Interim Suspension in place and commence Disciplinary Action.

11. If and when the individual has an Interim Suspension or any conditions imposed, lifted the club/ centre may be asked to help provide support to integrate the individual back into the club/ centre or additional training needs to be addressed.

Things to remember:

- It is important to keep British Canoeing informed of **any** allegation or concern which is being followed up or dealt with independently by the club/ centre.
- In the above circumstances it is also very important to keep detailed records of all actions and discussions.
- It is important that club constitutions include a section relating to policy and procedures following the suspension (interim and full) or restrictions/ conditions placed on a club member following a British Canoeing investigation or disciplinary action.

Contacts:

British Canoeing members: Child Protection Officer – Mark Williams-Thomas - 07917 695559

British Canoeing Safeguarding Support Officer – Keith Hampton - 07740 820113

CANI members: Mary Doyle - 02890 738884

SCA members: Andy Murray – 07900 887007

WCA members: Nigel Midgley – 07971 783080