



Safeguarding Guidance: Information for Parents and Carers

In seeking reassurance that the sport your child is involved in has their best interest and welfare at heart, you may consider finding out the following:

Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy

A good club or centre will have a child protection or safeguarding policy and you should be told what to do if your child has any concerns. Ideally, there should be a Club/ Centre Welfare Officer (CWO) who will answer any questions you might have.

Code of Conduct/ Behaviour policy

This should also include what to do if you feel it is not being followed.

Selecting and recruiting staff and volunteers

There are legal requirements for those who are working within 'regulated activity' to have completed a Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to being deployed in their role. For more information about the Disclosure requirements for those working with children see [British Canoeing Disclosure Policy](#).

Training and education

Ask if coaches and volunteers have undertaken training for their roles, or achieved a formal coaching qualification. Those regularly working with children should have completed recognised Safeguarding Training. For more information see [Training Requirements](#).

Events away from home

Ask about what arrangements the club makes to ensure children are kept safe when they take part in competitions or trips away from home.

Club/ Centre accreditation

Find out whether the club or centre has an accreditation award such as British Canoeing's Quality Club or Club Champion awards. This shows that it has achieved a recognised minimum standard that ensures it provides a good experience for children and young people.

Promoting your child's welfare

Ask about how the club or centre safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. This can include a register at the beginning and end of sessions; first aid provision; the number of children looked after per coach/trainer; arrangements for transporting them to and from events; and signing children in and out.

Changing rooms

If the club or centre has changing rooms, ask if there is a changing room policy. You may wish to make alternative arrangements or come changed and ready if you prefer or there is no clear policy.

Supporting your child's involvement in Sport

While you don't want to scare, worry or put your child off, it is important that you teach them what to do if they feel they are being badly treated or hurt by someone who is supposed to be coaching or looking after them. (This is helpful not just in the sporting environment, but could relate to other clubs, activities or even school).

If you start to notice your child appearing to be worried or not wanting to take part or go to their club anymore, without saying why. Talk to them about it, but understand that if they are being badly treated, it may be difficult for them to open up immediately. Remember to tell them it is not their fault and to encourage them to tell someone they know and trust- in a club or centre setting this may be their Club/ Centre Welfare Officer.

Sometimes, however it is not the actions or lack of actions, of the club or other club members that can negatively impact on your child's participation and enjoyment. Despite best intentions, sometimes it can be you or your partner's behaviour which can negatively impact on your child's (or other children's) enjoyment of the sport- often without you even realising!

Examples of negative impact can be when you or your partner:

- criticise or goad officials, other spectators or coaches
- expect too much, push them too hard and too fast
- focus exclusively on winning at any cost
- impose sporting aspirations
- encourage foul play or rule breaking
- contradict or undermine the advice or guidance of the coach
- pursue your own sporting dreams through your children
- define them by their talent and success alone
- demand they sacrifice 'fun' activities for 'serious' training A couple of really good videos have been created by CPSU which help illustrate how a parent or carers behaviour can negatively impact on a child or young person's experience of sport.

[Magic Sports Kit video: It's our game not yours](#)

Instead you should try to:

- Support enthusiastically and positively
- Encourage without expecting perfection
- Acknowledge the efforts of all the children
- Promote fair play & encourage playing by the rules
- Support the coaches and officials (particularly young officials)

- Share challenges or criticisms (of officials, coaches or players) in a constructive way
- Allow the coaches to coach
- Support and respect their ambitions
- Celebrate the taking part, not just the winning
- Remember that this is your child's sporting experience – not yours!

Keeping your Child Safe Online

It is difficult to keep up with the pace of online technology and social media these days and even if you do, it can be an ever changing minefield!

Often it is our children who are teaching us how to use today's technology. It is therefore important to try and spend some time getting to know the websites they are visiting and who they are contacting. Many social media sites have a minimum age for use and several options for controlling the sharing of information. There is also software available which provides parental/family control settings, most internet providers also offer this. Being up to date with these can help you safeguard your child whilst online.

It is also worth bearing in mind the ever increasing range of devices where the internet can be accessed from and check their settings too:

- Mobile phones
- Tablets & Kindles
- Laptop & Notebook computers
- Games consoles E.g. Xbox, Wii, Play Station
- Smart watches
- Smart TV's

It is a good idea to set ground rules as well as help educate your children on the risks associated with the internet and make sure they know to tell you if they are sent or see anything which upsets them.

Helpful information and links

[Child Protection in Sport Unit \(CPSU\)](#)

www.facebook.com/safety

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/?topic=2811>