



## Safeguarding and Protection Policy

King's Swords Fencing Club (KSFC) has a duty of care to safeguard from harm those children, and adults at risk, who are involved in our activities. Everyone has a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. KSFC will do their utmost to ensure the safety and protection of everyone involved in any activity at KSFC. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

### Policy Aims

The aim of our Safeguarding and Protection Policy is to promote best practice. KSFC will do this by a number of means including:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection
- allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific issues
- promoting best practice

### Promoting Best Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions. KSFC recognises that it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with our judgement about the appropriate action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

KSFC hopes that a child who has been subject to abuse outside of fencing will find that sport can play a crucial role of improving their self-esteem. In such instances KSFC will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure that they receive the required support.

### Best Practice Guidelines

All club personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense guidelines.

- Always work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets
- Treat everyone equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always put their welfare first
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empowers them to share in the decision-making process
- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play

- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Fencers, and if appropriate carers and/or their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained
- Keep up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, we will always ensure supervisors work in pairs and that this is carried out by gender appropriate members of staff
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol while in the company of the young people
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of our fencers - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Secure parental/carers consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Request written parental consent if officials are required to transport young people in their cars

### Practices to be Avoided

The following should be avoided – although there are times when they are unavoidable. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session. If this happens, then it will be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents.

- Spending time alone with children away from others
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event

### Practices that are Not Allowed

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised

Sometimes it may be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for someone, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the fencer involved. These tasks may include situations where they are helping to dress or undress a fencer, where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. Talk with them about what is happening and give choices where possible and avoid taking on responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

As far as possible, the Club will ensure that such unavoidable activities are conducted by a gender appropriate adult.

## Reporting and Recording an Incident

If any of the following occur, this should be reported immediately to the KSFC's Welfare Officer and the incident recorded. Parents of the child should be informed if:

- A fencer is accidentally hurt by a coach, volunteer or official
- If they seem distressed in any manner
- If a fencer appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a fencer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

If abuse or poor practice is suspected, then the club's Welfare Officer must be informed and provided with a written report. This must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Are these the concerns of the person making the report or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information will be included
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- If the parents/carers have been contacted
  - If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, have they been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

The first point of contact will always be the KSFC Welfare Officer, if the child is safe then British Fencing Equality and Safeguarding Manager should then be contacted on 07526 003030. If the child is not safe then the Police will be contacted.

## Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned, information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only to:

- The Welfare Officer (Kate Smith – [kate.smith@ksfc.co.uk](mailto:kate.smith@ksfc.co.uk))
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- The alleged abuser and their parents if the alleged abuser is a child
- British Fencing Equality and Safeguarding manager
- Police/Social Services