Safeguarding Policy

Verulam Cycling Club (VCC) believes everyone who participates in cycling, in all its disciplines, is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and to be given the chance to experience the fun, challenge and sense of achievement that are inherent to cycling.

In addition, all young people (under 18) and vulnerable adults are entitled to a duty of care and to be protected from abuse. VCC is committed to implementing appropriate policies and procedures to ensure everyone in the club accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. This means taking action to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to report any concerns about their welfare.

VCC respects British Cycling's procedures for good practice and child protection that clearly states what is required of the club:

- Everyone knows and accepts their responsibilities and works together: parents, volunteers, cyclists, coaches, leaders, and club officials.

The following terms are used in the club's policies:

- Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person. VCC use the term youth for all children and young people.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.

British Cycling's Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy can be found here: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/safeguarding

This is also endorsed by Cycling Time Trials (CTT) and other leading national cycling organisations. The main points of the policy are summarised below.

British Cycling requires:

- All affiliated clubs to appoint a **Club Welfare Officer** (CWO) responsible for guidance on good practice and child protection.
- All Club Welfare Officers, coaches and runs leaders to undertake relevant child protection awareness training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection in cycling.
- All personnel (parents, cyclists, coaches, leaders, club officials, senior and junior club members) to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult

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towards a young person. This can be found in this document and also at: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/safeguarding?c=EN

- All coaches and those working with youths to attend a British Cycling one-day top-up course on child protection, or other training course run by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, or by the County Sports Partnership that comprises good practice and child protection awareness training, guidance on child-centred coaching styles and information on child growth and development and its implications in cycling.
- All coaches and runs leaders should have up to date knowledge of First Aid.

Welfare Officer
VCC has a Welfare Officer, who along with the Club Coaches ensures that our Child Protection Policy is implemented and communicated to Club Members. The Welfare Officer will also advise VCC event organisers how best to safeguard the welfare of youths who are participating in those events. If you have any concerns about the welfare of youths involved in the Club you can contact our Welfare Officer by emailing: welfare.officer@verulamcc.org.uk

Information for Parents
Youths will be welcome to take part in a number of VCC's activities and we will run specific events for children and young people. However VCC requires that parents of youths taking part in all our club activities complete our parental consent form.

This is required for all participants and can be completed via the VCC website.

Guidance notes for Coaches and Event Organisers
All of our coaches and event organisers will adhere to the best practice guidance provided by British Cycling, details of which can be found here: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/safeguarding/SG_3.2_Guidelines_for_cycling_events.pdf

The following information covers the main points that coaches and event organisers need to adhere to.

Good Practice
The following principles should be adhered to by those involved in cycling:

- Conduct all coaching and meetings in an open environment; avoid one-to-one coaching in unobserved situations.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with youths.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with youths. Touching can be okay and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the cyclist's permission has been given.

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- Carry a mobile phone.
- Carry emergency contact details of all youth riders taking part.

Poor Practice
The following is deemed to constitute poor practice and should be avoided:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with one youth away from the others.
- Avoid taking youth(s) to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Never allow allegations made by a youth to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the person in charge, or the youth's parents. If any incidents should occur that gives you concern for a youth's welfare and safety, you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event (to be sent to the Club Welfare Officer and Club Secretary), and inform parents of the incident:
- All leaders are required to adhere to the British Cycling Safeguarding Policies of which can be found here: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/safeguarding

Use of Social Media

- Set up a club/team specific profile page - encourage your riders to join this page and openly share appropriate information only as part of the group. No private discussions should take place, particularly between an adult and a youth rider. Consider including parents in this too.
- Be responsible - lead by example; act as an ambassador for your team/club, region and cycling.
- Not all information is for sharing - this should only be cycling/team/club information. Nothing personal, private or inappropriate. Photos and videos may be fine, but only where parents have specifically consented to this.

Read more at:
https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/safeguarding/SG_5.2_Using_Social_Networking_Services_and_Social_Media.pdf

Photography
The taking, and publication on the internet, of images of under-eighteens is an increasingly sensitive issue. British Cycling has introduced the following policy to help protect members in this age group, which VCC has adopted:
https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/safeguarding/SG_5.4_Safeguarding_and_Photography.pdf

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In summary:

- VCC will make every effort to limit shots taken, or published on its website, of riders in the under sixteen categories to images which involve racing or formal training or formal club on-the-bike activities.
- Off-the-bike shots of this age group will be limited to groups of riders unless provided by and with consent from a parent of the youth.
- As an exception to the British Cycling Policy above, VCC may also take and publish photos of under-sixteens receiving their awards at formal prize presentations.
- VCC will always remove images from its website upon request to the Club Secretary or Welfare Officer, where reasonable.

Managing challenging behaviour of children and vulnerable adults in cycling

Those who deliver cycling and other sports activities to children and vulnerable adults may, on occasions, be required to deal with a rider's challenging behaviour. This may cause individuals to experience different emotions and they may find it difficult to manage this behaviour.

CPSU (Child Protection in Sport) Briefing 'Managing challenging behaviour' guidance aims to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting riders to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used.

These guidelines are based on the following principles.

- The welfare of the rider is the paramount consideration.
- All those involved in activities (including riders, coaches/volunteers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the organisation/club's process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.
- Riders must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some riders' exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, e.g. a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the rider may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the rider in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support

provided e.g. from external agencies, educational establishments, Children's Social Care services etc.

- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and vulnerable adults. Every rider should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a rider or of other riders cannot be maintained, should a rider be excluded from club activities.

The CPSU Briefing document is available at: https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/managing-challenging-behaviour/

Physical contact and young people in sport

Introduction and background

There is growing concern about what is and what is not permissible in the area of physical contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in sport.

Guidance

There are a number of principles that should be followed when the activity involves physical contact. Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's.

The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- To treat an injury
- To prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- To meet the requirements of the sport

The adult should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.

It is good practice for sport clubs, as part of an induction process or pack for new members, to explain to parents/carers and their child or give written guidance about any physical contact that will be required as part of that activity.

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Children should be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment. Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

The CPSU is not aware of any sports bodies that have stated that any physical contact is not permissible under any circumstances within the context of coaching or teaching.

In the case of a young person with a disability specific support or assistance may be required. When children with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, the individual child should be treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the child and those assisting. It is recommended that those assisting receive appropriate training.

Specific situations

Physical punishment

Any form of physical punishment of children is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of physical intervention to prevent a young person from;

- Harming themselves
- Harming other
- Damaging property

It is particularly important that adults understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the Club.

Contact as part of coaching

Some sport or physical activities are more likely to require coaches or teachers to come into physical contact with children and young people from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or demonstrating a move or exercise during a coaching or teaching session in order to reduce the risk of injury due to falls or errors when performing. Adults should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place, and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

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A number of sport or physical activities may require physical contact between young athletes and those teaching them, for reasons of both teaching and the participant's safety. A number of sports governing bodies have developed guidance to assist coaches in this area. This guidance should be followed by those teaching these sports. Even in sports where there is a need to support or touch a child, over-handling should be avoided.

It should be recognised that physical contact between an adult and a child that may occur during legitimate teaching or coaching may be misconstrued or misunderstood by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching young participants, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised. As a general principle adults in positions of responsibility should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. It is particularly unwise to attribute frequent touching to their teaching or coaching style or as a way of relating to young participants.

Responding to distress and success

There may be occasions where a distressed young person needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Physical contact may also be required to prevent an accident or injury and this would be wholly appropriate. A young person or coach may also want to mark a success or achievement with a hug or other gesture. Adults should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is (and what is seen by others present) normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same young person over a period of time. It should also be considered that what, as an adult may, be felt appropriate may not be shared by a young person.

Sports science and medicine

There may be some roles within sport or physical activities where physical contact is common place and/or a requirement of the role, particularly sports science or medicine. These tasks should only be undertaken by properly trained or qualified practitioners. This guidance does not seek to replace the specific guidance and codes of practice developed for those professionals and reference should be made to the appropriate body for that discipline.

Useful resources/contacts for advice:
NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (https://thecpsu.org.uk/) or call the NSPCC on: 0808 800 5000

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VCC Youth Development Secretary: youth.sec@verulamcc.org.uk
VCC Welfare Officer: welfareofficer@verulamcc.org.uk

Plus:
VCC Code of Conduct for Adult Members
VCC Code of Conduct for Youth Members
VCC Equality Policy
VCC Health & Safety Policy
VCC Privacy Policy
VCC Volunteer Agreement
Available here: https://www.verulamcc.org.uk/membership/club-policies