



G.U.E POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction

The Guernsey Union D'Esgrime (GUE) is the governing body for the sport of fencing in Guernsey and has developed this Child Protection Policy for implementation throughout the island by its member clubs (MC's) and wherever the sport is taught or practiced.

Wherever provision is made for children and young people to:-

- Participate in fencing on Guernsey and/or
- To participate in fencing elsewhere with a Guernsey club or team and/or
- To participate in fencing elsewhere accompanied by officials of a Guernsey club or team every "associated adult" [adult purporting or appearing to have a role in the activity, or supervision for the purposes of that activity (AA)], has a responsibility ensure that:

- 1. The welfare of the child is paramount**
- 2. There is recognition that all children have the right to protection from abuse**
- 3. All suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately**
- 4. All concerns are reported to the appropriate officer.**

Adopting best practice will help to safeguard participants from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in a position of responsibility from any potential allegations of abuse.

It is recognised that young fencers from Guernsey enjoy participating in the sport both in the Bailiwick and elsewhere. This document is binding upon all MC's in Guernsey and on all AA's whether in Guernsey or elsewhere. Whilst an entirely privately organised outing by a parent exclusively for their own child may strictly fall outside the influence of this document (the only fencing related activity likely to be so considered), a parent in such circumstances is encouraged to heed its guidance. Any reported poor practice or abuse may have implications on the ability of that parent to be an AA in respect of other children in the future.

Where, in its absolute discretion, the Committee of the GUE considers that an incident or other issue falls outside the scope or coverage of this document, or where assistance is required in the interpretation of any provision, it can and will refer to the policies and guidelines of its sister organisations, the BFA and the governing bodies for fencing in the Home Countries, for assistance.



Legislation

The Children (Guernsey and Alderney) Law, 2008 has been in force in those islands since 1 January 2010. It falls outside the scope of this document to set out its terms however the GUE is aware of the responsibilities and duties of the Police, Children and Young People's Services section of the Health and Social Services Department (formerly Children Board) and the Children's Convenor to investigate allegations of abuse against children and GUE recognises its own responsibilities in the arena of Child Protection.

Policy Statement

The GUE, its MC's, AA's and all participants in fencing have a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children who are involved in the sport. All children have a right to protection and the specific needs of individual young people who may, for whatever reason (including, for example, disability) be particularly vulnerable must be both recognised and taken into account.

Sport can and does have a powerful and positive influence on people, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement but also it helps to develop and enhance valuable qualities such as self esteem, leadership and teamwork. In order for these positive experiences to reliably and safely take place, GUE will constantly work to have the best possible procedures and practices.

The kinds of positive experiences which sport can deliver and their impact on the personal development of a young person may, themselves, contribute to protecting that young person from negative influences or abuse from others; thus good practice, and the delivery of sports coaching in a good practice environment, should be seen as a positive way to enrich the lives of young people. Equally, poor practice may impair the ability of young people to report abuse and may have unseen implications beyond the sport itself.

Aims

The aim of this document is to promote good practice and to seek to ensure that good practice is followed by MC's and AA's:

- ❖ Providing young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of MC's and AA's.
- ❖ Ensure that all incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- ❖ Allow all MC's and AA's and parents to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.



- ❖ This document uses both the terms “child/children” and “young person/people” according to the situation however the terms should be taken to be interchangeable and refer to all people under the age of 18 notwithstanding that it is recognised that there is a distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal responsibility/liability etc.
- ❖ Aside from that, the GUE recognises that young adults are vulnerable to undue influence by adults in positions of responsibility and encourages good practice throughout the age ranges of participants in sport.
- ❖ Confidentiality will be upheld by GUE in line with the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001.

Good Practice

Child abuse of any kind can arouse strong emotions in those facing a disclosure or witnessing it. Abuse can occur within many situations within the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that some individuals will actively seek to have contact with young people in order to harm them or for other sinister ulterior motive.

A coach, instructor, teacher or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be a critical link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection.

ALL CASES OF POOR PRACTICE AND SUSPECTED CASES OF ABUSE SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE GUE [[FOR FULL CONTACT DETAILS OF THE CURRENT G.U.E CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER, PLEASE REFER TO THE G.U.E WEB SITE](#)] AND/OR RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (SEE LEGISLATION SECTION) FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINES IN THIS DOCUMENT.

When a child enters a club environment having experienced abuse elsewhere, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child’s self esteem. In such instances, clubs must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives appropriate support.

All those involved in the sport of fencing should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard children and young people and protect themselves from false allegations. The following are examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within fencing:

- ❖ Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations, avoiding coded language or communication which may not be understood by others, involving parents and other AA’s in plans and activities, no secrets). Failing to do so not only presents an opportunity for abuse but it also encourages young people to accept such situations as the norm thus predisposing them to abuse by others.
- ❖ Treating all people equally, with dignity and respect.



- ❖ Placing the welfare and safety of the child or young person above the development of performance or competition.
- ❖ Avoiding any apparent favouritism and any apparent personal emotional investment in the performance of young people.
- ❖ Maintaining a safe and objectively appropriate distance with fencers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a young person in respect of whom one is in a position of responsibility nor to share a room with them).
- ❖ Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers young people to genuinely share in the decision-making process.
- ❖ Making sport fun and enjoyable and promoting fair play, humility in success and positivity in defeat.
- ❖ Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and only where demonstrably necessary.
- ❖ The GUE does not approve or condone the provision of massage or other manual therapies by any fencing coach. There will be a presumption at least of poor practice where this is proven to have been offered or given unless it can be shown to have been a necessary act of First Aid or where the AA has nationally recognised qualifications and parental consent has been given.
- ❖ Keeping up-to-date with technical skills and qualifications and insurance requirements.
- ❖ Ensuring that teaching practice reflects the highest possible standards.
- ❖ Involving parents/carers wherever possible. Wherever fencing trips are taken off island, organisers must ensure sufficient numbers of AA's (of each gender where relevant) are taken and that they are "police checked" and educated in the detail of this document and the Child Protection policy of the relevant MC.
- ❖ Ensuring that at residential events off island adults should not enter young people's rooms or invite children into their rooms (for meetings or otherwise, accompanied or otherwise).
- ❖ Being an excellent role model (including avoiding drinking alcohol or smoking in the presence of young people).
- ❖ Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.



- ❖ Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- ❖ Securing parental consent in writing to act “in loco parentis”, if the need arises, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- ❖ Having up-to-date records of young people including contact numbers and information about medical conditions and lesson plans.
- ❖ Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs along with the details of the outcome including any treatment given and details of the time and manner in which the parent/carer was notified.
- ❖ Requesting parental consent if club officials are organised to transport young people in their cars.

Practice Never To Be Sanctioned

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Spending excessive time alone with young people away from others.
- Taking children to one’s home or any secluded place where they will be alone with you.
- Sharing a room overnight with a young person.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of (objectively) inappropriate touching.
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged (including bullying and profanity).
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person even if in fun.
- Bullying a child physically or verbally nor wilfully reducing a child to tears for whatever reason.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Doing anything of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves unless specifically requested to do so and with the parental permission and then with the utmost discretion.



- Vacating the venue until the supervision of the safe dispersal of all fencers is complete.
- Abusing the coach's position of power or trust in any way.
- Embarrassing or humiliating or undermining any individual or cause them to lose self esteem.
- Striking or appearing to strike a fencer to chastise or encourage them or punish them for perceived poor performance.

If any of the following occur, it is the responsibility of an AA to report the following to another colleague and record the incident and inform a member of the committee of the relevant MC:

- If you or an opponent accidentally hurts a child fencer.
- If a young person seems distressed in any manner.
- If a young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or appears to exhibit a crush or more-than-platonic interest in you.
- If a young fencer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done or said.

It is a fundamental requirement of all AA's that they report to the committee of the GUE as a matter of urgency the following (this is not an exhaustive list - if a serious matter is not included on this list you should err on the side of reporting since failure to do so may itself result in disciplinary charges):

- If you have become or been the subject of an investigation into your conduct (otherwise than by the GUE) (whether by the police or your employer or your club or by any of the agencies mentioned in the Legislation section of this document or similar agencies in another jurisdiction) connected with fencing activities.
- If you have become or been the subject of any investigation into your conduct (whether by the police or your employer or by any of the agencies mentioned in the Legislation section of this document or similar agencies in another jurisdiction) in relation to a child wherever that alleged conduct took place.
- If you have become aware of any complaint as to your conduct in connection with fencing.

Guidance for Parents

A good coach will develop a strong trusting bond with his/her fencers. This is essential in a successful coach/fencer relationship. However, as a parent you should:



- Check that the club has a published Child Protection Policy which seeks to ensure that all young people are protected and kept safe from harm.
- Check if the club has an anti bullying policy.
- Check if the club has a designated child protection officer in place and that young people are aware that they can talk to them about concerns without fear of victimisation or reprisal.
- Check if there are procedures in place for dealing with concern/complaints and disciplinary issues.
- Check if the club has in place procedures for criminal record checks for volunteers and officials.
- Be aware that a “clean” criminal record check is merely proof that an individual had not been convicted in Guernsey/UK of a relevant criminal offence when the check was carried out. You should ensure that you are happy with the running of an individual club and the behaviour of its officials.
- Check if the head coach has a minimum BFA coaching qualification.
- Check if the club makes every effort to ensure that at least two responsible adults are present during training sessions.
- Check if the club encourages officials and volunteers to attend Child Protection Awareness training.
- Check that parents are not discouraged from watching/becoming involved.
- Encourage your children to talk to you about their training and ensure that they know how to voice their concerns if they are not happy about situations that may arise.

Photography

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events or club evenings

Alongside the Child Protection in Sport Unit at the NSPCC, the GUE does not advocate the banning of photography or the use of images and videos of adult or child participants in fencing, but recommends that appropriate and proportionate safeguards should be in place to ensure a safe sporting environment for children and young people.

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions.



All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should to be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer or to the manager of the venue where fencing is taking place if it is not being used exclusively by the relevant fencing club or event.

Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children especially when used with personal information and especially in the context of a small island community. This itself can make a young person vulnerable to grooming quite apart from the potential for the content of the photograph itself to be inappropriate. Clubs must therefore develop policies in relation to photography at club meetings and events which are alive to the risks and which recognise that young people and their carers have a right to decide whether their photograph is taken and how images are used.

Particularly important issues which should be covered include, but are not limited to:

- How, and when, informed consent is to be obtained
- The registration of those taking photographs/videos and the use to which those images will be put
- The fact that only images of children in appropriate dress (in terms of both affording dignity and decency to the individual as well as showing participants using the correct safety clothing whilst fencing or being coached) should be taken
- The fact that the emphasis should be on the activity rather than an individual.
- A recognised procedure for dealing with complaints.

At many events, organisers and others will reasonably wish to take wide angle, more general photos of the event sites, opening and closing ceremonies, and so on. Separate to the issue of consents for 'identifying' photographs/footage (as above) parents and children should at least understand that these types of images will be taken during, or at specific points in, the event e.g. information could be included on the parental consent form. It may not be reasonable, practical or proportionate to require parental consents for this type of photography, or to preclude it on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents. Parents should, however, be made aware of the issues.

Assistance in drafting an appropriate policy may be obtained from the NSPCC website.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely



Responding to Suspicions or Allegations

IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANYONE WORKING AS AN OFFICIAL OR VOLUNTEER IN FENCING TO DECIDE WHETHER CHILD ABUSE HAS TAKEN PLACE. THIS IS THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION AGENCIES MENTIONED IN THE LEGISLATION SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT. HOWEVER THERE IS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL INVOLVED IN FENCING TO ACT ON ANY CONCERNS THROUGH CONTACT WITH THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

The GUE assures all AA's that it will fully support anyone who in good faith reports his or her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where a complaint is made against an AA, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal investigation (police).
- Child protection investigation (CYPS/Convenor).
- Disciplinary/misconduct investigation (GUE/MC).

Action to be taken if there are concerns:

If the allegation is clearly about poor practice, it should be reported immediately to the CCPO who will, in consultation with the GUE (the GUE retains the power to take over any investigation), deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the concern is, or may be, about abuse then report your concerns immediately to the Child Protection Officer of the relevant Club (CCPO). If this person is not immediately available, the person who was told about the abuse or who discovered it should contact Children and Young People's Services (Perruque House) or the police immediately and thereafter ensure that the CCPO is informed of the action taken. Both agencies will advise on how best to involve parents/carers and deal with the situation. If the alleged abuse is by an AA, then a disciplinary investigation will also need to be carried out by the CCPO (even if the police do not prosecute).

If the CCPO is available, they should contact the agency or agencies above. They should also, immediately afterwards, inform the GUE on the appropriate form provided.

FLOW CHART PROCEDURES FOR CLUB AND ALSO FOR YOUNG PERSON

You become aware of someone's behaviour which raises concern

If immediate medical attention is required, summon a doctor/ambulance and inform them that there is a child protection concern.



Report the concern immediately to the Child Protection Officer (“CPO”) of your Club.
[If the CPO is involved, refer the matter to the Chairman/President]

Poor Practice/Breach of Code

Relevant club disciplinary procedure initiated

G.U.E to be kept informed throughout.

Investigation.

No case to answer.....Warning/advice as to future conduct/sanctions.

Further training needed

Dismissal

Referral to G.U.E/British Fencing

Possible Abuse

Refer immediately to the Police and/or Children & Young People’s Services (“CYPS”) (Assessment and Intervention Team – 723182) who will advise on contact with parents.

Inform G.U.E and Club Chairman/President without delay.
The G.U.E will inform British Fencing.

Relevant Club disciplinary procedures initiated.

Decision to be taken re temporary suspension, pending investigation.

If the threshold for CYPS/Police involvement is not met, refer the matter back to the Club re any disciplinary investigation, and to the G.U.E, who will liaise with British Fencing.

If you do not know who to turn to, or are worried about sharing your concerns, or believe that your concerns have not been dealt with appropriately within your Club/G.U.E, or you have concerns about a child, or behaviour towards a child which is not sport related, contact CYPS direct or NSPCC (0808 – 800 – 5000) or Childline (0800 – 1111)

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