



Safeguarding & Welfare Policy

Watford Fencing Club has drawn up these guidelines using British Fencing Association's guidance. They will be updated in line with British Fencing Association's Child Protection and Procedures. The guidelines are based on the principles detailed in Appendix A.

Everyone at some point in their own or their child's sporting life has concerns about things they observe within their sport. These may vary from simple bad manners to the outright dangerous and everything in between. Often these concerns are relatively minor and can be easily be resolved.

Abuse can occur anywhere there are children/vulnerable adults, e.g. at home, at school, in the park, or even the fencing club. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where children are simply in order to abuse them. We believe that everyone at Watford Fencing Club has a part to play in looking after the children/vulnerable adults with whom we are working. This is both a moral and arguably a legal obligation. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 indicates that anyone who has the care of children/vulnerable adults should *"do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's /vulnerable adults' welfare."*

Finally, please remember that Watford Fencing Club will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a child/vulnerable adult is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.

Watford Fencing Club - Child Protection Procedures

Background

- Watford Fencing Club is a fencing club for adults. Members must be at least 16 years old.
- If an under-16-year-old wishes to join, the Club may admit the young person at the discretion of the Committee.
- Members of Three Rivers Young Blades, our sister club for junior fencers, may attend on Watford Fencing Club evenings.

Particular guidelines cover each type of attendance by children and young people. This document first outlines general procedures, and then specifies particular guidelines.

Procedures put in place at Watford Fencing Club to protect children cover the following areas -

1. Recruitment, Employment and Development of Staff and Volunteers
2. Promoting Good Practice with Young People
3. Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying
4. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

1. Recruitment, Employment and Development of Staff and Volunteers

Recruitment

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people and vulnerable adults.

Any applicant for a coaching position with WFC, either paid or voluntary, will be asked to complete an application form (Appendix B) or provide a curriculum vitae, and will be asked to provide two references. They will also be expected to comply with the requirements for all coaches set out below.

Employment

Watford Fencing Club will allow people to work with children and vulnerable adults only if they comply with the following –

- Possess a coaching qualification from a recognised professional body

This is likely to be from the British Fencing Association (BFA) or the British Academy of Fencing (BAF).
- Sign the BFA's Code of Ethics and Conduct (see Appendix C)
- Possess an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (see Appendix D).

A coach will be required to renew the Disclosure every 3 years.
- Receive training in child protection awareness

Child Protection courses are run by Local Authorities and by the BFA.

2. Promoting Good Practice with Young People

The following guidelines apply to all adult members of WFC, and to Coaches and Committee Members in particular.

Avoid situations where coach/club official and child are alone.

One to one contact outside of fencing should not be encouraged. Regular one-to-one contact should never be allowed to occur on a regular basis. Further guidance on this issue is contained in the BFA's *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

It should never be necessary to be alone with a child/vulnerable adult in the shower, changing rooms or toilets at the fencing venue.

If it is necessary to help children/vulnerable adults into or out of fencing kit, make sure you have another adult accompanying you and preferably ensure this is in a public area (i.e. in the fencing salle).

All club equipment should have documented regular safety checks. It is also important that all fencers' club equipment is the correct size for them.

Coaches/club officials should work in pairs if classes or groups of children have to be supervised in the changing room.

Do not allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility.

Age information is required for any member under 18. The Committee will be informed of all under-18 members as a standing item on committee meeting agenda.

Watford Fencing Club will keep a record of telephone numbers for under-18 members on the premises.

At competitions, be aware of people who don't appear to be relatives or friends of children who are fencing but, nevertheless, seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them, particularly if they are not authorised. Report these incidents to the organisers or the Centre management immediately.

When organising a competition, all parents/relatives and friends and bona fide press photographers are required to register with the organizers. The organisers are responsible for monitoring all photography to ensure compliance with BFA's guidance.

Under 18s

Joining information for under-18 should clarify:

- That WFC is an adult club
- That WFC coaches have DBS clearance
- That WFC is responsible for supervision of an under-18 member in the fencing salle and equipment room only
- That parents are responsible for transporting under-18 members to, and collecting them from, the fencing club

Additionally, a condition of membership for under-16s is that a parent/carer remains responsible at all times.

3. Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying

Poor Practice

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes BFA's Code of Ethics and Conduct which consider:

- Rights — for example of the participant, the parent, the coach, etc.
- Responsibilities — for example responsibility for the welfare of the fencers, fencing, the profession of coaching.
- Respect — for example for other fencers, officials and their decisions, coaches, the rules.

Abuse

It is generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical Abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child/vulnerable adult, for example, by hitting or shaking them, bearing in mind that certain bruises are fairly common when fencing. It might also occur if a child/vulnerable adult is forced to train beyond his/her capabilities. Bullying is likely to come into this category.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child/vulnerable adult takes part in something which meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child/vulnerable adult is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed or, perhaps even worse, ignored. Conversely, it can also occur if a child/vulnerable adult is over-protected. It is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents and coaches over what a child can achieve. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse and can be a feature of bullying.

Neglect

Neglect usually means failing to meet children's/vulnerable adults' basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm or leaving the unsupervised in potentially dangerous situations such as unsupervised 'sword in hand' training.

Recognising Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not always easy - even for experts.

The examples listed below are not a complete list and they are only indicators - not confirmation.

- The child/vulnerable adult says that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring
- The child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes quiet and withdrawn, or alternatively becomes aggressive.
- The child/vulnerable adult appears not to trust adults, eg. a parent or coach with whom she or he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends
- He or she becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason
- He child/vulnerable adult shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.

Bear in mind that physically disabled children/vulnerable adults and children/vulnerable adults with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Bullying

Bullying is not easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types of bullying are: physical (e.g. 'hard hitting', pushing), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities).

They will all include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim
- A victim who is weaker than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Watford Fencing Club is prepared to:

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate any incidents
- Talk to the bullies and victims separately

Having talked to all parties, Watford Fencing Club will decide on appropriate action, which could include:

- Obtaining an apology from the bully to the victim
- Informing parents of the bully
- Insisting on the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen
- Insisting bullies compensate the victim, if applicable
- Holding club or class discussions about bullying
- Providing support for the coach and/or the victim.

4. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Responding to Disclosure

If a child/vulnerable adult tells you that he or she is being abused.

- Stay calm and move the child/vulnerable adult away from the group
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself
- Listen to what the child/vulnerable adult say and, please, take it seriously. Do not ask leading questions.
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child/vulnerable adult is telling you. Do not ask the child/vulnerable adult any explicit details.
- Make a detailed note of what the child/vulnerable adult has told you but please don't delay passing on the information. Any notes will be attached to the Incident Report form.
- Contact the WFC Child Welfare Office as soon as possible, whose contact details will be listed on the club's website.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

Please remember

It's not your responsibility to decide whether a child/vulnerable adult is being abused but we are asking you to **make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard and pass on your concerns ASAP.**

If you are a member of Watford Fencing Club or the parent/guardian/friend of a member, you should in the first instance:

- tell the WFC **Child Welfare Officer** (details on the club website)
- at an event, tell a member of the Directoire Technique – unless, of course you suspect them of being involved.

Again please remember to make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard but don't delay passing on the information. The Child Welfare Officer will then do one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- Talk to the child's/vulnerable adult's parents/carers about the concerns if there is an obvious explanation such as a bereavement or pressure from studies/exam
- Contact local Social Services. The telephone number is available from local phone book (including out of hours Duty Social Worker)
- Contact the Three Rivers Young Blades Child Welfare Officer
- Contact the BF Child Protection Officer via BFA headquarters

The club official is then required to complete an Incident Report form (Appendix E). Any notes you have taken will be attached to the form.

If you're working with fencers away from home, at a training camp, perhaps, or at a national/international competition – tell the **team manager** or the **chief coach**.

If you're working with a school – tell the **school's designated person**.

If appropriate, you should also write to BRITISH FENCING to advise them of your concern and to whom you have reported it. The address is -

The Child Protection Officer (Liz Behnke), C/o BRITISH FENCING
1 Baron's Gate, 33 Rothschild Road, London W4 5HT

Telephone numbers - **For urgent issues please call 07526 003030**

If, however, despite the action you've taken, you feel that the situation hasn't changed, or that nothing has been done please contact Social Services.

APPENDIX A

The guidance given in the procedures is based on the principles set out below:

- The welfare of young people, (the Children's Act 1989 defines a young person as under 18 years of age) and disabled adults is the primary concern
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns
- All incidents of suspicious poor practice and allegations should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Human Rights Act 2000.

APPENDIX B

APPLICATION FORM

This form is to be completed by employees and volunteers in fencing.

Confidential

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|--|
| Position applied for: |
| Surname and title (Mr/Ms/Other): |
| Any first name, surname or maiden name previously known by: |
| First name(s): |
| Date of birth: Place of birth: |
| Present address: Postcode: Telephone Number(s) E-mail address: |
| Former address (if moved within the previous three years): |
| Academic/school: (not essential for those applying for voluntary posts to complete) |
| Qualifications |
| Sporting qualifications and experience: |
| Vocational interests: |

APPENDIX B (2)

Current occupation:

Name of organisation:

Role: Address:

Start date:

Reason for leaving:

Previous occupation:

Name of organisation:

Start date:

Finish date:

Reason for leaving:

Relevant experience:

Previous experience of working with children in a voluntary or professional capacity:

Reasons for applying:

APPENDIX B (3)

Name and address of two people who know you well (and are not related to you) who we can contact for a reference. If possible, these referees should have first hand experience of your previous work with young people.

With your approval we shall also contact your current employer (where appropriate) for a reference

I agree to abide by any Code of Ethics and Conduct which British Fencing has in force.

I agree to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau

Print name:

Signed:

Date:

NB Failure to disclose information may result in exclusion from the club or organisation

BFA Code of Ethics & Conduct

All fencing coaches must ensure that every individual particularly all young/vulnerable people in their care are respected as individuals and treated equitably and with dignity at all times. They should ensure that all training complies with the current guidance issued by British Fencing Association (BFA) and does not form any sort of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, neglect etc.). See examples of inappropriate behaviour over page.

All relationships should be based on respect, honesty and openness.

All fencing coaches should recognise the personal development of young fencers takes priority even over the development of their performance.

All fencing coaches should encourage young/vulnerable fencers to be responsible for their own behaviour and performance.

All fencing coaches should have an ongoing commitment to their own training and work with others (i.e. referees, medical advisors, sports scientists, parents and other coaches) to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all fencers in order that they can develop both within fencing as well as outside.

All fencing coaches should respect a fencer's need for confidentiality.

All fencing coaches should work within their own competency and qualifications.

All fencing coaches should strive to be positive role models, working within BFA guidance displaying high standards of personal behaviour.

All fencing coaches have a responsibility to develop in partnership with all fencers particularly parents and young/vulnerable fencers clear expectations both on and off the piste and what the young/vulnerable fencer is entitled in return to expect of the coach.

All fencing coaches should promote good behaviour within the rules of Fencing.

I agree to comply with the BFA's Code of Ethics and Conduct set out above.

Name

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Signature

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Date

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APPENDIX C (2)

Examples of behaviour deemed inappropriate for BFA coaches:

- Invite a child to your home or secluded place when they will be alone with you
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Neglect their responsibility for any child under their care at any time
- Bully a child either physically or verbally, nor reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young/vulnerable fencer – even in fun
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
- Do things of a personal nature for a fencer that they can do for themselves unless specifically requested to do so and then with the utmost discretion
- The last official must never vacate the venue until the supervision of the safe dispersal of all the fencers is complete
- Spend excessive amounts of time with individual fencers away from others
- Abuse the coaches' position of power or trust in any way
- Allow allegations made by or about a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Embarrass, humiliate or undermine any individual or cause them to lose self esteem
- Make remarks about another individual that are in any way offensive or in any way can be construed as such
- Fail to record any incident in line with BFA guidelines

APPENDIX D

British Fencing encourages all people who have frequent and regular contact with young people and vulnerable adults to be criminal record checked. The way this is done varies from one home nation to another, but the principles are broadly similar.

In England and Wales, from the 1st December 2012, there have been some changes to the way we undertake checks on people working or volunteering in fencing. This has come about as a result of changes to legislation, particularly the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 which has resulted in a change to the definitions,

Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Checks have now been replaced by **Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS)**. Current CRB checks will continue to be valid until they expire and will be replaced by DBS Checks. There have also been changes as to who will need to be checked and at what level.

Checks in Scotland and Northern Ireland will continue to be undertaken by Disclosure Scotland and Access NI.

At British Fencing we believe strongly in the safety of all participants in our sport, and we will continue to undertake checks to reduce risk. In line with the new regulations we have now produced guidance to help people involved in fencing to apply for the right level of check.

Anyone who is working and a “Regulated Activity” must have an enhanced criminal record check including a check against the Barring List. Regulated Activity is defined as someone who is involved in the following:

- Unsupervised teaching, training, instructing
- Caring for or supervising children
- Providing guidance/advice on well-being
- Driving a vehicle only for children
- Happens frequently (once a week or more often)
- Happens intensively (on 4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight)
- Work in schools

In general the following roles are likely to require an Enhanced Check including the barred list

- Coaches
- Team Managers
- Leaders
- Child Welfare Officers

Applicants will need to ask for either a “child”, “adult” or “child and adult” check dependant on whom they are working with.

Incident reporting form

This form should be used when a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses something to someone in the club that they or another young person is suffering or is at risk of abuse. Once this form is completed it should be marked Strictly Confidential and forwarded to: Equality and Safeguarding Officer, British Fencing, 1 Baron’s Court, 33 Rothschild Road, London W4 5HT.

Do’s and Don’ts

Do:

- Allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by them
- If you have to ask questions then limit them to “neutral” questions such as “can you tell me what happened?”
- Accept what they have told you and do not ask for further detail
- Acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing
- Explain that you will have to tell the Club Welfare Officer and why
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Don’t:

- Burden them with guilt by asking questions such as “why didn’t you tell me before?”
- Interrogate or pressure them to provide information
- Ask any questions that start with the words how, what, when, where and why
- Undress them to examine clothed parts of their body
- Criticise the perpetrator
- Promise confidentiality or make promises that you can’t keep such as “it will be alright now”

1. You

Your name.....

Position in club.....

2. The Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

Name.....

Date of Birth.....

Name of
Parent/Carer.....

3. The Alleged Perpetrator

If they have named or described the alleged perpetrator, note the details here:

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4. The Disclosure

Record of conversation (use continuation sheet if necessary):

- Record what was said by them and by you
- Use exact words and phrases that they used
- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and key words in the language that they used

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Did they name any witnesses? If so, note them here

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Was anyone else present during the disclosure? If so, note them here

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5. Consent to share

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| Were they able to provide informed consent If so how did you seek consent? | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|

- Specifically, what did you explain, what questions did you ask and what were the responses?

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Did they provide consent to share? Yes No
 If yes, what did they say?

- Note their exact words

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If no, did you explain that you would have to share this information with the WO and who else might receive this information and why Yes No
 If yes, what did they say?

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6. Additional Information
 Any other comments

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Signed

Time & date.....