

Apollo Cycling Team

Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Children (under 18's) and Vulnerable Adults

Apollo Cycling Team has a duty of care to protect members who are children or vulnerable adults, to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity or disability, while involved in club activities.

Policy aims

The aim of the Apollo Cycling Team, Protection of Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing young people and vulnerable adults, with appropriate safety and protection, whilst in the care of the club.
- Allowing all members to make informed and confident responses to specific young people and vulnerable adults protection issues.
- Providing assurance to Parents and Guardians that their child or vulnerable adult is safe.

What is Child Abuse?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order)
Child Abuse occurs when 'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.' (ACPC, 2005)

Neglect

Actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger.

Physical Abuse

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Indicators of Abuse and Bullying

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (eg becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons (eg being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture). Although bullying often takes place in schools, it can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision (eg on the way to and from training, in the changing rooms). The competitive nature of cycling provides a potentially ideal environment for a bully to gain power over others. The bully might be:

- a parent who pushes too hard
- a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy
- a cyclist who intimidates inappropriately
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or competitions
- an unexplained drop-off in performance

- physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol

Role of the Committee

The Apollo Cycling Team Committee will take all reasonable practical steps to protect members from harm and discrimination and will respond appropriately to all reported suspicions and allegations. The Committee's responsibility is to ensure suitable procedures exist to meet this policy statement.

Procedures

The Club has a few straightforward requirements;

1. All participants in Apollo CT events who are under 18 need to complete a Parental Consent form.
2. Participants aged 14 and under also need to be accompanied by a parent/guardian or other nominated adult.
3. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the activity is within for the child's capabilities, and that bikes are in good working order.
4. Parent/guardians are to ensure that riders wear suitable clothing, including a helmet, are properly equipped, and have any necessary medication (including inhalers etc) with them.

In addition to these basic requirements Apollo CT has adopted the following procedures;

Apollo CT will appoint a Team Welfare Officer annually. The Apollo Committee will determine as required which members need Vetting checks and which members have a responsibility for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Any concerns about the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be reported Welfare Officer who will then initiate an investigation.

It is the responsibility of the Welfare Officer to report any concerns about the welfare of a child to Social Services.

Apollo CT give a commitment that all suspicions will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately through laid down suspension, disciplinary and appeals procedures.

The Club Committee has the power to suspend any member accused of alleged abuse while the appropriate authority is investigating the matter.

Good Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

To provide young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in cycling, it is imperative that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures that cycling makes a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguards their welfare, but also protects everyone from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse. It is not the responsibility of team members to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child. This section will help you identify what is meant by good and poor practice and some of the indications of possible abuse. Guidance on what to do if you are concerned about poor practice or possible abuse

Good Practice

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

- Ensure experience of cycling is fun and enjoyable.
- Provide open access to all those who wish to participate in cycling and ensure they are treated fairly.
- Ensure all cyclists are able to participate in an environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, victimisation, bullying and abuse.
- Be an excellent role model, use appropriate language and demonstrate good attitude.
- Treat all young people and vulnerable adults equally; this means giving both the more and less talented in a group similar attention, time, respect and dignity.
- Respect the developmental stage of each young person and place their welfare before winning, club or personal achievements. This means ensuring that the training intensity is appropriate to the physical, social and emotional developmental stage of the cyclist. Ensure training and competition schedules are based on the needs and interests of the child, not those of the parents, race organisers, coaches, trainee coaches and leaders or clubs.
- Conduct all coaching and meetings in an open environment; avoid one-to-one coaching in unobserved situations.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with cyclists; it is inappropriate to have an intimate relationship with a young person. One adult should never share a room with one young person. It is accepted that situations may occur where a number of young people and adults share a common sleeping area. Always ensure that parents' permission is gained in writing beforehand and cyclists are given an opportunity in advance to discuss this, air any concerns and agree the logistics of the sleeping arrangements.
- Build relationships based on mutual trust and respect in which young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making. Avoid situations in which the coach uses their position and power to dictate what the cyclist should and should not do.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Touching can be okay and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the cyclist's permission has been given.

- Ensure separate changing facilities are available for both male and female cyclists and if possible for junior and senior cyclists. Where supervision is required, involve parents wherever possible and ensure that adults work in pairs.
- Communicate regularly with parents, ensure they have a copy of the Safeguarding Policy, involve them in decision-making and gain written consent for travel arrangements. Secure their 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.
- Be aware of any medical conditions (including allergies), existing injuries and medicines being taken. Keep a written record of any injury or accident that occurs, together with details of any treatment given. Ensure that the club has qualified and up-to-date in first aid or that there is someone with a first aid qualification in attendance.
- When cyclists travel away from home in mixed teams are taken away, ensure they are accompanied by a male and female member. Adults should not enter children's rooms on their own or invite children into their rooms.
- When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.

Poor Practice

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

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from the others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never share a room with a child.
- Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Never allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Never condone bullying, rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.

Photography

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sports people in vulnerable positions. Apollo CT, therefore, require that all personnel adhere to the following guidelines.

Guidelines on Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment at Competitions

Professional photographers/filming/video operators wishing to record at an Apollo CT event should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their professional

identification for the details to be recorded. Ideally they should request this at least five working days before the event.

Apollo Cycling Team will request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the club before carrying out any such photography. Apollo Cycling Team reserves the right to decline any request to make recorded images.

If you have concerns: if you are concerned about any photography taking place at an event, contact the promoter or event organiser and discuss it with them. If appropriate the person about whom there are concerns should be asked to leave.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in Apollo Cycling Team, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. It is essential that a member does not investigate a suspicion or disclosure made by a child. All concerns must be reported to a member responsible for safeguarding. A list is contained at the end of this policy.

Apollo CT will assure all members/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.
Action

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Club Committee will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

2. Reporting suspected or disclosed child abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member or a volunteer should be reported to the Club's Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. These steps are detailed in the Cycling Ulster website.
- The Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- If the Safeguarding officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services.
- The Safeguarding Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.

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.

In all instances the Club will be guided by information and guidelines put in place by Sport NI, Cycling Ireland & Cycling Ulster.

Guidance for young members

Young cyclists should always:

- Listen to and follow instructions from bike leaders, coaches, officials and managers and treat them with respect
- Play fairly and be trustworthy and accept decisions
- Respect other youth members and leaders
- Respect opponents
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of cycling into disrepute
- Talk to A recognised coach if they have any problems or alternatively the designated Cycling Ulster Lead Safeguarding Officer
- Young cyclists should never:
 - Cheat
 - Shout at or argue with officials, team mates or other competitors
 - Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed in the rules
 - Bully or use bullying tactics
 - Take banned substances
 - Keep secrets about any persons who may have caused them harm
 - Tell lies or spread rumours.