

**DEVON FEDERATION
OF
YOUNG FARMERS CLUBS**

**Policy for the safeguarding of children
and young people and vulnerable
adults**

As well as this policy Devon Safeguarding Children Board has clear information with regard to Training on the website. It also contains information about Adult Safeguarding which may be useful.

<http://www.devonsafeguarding.org>

Revised 2015

1. Statement of Commitment

As an Organisation with a responsibility for young people under the age of 18, we need to be aware of how to protect those young people in our care. Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Federation.

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, emotional and sexual abuse or harm.

2. Aims of Policy

To ensure that all staff and volunteers put the safety and wellbeing of children and young people they come into contact with first.

To ensure children and young people within DFYFC can retain the sense of adventure and achievement within a risk managed environment.

To ensure all members and others within DFYFC know how to voice concerns over issues affecting the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and young people.

3. Means of delivering the aims

How we achieve this in DFYFC

We have a Child Protection Officer who is our Operations Manager of DFYFC

To ensure all staff, leaders, officers and volunteers have access to a copy of the policy.

All Staff, leaders, officers and volunteers will need to be committed to training and reading information at the appropriate level for their role within the clubs, groups or county federation.

Each club will have an appointed child protection officer (one of the leaders) who will make sure that correct procedures are in place to protect members and those in a position of responsibility. They will also be the first point of contact in a club if an incident Arises or alternatively they can contact the County's Child Protection Officer.

We all have a responsibility to raise a concern or awareness of a child protection issue and contact the county child protection officer or the Police and Social Services.

Staff, leaders, officers and volunteers that do not fully engage in the appropriate level of checks and training will not be appointed or recognised by DFYFC.

The Board of management will act as scrutinisers and check that this policy is fully implemented.

4. Recruitment

All paid staff and volunteers will need to provide relevant information when taking up roles that have a clear responsibility for safeguarding or access to children and young people in their club, group or county.

- The volunteers will need to be proposed and seconded by current members at an official business meeting.
- Provide details of 2 references.
- Complete a CRB disclosure form so background checks can be made.
- All new staff and volunteers will need to attend relevant training within the first 6 months of their appointment.

5. Code of Conduct

The duties of a Club Officer/Leader with under 18s recognises that parents have placed those young people in the care of a Young Farmers Club and that this responsibility carries the expectation that the Club Officers/Leader will always act in the best interests of those young people. This will include;

- Do not get into any one to one isolated situations with young people. If you witness other leaders or officers in this situation do make them aware, at the next appropriate opportunity, of the risk to both themselves and young people.
- If a young person has not been picked up from an event contact their parent or guardian and check before transporting them home. If no contact can be made contact another trusted adult before transporting them.
- Permission should always be gained from parent or guardian before an under 18 can take part in activities. Firstly through their parental consent form on joining being signed and returned to club. Secondly by specific permission for activities to be judged to have more risk attached.
- Activities should be planned and a risk assessment carried out to minimise any risks whilst retaining the sense of adventure and achievement that the activity sets out to provide.
- Ensure there is always a leader or officer (recommended two) present who has current CRB clearance. Also ensure there is a minimum of 2 responsible adults present before any activities can take place.
- All members and others connected with DFYFC should know how to voice concerns and report issues affecting the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and young people. Any one has the right to raise a concern or awareness of a child protection issue and contact the County child protection officer or the Police and Social Services.
- If an allegation or issue is raised it will be followed up and investigated by the County child protection officer supported by a subcommittee of the Board of Management. If the allegation is of a serious nature the person (s) involved will be suspended from all YFC activities until an outcome is reached. At any stage another statutory body such as Social Services and Police may be contacted.

After the outcome of the investigation both sides have the right to appeal against the decision made by DFYFC. The appeal should be made to the chairman of the Board.

- Devon Federation of Young Farmers clubs reserves the right to investigate any person that has or is raising concerns

6. Training Provision

DFYFC is committed to providing training to all staff, officers, leaders and other volunteers in the federation. Although the CRB and other checks are important they are just part of the process of ensuring people in the care of Young Farmers Clubs are kept safe and risk is minimised. The training DFYFC offers helps to ensure all levels of staff and volunteers can gain the information and skills they need to help run Clubs and activities. These include:

- Each club will be given a resources file with a complete set of policies. The file will be kept up to date by new policies being sent to clubs secretaries as and when they are reviewed and changed.
- Further on in this policy are definitions of abuse and some guidance for recognising abuse.
- Training is offered regularly to all key volunteers through the officer's training weekend, leaders evening, group advisors evenings and local group training.
- We also sign post key volunteers (county officer, group advisors etc) to other more in-depth training that may well be provided by professional partners outside of DFYFC.
- The abuse of children is most easily concealed, and therefore perpetuated, where there is confusion amongst adults over roles, responsibilities and accountability. Therefore risks are minimised if all Club Officers/Leaders have clear roles, outlining their tasks and responsibilities. Openness and honesty in all dealings with young people are always to be encouraged.

7. Advice on protecting club leaders and officers

Club Leaders and Officers may be at risk of accusations of unacceptable behaviour towards young people. The following points of advice and guidance are aimed at minimising these risks and should be given to Club Leaders and officers:

1. Do not rely on your good name to protect you.
2. Do not for one moment believe "It could never happen to me".
3. Whilst respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality, try never to be totally alone with a young person. When one to one situations are unavoidable, ensure that other adults are close by and aware of your presence.
4. Never engage in inappropriate physical or verbal contact with young people.
5. If you suspect that a young person is developing a 'crush' on you, discuss it with other leaders and explore constructive ways of dealing with it in a proper manner.
6. Similarly, if you notice one of your colleagues is risking accusations, draw his or her attention and suggest that they adhere to the guidelines.

7. Do not show favouritism to young people within your club.
8. Mixed gender groups (especially residential ones) should always have mixed gender leadership.
9. If you are feeling emotionally disturbed, or you feel an abnormal affection for a young person, withdraw from the situation and discuss the matter with a trusted friend.
10. Never take chances with young peoples' safety.
11. Be aware that young people can and do fabricate stories that may place you in a bad light. Do not allow circumstances to develop where a young person's story can be given additional credence.

REMEMBER - the checks we carry out on YFC personnel working with young people are there to help protect you and young people!

8. Child abuse

Child abuse is a complex area for most adults. It requires both acceptance and understanding and, where there is any doubt about procedures, willingness to take professional advice before acting. It is possible that individuals may be placed in the position of having to report child abuse. You may become suspicious of an injury on a child, a child may confide in you, or you may just realise that a child whom you have come to know quite well suddenly starts to act out of character. All of these may be the signs of child abuse and it is your legal responsibility to do something about it.

Recognising signs of abuse or receiving a disclosure of abuse is always stressful and upsetting and in many cases it is much easier to convince yourself that there is really no problem and do nothing about it – this can be very dangerous! What do you do if you suspect child abuse? What can you do if you are accused of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour?

This document is designed to help anyone working with under 18's to:

- Recognise the signs of child abuse, whether physical, emotional or sexual.
- Develop techniques of how to deal with it.
- Understand their legal responsibility.
- Minimise situations that may lead to accusations of child abuse.
- To convince people that the consequences of doing nothing may be very serious, or even fatal.
- To provide guidance and protection for yourself and the young person in carrying out your responsibilities.

What is child abuse?

Physical: Where young people are made to suffer physical hurt or injury.

- Sexual: Where adults seek sexual gratification from children or young people.
- Emotional: Where young people are harmed by a chronic lack of love and affection or are receipt of threats, taunts etc. including through electronic communications (phone text, social media, computers etc.)
- Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs.

8. How to recognise child abuse

Noticeable injuries or changes in behaviour patterns may be the result of a number of things, abuse being only one. The following information is intended to make you stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

Physical abuse

It can be very difficult to establish whether an injury has been caused by accident or abuse. Ask the child about the injury and if you are at all unhappy with the explanation given, then report your suspicions in the first instance to the YFC Federation Organiser. He/she will then agree with you if the matter should be reported to the Local Authority Child Protection Unit, and who is to take responsibility for such action. (The Local Authority Child Protection Unit is usually located in your Social Services Department and their telephone number should be listed in the telephone directory).

Sexual abuse

This is much more difficult to identify than physical abuse as there may not be any outwardly visible signs. Indications of sexual abuse may be:

- Emotional or behavioural changes, e.g. a normally quiet child may become loud and aggressive or a boisterous child may suddenly become quiet and passive.
- Sexually explicit talk and behaviour, inappropriate to the child's age.
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders.
- Depression and suicide attempts.

However it is much more likely to be discovered by means of disclosure, either accidental, deliberate, or through a third party. As with alleged physical abuse, where the parent is not implicated, the parent should be consulted and involved in the next steps.

Emotional abuse

Probably the most difficult type of abuse to recognise, where some indications may include:

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence (always thinking their contribution is "rubbish" and needing constant reassurance).
- The child having extreme difficulty forming friendships, thus becoming a "loner".
- The child frequently being used as a "scapegoat" by other children.
- The child being withdrawn, introverted and depressed.

With all of the above examples, one must make judgements about the maturity of the child or young person and consider his/her wishes at all times.

Suspicion of child abuse

As a voluntary worker, you may gain the trust of children and young people to such an extent that it is you they choose to talk to if they have something they wish to disclose. Many volunteers and paid staff may not know how to deal with this disclosure but it is important to remember that it is your duty to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected to statutory child protection agencies.

If a child or young person wants to talk to you in confidence:

- Accept what they say, keeping calm and giving them your undivided attention.
- Let them know that depending upon what the problem is, you may need to tell someone else, so do not promise confidentiality.
- Reassure them that you will not be shocked or judgemental.
- Reassure them that even though they may feel that they have broken a rule, you will not hold them to blame.
- Recognise the child/young person's fears and feelings – be aware that they may have been threatened and may not be telling you all they know.
- Reassure them that they were right to tell you.
- Discuss the options with the child or young person and agree future action, recognising your legal responsibilities and the perceived maturity of the child.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep a handwritten record.
- Never physically examine a child/young person except in an emergency such as an accident or to prevent worsening of a condition.
- In this case always have another person present (a good rule would be that an examination starts when a child's clothing is removed and the child's body is felt for signs of injury. A peep down a child's collar to spot signs of injury to neck or back could be described as observation, rather than examination). If in doubt leave well alone for the experts and remember the parent's right to be informed if the parent is not the perpetrator.
- Never push for information. It is inadvisable to question the child/young person too closely. This should be left to a practitioner skilled in asking such questions and aware of the sensitivities required in such evidence gathering.
- Always seek professional help with speed and in the best interests of the child. Where a parent is not implicated or the subject of an allegation, it is best to involve the parent as early as possible in the care of the young person. If you return the child to a parent's care and fear the allegations made by the child may go

unreported, then do advise the County Child protection officer in the first place. The County YFC office should work with you in seeking professional advice from Social Services at the earliest opportunity.

- In any location where youth activities are carried out, it is always valuable to display the 'Child Line' number so that a worried child or young person, who may not have the confidence to consult an adult, has a telephone option.

9. Procedure guidelines if abuse is disclosed or suspected:

- Do not delay
- Advise your YFC County Child protection officer of your concerns at the earliest possible opportunity – they will be able to assist you in these difficult circumstances
- Contact the statutory services responsible for child protection in your area, i.e. social services, NSPCC or the police child protection unit. This task may be undertaken by the county YFC office on behalf of the “abused” – it is important to clarify who is taking responsibility for informing the statutory authorities.
- Keep a written record of any action taken.

Be aware that there are procedures for investigating when a child is at risk. Social Services may set up a Case Conference. If you are invited to attend to give information, or support the parent/family, you need to clarify in what capacity you have been invited, i.e. as a member of the conference or as support. You may wish to seek legal advice if your role in the procedure has been questioned or criticised.

Child Protection Specialist within Devon YFC
Nick Creasy Contact No 01647 24120 or 07843386678

Social Services Child Protection Unit
Contact No. 01392 384444

NFYFC safeguarding 24hr emergencies line 07501 401219

www.devonsafeguarding.org

South West Child Protection Procedures if anyone wants any more detailed information and advice. These procedures can be found at;

www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/