

RADLEY AC

Athlete Protection & Welfare Policy

Introduction

Radley AC has a duty of care to safeguard all those involved in its athletic activities from harm, especially children. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of the disabled and others who may be particularly vulnerable will be taken into account by the Club. Radley AC will ensure the safety and protection of all those involved in athletics, but especially children through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by the Athletics Governing bodies. This Policy is in line with the following: UK Athletics - Welfare Policy and AAA England - Athletics Welfare Policy. A child is defined as under 18 by The Children Act 1989. Terminology used in this policy is attached (Appendix A)

Radley AC ensure that:

- The welfare of the athlete, and in particular, children is paramount in all its activities;
- All athletes, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and mis-treatment;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and mis-treatment will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All those working in athletics have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate Officer.

Policy aims

The aim of this Athlete Protection & Welfare Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Club;
- Allowing all volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Policy

1. Coaches, officials, volunteers etc.

Radley AC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse/mistreat children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with the Clubs athletes, including:

- All volunteers working closely with young people in regulated activity (coaches, officials, team managers etc) will be required to have an enhanced DBS check
- All volunteer "helpers" working closely with young people (who are not qualified such as parent helper) will need to complete a self-disclosure about any criminal record (see Appendix B).
- Confidential references, including one regarding any previous work with children may be sought.
- Evidence of identity (Passport or driving licence with Photo) may need to be provided.

All of those working with the Club are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to protect the athletes they work with as well as themselves from false allegations. This includes adhering to good practice in relation to their conduct and behaviour and avoiding other practices, which are positively discouraged by the Club (see Appendix C).

2. Guidelines for Use of Photographic & Filming Equipment and Outputs

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. Radley AC are therefore vigilant with regard to this and require anyone taking photographs or videoing at their home fixtures to gain approval from the Club Officials to do so (see Consent Form at Appendix D). Any concerns are to be reported to the Clubs Officials immediately. This also applies to the local press photographers etc.

Club coaches should only use videoing as a legitimate coaching aid and should inform the athletes and their parents/carers that this is part of the coaching programme. Care should be taken in the storing/use of such films and they should be deleted after analysis where possible. Extreme care should be taken when sharing images or videos via social media. The

Club requests that no photos or videos should be posted on public sites including coaches own pages. Closed groups could be set up if there is a need to share such media but coaches and others in such groups need to be aware of these guidelines and that they should only post images and videos that include athletes that have given permission for such via the Clubs membership form. All such sites and posts are the sole responsibility of the Coach and as it's a closed group and therefore the Club takes no responsibility for its contents.

The Clubs membership form includes a statement for parents/carers to approve the publication of junior athletes photos. This includes in the local press, Clubs newsletter and website and on promotional materials. Child protection guidelines will always be followed when this happens.

3. Response to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone on behalf of Radley AC, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse or anything else, such as bullying has taken place, as they are not trained to do so. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Radley AC will therefore assure all members and volunteers etc that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague or parent/carer is, or maybe, mistreating an athlete and in particular a child in any way. Appropriate actions and investigations will be followed (as detailed in Appendix E). Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis* only.

4. Bullying

Bullying will be taken very seriously. Any athlete who considers they are being bullied by either another athlete or club official, should speak to either their parents or a responsible member of the Club and the matter brought to the attention of the Chairperson immediately. Appropriate investigations and actions will be taken by the Club. The same procedure will be followed as set out for abuse if considered serious enough. Recommended actions are detailed in Appendix E). The clubs disciplinary procedures will come into effect.

5. Equity

Radley AC is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its activities and development. All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity. The club:

- acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity:
Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.
- respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of athletics, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.
- is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy the sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to club disciplinary procedures.

6. What to do if you have concerns

Refer to the reporting procedures contained in the UKA Welfare Policy (Pages 11 &12) and the related flowcharts.

Information passed to the UKA Child Protection Lead Officer must be as helpful and detailed as possible, so make a detailed record of the disclosure/concern/incident at the time.

Information should include the following:

- Name of child
- Age of child or date of birth
- Home address and telephone number of child
- Name of the person making the report, their date of birth and address
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and

- other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
 - A description of any visible bruising or other injuries, their behaviour and/or indirect signs?
 - Witnesses to the incident(s).
 - What action has been taken to date:
 - Have the parents been contacted?
 - If so what has been said?
 - Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
 - If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said regarding what happened?
 - Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Reviewed by Committee February 2017

Terminology / Definitions

- **Neglect** – where adults fail to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment). It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Neglect in sport could include a coach not ensuring children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.
- **Physical abuse** – where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, or scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after e.g. factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy. Examples of physical abuse in Sport may be when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child’s immature and growing body; where drugs are used to enhance performance or delay puberty.
- **Sexual abuse** – where girls and boys (or vulnerable adults) are used by adults (both male and female) or other children to meet their own sexual needs. This includes being touched inappropriately or where the individual feels threatened or uncomfortable, sexual innuendo, being asked or forced to have sex or being exposed to images of a sexual nature.

In sport, coaching techniques, which involve physical contact with children, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers (or vulnerable adults), if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

- **Emotional abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development? It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child. Emotional abuse in Sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

The above definitions are adapted from Department of Health (1999) *Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* and/or UKA guidelines.

- **Bullying** - is a form of emotional abuse and is often defined in terms of three components.
 - It must occur over time, rather than being a single aggressive act.
 - It involves an imbalance of power, the powerful attack the powerless.
 - It can be psychological, verbal, or physical in nature.

Radley AC

Volunteer Declaration Form

Radley AC recognises the need to ensure the Welfare and Safety of all young people in sport. Volunteers are not permitted to have unsupervised contact with athletes without having completed the following form and received a DBS check (if required).

I can confirm that:

I have read and understood the following Club Policies:

- Athlete Protection & Welfare
- Health & Safety
- Equality & Diversity
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Code(s) of conduct

and agree to adhere to the recommendations and adopt the best practice outlined therein.

I understand that I will not be able to commence my role as a volunteer until a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure check has been received (if required).

I am who I say I am, and attach evidence of my identity, which includes a photograph (e.g. Passport or new style driving licence).

I have received an induction pack which contains:

- Club constitution
- Health & Safety Policy
- Club Contacts list (as appropriate to role)
- Code(s) of Conduct (as appropriate to role)
- Job description (where one exists)

I am aware that if I need support from Radley AC I should seek this from the relevant volunteer co-ordinator or Committee.

Signed:

Date:

Print name:

For Club use only

Form completed on:

DBS applied for:

DBS received:

Satisfactory: Yes / No

Good Practice Guidelines for Club Coaches, officials and other volunteers.

Good practice means:

- always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning, achieving goals or competitive development.
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with athletes (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- being an excellent role model – this includes behaviour and appearance.
- 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. (The Clubs membership form covers this with respect to Club team fixtures etc).
- keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given (see Health & Safety Policy).
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Providing additional support or revised training methods for those who need it due to disability. Training for this can be provided if required.
- Reporting immediately to another colleague and recording the incident, especially:
 - if you accidentally hurt an athlete.
 - if he/she seems distressed in any manner.
 - if an athlete appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
 - if an athlete misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- Ensure the parents of the child are informed, as well as the Committee in writing.
- Disciplining athletes (if required due to inappropriate behaviour) appropriately and to reinforce correct behaviour, the rules of the sport or safety aspects as required. (refer to discipline & grievance procedure)
- Discouraging sexual activity between Club volunteers (coaches, officials etc) and young people (16+). For those under 16 it is a criminal offence and will be treated with the seriousness such an action offers.

Practice to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Avoid physical contact as much as possible, and only to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. Physical contact between adults and children/young people should only be used when the aim is to:
 - Develop sports skills or techniques;
 - To treat an injury;
 - To prevent an injury;
 - To meet the requirements of the particular sport.

Physical contact should always meet the need of the child/young person and not the need of the adult and be fully explained to the child/young person and, with the

exception of an emergency, permission should be sought.

- Avoid sexual relationships where possible. Such relationships can and do occur, however the following guidelines should be followed:
 - Sexual activity between children/young people involved in sport should be prohibited during team events, in sports facilities or social activities organised by the club/organisation.
 - Inappropriate or criminal sexual behaviour committed by a young person may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the sports governing body guidance.
 - Sexual interactions between adults and young people (16+) involved in sport should be avoided, especially if the adult is in a position of authority (e.g. coach, official) as they raise serious issues regarding the power imbalance inherent in the relationship, which may influence the young persons ability to genuinely consent to sexual activity.
- Avoid violation of the rules of the sport and encouraging the athlete to do the same.
- Posting video or pictures of junior athletes on public or personal social media sites and only when all athletes included have given permission to do so via the Clubs membership form.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session.

Practice never to be sanctioned

You should **never**:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- share a room with a child;
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- reduce a child to tears as a form of *control*;
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves;
- Condone the use of prohibited substances;
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised;
- allow or engage in unnecessary physical contact of any kind, especially that involving touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts, or out of sight of others;
- undertake any kind of sexual activity with a child under the age of consent (16), as this is a criminal offence and will be reported by the Club to the relevant authorities e.g. Police as well as the sports governing bodies.

NB. It may sometimes be necessary for coaches, team managers etc to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Approval form for the use of photographic or video Equipment

Radley AC recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people in sport. In accordance with our Athlete Protection and Welfare Policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of young people to be taken without the consent of the Club.

I can confirm that I wish to partake in photographing or videoing during today's athletics event and confirm that:

- The results will be used for the controlled use by:
 - Myself (as relative/coach/other
 - The Club on behalf of which I am working (Club:
 - The press which I represent (name of media
- I will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended and stored appropriately.
- I will seek permission from the Club (and/or its athletes or their parents as appropriate) to publish these pictures/video clips.
- If I become aware that these images are being used inappropriately I will inform Radley AC immediately.

Signed: Date:

Name (printed)

The Clubs Response to suspicions or allegations

The Welfare of Children (and other Club members) will be paramount.

If a complaint is made there may be three types of investigation

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action to be taken if there are concerns

The following action will be taken if there are concerns with regard to:

Poor Practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Clubs Welfare Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Clubs Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to another Committee member or the relevant UK Athletics Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Suspected Abuse by a Club member or volunteer

- Any suspicion that an athlete (or other member) has been abused by either another member or Club volunteer etc should be reported to the Club Welfare 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.
- The Club Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police; or go directly to the police if *out-of-hours*.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club Welfare Officer should also notify Home Counties/UK Athletics Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries and make decisions.
- If the Club Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to a member of the Committee, or the UK Athletics Child Protection Officer.

If parental abuse is suspected

If you have concerns that an athlete is being mis-treated or abused by either a parent or carer (e.g. outside the immediate sporting environment).

Remember:

- Maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis only.
- Ensure the Club Welfare Officer is made aware immediately.
- The Club Welfare Officer should then pass to Social Services and also report the incident to the UK Athletics Child Protection Officer who should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role in athletics and act accordingly.

If abuse is suspected or alleged:

- The UK Athletics Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the UK Athletics Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the UK Athletics Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.

Bullying

Those experiencing bullying should note:

- All signs/allegations of bullying will be taken very seriously.
- All members are encouraged to speak-up and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).
- The victim should tell their parents or someone else in authority of the incident.
- All allegations should be reported to the Clubs Welfare Officer
- Action will be taken to ensure the victim is safe.
- The victim and the bully(ies) will be spoken to separately.
- Reassurance will be given to the victim that the CWO can be trusted and will help them, although they cannot promise to tell no-one else.
- Records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when) will be kept.

Action Towards the Bully(ies):

- Alleged bully(ies), will be asked to explain their side of the allegation, and asked to understand the potential consequences of their behaviour.
- If appropriate, a written apology will be requested to the victim(s).
- The bully's parents will be informed (if appropriate).
- Any *borrowed* items will need to be returned and the bully(ies) asked to compensate the victim if necessary and replace any monetary loss.
- Appropriate support for the coach of the victim may be provided if applicable.
- Sanctions may be imposed as necessary.
- Support may be provided for the bully(ies) to assist with changing behaviour.
- Meetings may be held with the families of the bully(ies) to report progress.
- All Club members will be informed of the action taken.
- A written record of action taken will be retained.

Support to Deal with the Aftermath

- Consideration will be given to the support that may be appropriate to children, parents, Club volunteers etc after an alleged case. The British Association of Counselling Directory (The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bac.co.uk, Internet: www.bac.co.uk) will be a useful resource.
- Consideration will also be given to what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a volunteer who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the Club should follow the procedures in accordance with UKA Welfare Policy guidance – reporting procedures. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Use of Social Media & Welfare

Social media is used frequently in modern society by almost all.

The 'exposure' of this media, especially photos and video clips, can easily get into the wider world and may be used inappropriately by others.

Similarly, although we have guidelines for coaches and parents we need to be mindful there may be others in the photos or clips which have not given their approval for their images to be distributed in such a way including those who are on protected registers for various reasons.

England Athletics guidance on this recommends the following is adhered to:

Coaches (& others with roles of responsibility)

- Should not be 'friends' with junior athletes privately on social media and if they are any communications should also include the parents of that child
- Should not post images or video clips of junior athletes onto open social media sites
- Should use such images for coaching purposes only and once analyzed delete unless absolutely essential and justifiable to retain
- Where it is useful to share these this should be in a closed group or private message with athlete and their parents e.g. a training groups pages not on the coaches own pages so they are public and visible
- Should be mindful of sharing such images where others are also visible

Athletes/Parents

- Should be aware of all the interactions between their child and the coach, other training partners and other clubs members and officials and ensure you are included in such communications and they are not conducted privately (see above under coaches responsibilities)
- Should not post images or video clips of their child onto open social media sites where other athletes are visible or without thinking about the possible implications

Athletes

- Should refrain from making inappropriate comments on social media to other athletes
- Should not share photos of themselves on social media where other athletes are visible
- Should communicate with training partners through a group set up where possible/appropriate.