

Be sure they're safe and let them have fun

A guide for parents



Introduction

As parents we all want our children to take part in activities, whether that be getting involved in a sports club, being part of an organised group or being a young volunteer. We also want to make sure that this happens in a safe environment.

But we don't know what questions to ask or what would tell us that a club or organisation takes the safety and well-being of children seriously.

This leaflet helps parents ask those sometimes difficult questions and to give some ideas of what to look for.

Child protection policy

All organisations/clubs should have a current Child Protection Policy and as a minimum it should:-

- Explain the 4 categories of child abuse – physical, sexual, emotional and neglect
- Give details of the roles and responsibilities of various members of the organisation, including naming the Designated Person who is responsible for Child Protection
- Clearly state how they will respond and refer concerns about child abuse and include the numbers of who to contact

The Child Protection Policy may also include information about the organisation's/club's approach to bullying, recruitment and behaviour management.

If these topics are not covered in the policy – you should ask why.

If you are worried that a child is being abused you should contact your area Social Work team:-

North Bolton – 01204 337400

(Astley Bridge, Bradshaw, Brightmet, Bromley Cross, Darcy Lever, Dunscar, Eagley, Egerton, Hall l'th Wood, Halliwell, Tonge Fold, Tonge Moor)

South Bolton – 01204 337729

(Burnden, Darcy Lever, Daubhill, Deane, Farnworth, Great Lever, Harper Green, Kearsley, Little Lever, Moses Gate, Morris Green, Stoneclough)

West Bolton – 01942 634625 or 634587

(Blackrod, Deane, Derby, Great Lever, Halliwell, Heaton, Horwich, Hulton Park Lostock, Smithills, Westhoughton)

Workers/volunteers should be safely recruited and screened to work with children

All those working, or volunteering, directly with or regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children should have a current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This should be carried out when a worker or volunteer is recruited. Some organisations/clubs may also have a policy on updating these checks.

From October 2009 you should ask if the workers are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).*

Other things you could do include:-

- Reading the organisation/club recruitment policy and procedure
- Asking if the organisation/club request references and from who
- Asking what experience/qualifications people have to work with children

* The Independent Safeguarding Authority will keep a list of people who are vetted and cleared to work with children. It will also keep a list of those who are known to present a risk of harm to children, and prevent them from entering the children's workforce. More information about this scheme can be found at:- www.isa-gov.org.uk

Training to keep children safe

There should be at least one person who is qualified in First Aid at each session and ideally all staff will have attended some form of training in relation to health and safety and child protection

This should include:-

- Recognising and responding to signs of child abuse or neglect
- Health and safety – fire safety, first aid, recording and responding to accidental injuries etc
- Risk assessments

Managing difficult behaviour

Organisations/clubs should have a code of conduct or similar document (it may

be called 'Behaviour Management') which lets you know how workers or volunteers will respond to arguments, disagreements, fights, bullying, disruptive or challenging behaviour etc from children.

It should also tell you what sanctions or consequences will be put into place for the child/children involved.

If this is not available you need to ask.

Membership of local/regional/national networks or governing bodies

Some clubs/organisations are members of nationally recognised bodies, such as the Football Association, Amateur Swimming Association, Guides etc or are part of a nationally or locally accredited scheme.

To be members of these (affiliated), an organisation/club usually has to satisfy certain strict criteria about the well-being and safety of children. It is worthwhile asking the organisation if they have such a membership.

Complaints or concerns from parents or others

The organisation/club should be prepared to listen to your comments or issues and to offer suggestions as to how things could be dealt with in a positive way. Some clubs may also have a protocol or policy which tells you how they respond to complaints and concerns.



If you don't feel the organisation/club is taking the matter seriously or you think they are failing to act on your complaint/concern – you could try contacting their governing body or their accreditation scheme.

Remember if you are worried that children are suffering or at risk of suffering abuse or neglect you should act by contacting your local Referral and Assessment Team in Bolton.

Activities away from home

An organisation/club should have clear guidance and information about organised trips available for parents, trip organisers and sometimes children as well.

The information should:-

- Tell you who is going to be in charge and tell you who the other supervising adults are
- Tell you what risk assessments have been completed
- Request you complete details of emergency contacts
- Request any information about any needs your child has; this could include allergies, medical conditions, dietary needs, cultural etc

REMEMBER

- Don't be afraid to ask for copies of the organisations/clubs policies
- You are not being difficult – you are making sure that the people who are looking after your child know what they are doing
- A good organisation/club will welcome questions about their activities and the safety of their environment
- A good club should always encourage parents to be involved in their child's activities

Additional information about choosing a safe organisation/club can be found at:-

Sportcentric:-
<http://www.sportcentric.com/vsite/vfile/page/fileurl/0,,5157-1-1-125681-0-file,00.pdf>

Clubmark:-
www.clubmark.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit:-
www.thecpsu.org.uk

Large print, interpretations, text only and audio formats of this publication can be produced on request. Please call 01204 337479 or email boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk

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