



# ORWELL YACHT CLUB

## REPORTING PROCEDURES GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, their parents, someone else within our Club. It may involve the behaviour of one of our members or volunteer members, or something that has happened to the child outside the sport, perhaps at home or at school. Children may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel at ease.

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If you are concerned that a child may be being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and report them. For guidance on recognising abuse, see Appendix – What is child abuse?

### **Always:**

- stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe.
- show and tell the child that you are taking what he/she says seriously.
- reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame.
- be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the child wants.
- be honest, explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- make a record of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event, using the child's own words.
- if the child requires immediate medical attention call ambulance.
- in the first instance notify the OYC's Welfare Officers as soon as possible – they will assess - complete a referral form and, if necessary, report to the RYA Safeguarding Manager (see contact numbers below).
- if the Club's Welfare Officers, Commodore or RYA Safeguarding Manager are not available, immediately contact Children's Social Care/Police (see contact numbers below).

### **Never:**

- rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- make promises you cannot keep (eg. you won't tell anyone).
- ask leading questions (see 'Recording and handling information' below) .
- take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally one of the designated Welfare Officers or the Commodore) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

### **Recording and handling information**

Do not start asking leading questions which may jeopardise any formal investigation.

A leading question is where you suggest an answer or provide options that only need a 'yes' or 'no' answer, instead of allowing the child to explain things in their own words. An example would be asking 'did X hit you?' instead of 'how did you get that bruise?'. Use open questions such as 'what happened next?'. Only ask questions to confirm that you need to refer the matter to someone else. Listen to and keep a record of anything the child tells you or that you have observed and pass the information on to the statutory authorities.

**All information must be treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know.** If the allegation or suspicion concerns someone within the Club, only the child's parents/carers, the Club Welfare Officers, the Commodore (unless they are the subject of the allegation), the relevant authorities and the RYA Safeguarding and Equality Manager should be informed. If the alleged abuse took place outside the sport, the Police or Children's Social Care will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within the Club other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and the Welfare Officers or Commodore.

**OYC Welfare Officers:** Teresa Thorogood, M: 07807 346752 / John Burnell, M: 07770 402717

**OYC Commodore:** 07778 281065

**RYA Safeguarding and Equality Manager:** Jackie Reid, Tel: 023 8060 4104

**Suffolk County Council Child Protection:**

**Is it an emergency?**

Call:

- **0808 800 4005** if you're worried that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or harm, abuse
- the police on **999**
- the NSPCC child protection helpline on **0808 800 5000**