



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

(In the interest of conciseness the term 'Young People' should be understood equally to Children and Vulnerable Adults throughout)

1. Underpinning Values

1.1. The interests of a young person are paramount.

1.2. All children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse.

1.3. Children and young people have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, as do the adults who work with them.

1.4. All adults within the Seattle Adventure Sports, LLC (hereafter referred to as "SAS") program, which includes all staff, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, have a responsibility to protect children and young people from harm whenever they are in a position to do so.

1.5. All children and young people must have the opportunity to express their views about decisions taken about their lives.

1.6. All work with children and young people must be informed by equal opportunities practice.

1.7. All those working with or on behalf of children and young people must reflect and promote the value of working together with parents, colleagues, other agencies and the child/young person in order to create safe environments and protect the child/young person from harm.

2. Key Principles

2.1. In cases of suspected child abuse all workers have a responsibility for referral to the SAS Child Protection Officer.

2.2. Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.

2.3. Investigation is NOT the responsibility of SAS and must not be entered into. Investigating agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential adverse effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.

2.4. Concise written records, signed and dated, must be carefully made at each stage and copied to the SAS Child Protection Officer immediately. All records must be held securely and be retrievable promptly.

3. Why do we need Child Protection procedures? Will my relationship with the young person be damaged?

- We need procedures to ensure the protection of children and young people.
- We need procedures to ensure the best possible responses by relevant agencies to allegations and incidents of child abuse.
- Yes, it is possible that relationships with the young person and their parents/carers may be damaged at least in the short term. However, the young person's safety is paramount.

4. Some Reminders

4.1. If you are responsible for staff (paid and unpaid), check that they have ALL seen a copy of these guidelines and know and understand about the procedures.

4.2. Ensure all staff (paid or unpaid) have fulfilled the following:

- All field staff working directly with young people must have a current Washington State Patrol background check,
- All SAS employees working directly with young people must declare all convictions including spent convictions.
- New SAS employees working directly with young people must have a satisfactory WSP background check prior to commencing their work with young people.
- All staff must attend the relevant level of Safeguarding Training.

4.3. Brief new staff when they arrive, and ensure that they have sight of a copy of the procedures.

4.4. Ensure that all staff know where these guidelines are kept and further guidance is available on the SAS website- www.seattleadventuresports.com/childprotection

5. Recognising Abuse

Four indicators of abuse:

- a) Child/young person's own disclosure
- b) Emotional, behavioural or medical signs and symptoms noticed
- c) Third party allegations, someone else witnessed and reports concerns
- d) Admission of/or someone seeking help because they have or may harm a child

6. Guidelines on handling a disclosure

If a young person tells you that they or another young person is being abused: (the 6 R's)

6.1. Receive • Listen to what is being said, without showing shock or disbelief

- Take what is said seriously
- Note down what has been said

(If you have had a similar experience in childhood this may be difficult for you to do. You may need to pass the young person on to someone else who is in a better position to handle the situation).

If a young person chooses to speak to you, it means they have placed a great deal of trust in you. It takes a lot of courage to speak to someone about what has happened to them.

6.2. Reassure

- Reassure the young person, as far as possible
- Don't promise confidentiality/secretcy: you have a duty to refer.

Explain as simply as you can what and who you will have to tell and that information will only be shared with those who need to know. (A young person may beg you not to say anything because they are frightened but remember they would not have said anything unless they wanted the abuse to stop).

Young people often feel responsible for or guilty about the incident and need assurance that it is not the young person's fault. Tell the young person you are glad they told you.

6.3. React

Allow the young person to talk but do not pressurize, only gain enough information to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details – remember it is better if the young person does not have to repeat the story over and over again.

- Do not ask leading questions, for example “Did he/she...,” such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the young person’s) in any later prosecution.
- Ask open questions like “Anything else you want to say?”
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the young person may have an affection for him/her or be a relative.
- Do not ask young people to repeat it all for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.

6.4. Record

- Make brief notes at the time on any paper which is at hand, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Keep your original notes with this “clear” copy.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the young person, if possible.
- Record statements and observable things rather than your “interpretations” or assumptions.

6.5. Remember

- Follow these guidelines and consult as appropriate.
- Report the incident to your line manager. If necessary, you may feel you have to refer on to an Assessment Team immediately. You can always ring them to discuss the situation informally.
- Procedures require that appropriate records are made at all levels.

6.6. Relax

- Ensure that you get the support you need. You may need to unburden yourself and come to terms with the emotions and feelings you have been experiencing.

7. Allegations against SAS employee or contracted staff

Allegations may be received in a variety of ways including:

- direct complaint by young person to a member of SAS staff;
- direct complaint by a parent/carer to a member of SAS staff;
- Concerns raised by parties who may have been told about or witnessed abuse;
- Direct contact by parent/carer to SAS;
- Anonymous referral;
- Direct complaint to SAS or the police.

7.1. Key Issues/Initial Actions to be taken:

- When an allegation has been made concerning any employee within SAS, they should have the case against them dealt with quickly, professionally and impartially. SAS recognizes the responsibility and vulnerability of all staff.
- The child’s welfare is paramount.
- A Director of SAS must be informed of any allegation immediately. The Director of SAS will then advise you who else must be informed.
- Suspension will never be an automatic response. Each case will be considered individually.
- Where this is relevant – a young person who has made an allegation should not be left alone until a Director of SAS has been consulted and a course of action agreed, including the appropriateness of the young person continuing on a SAS project.
- Do not seek to investigate the allegation yourself or interview young people.
- Obtain details of the allegation. A verbal allegation should be recorded and a copy sent to a Director of SAS.
- A Director of SAS will consider the need for disciplinary action.

- Any disciplinary action must be kept separate from child protection investigations.
- Criminal investigations will take precedent over an internal investigation.
- When issues are resolved, a Director of SAS will write to all relevant parties with findings.

Who can I talk to?

For informal discussion of your concerns you can approach the following:

- Seattle Adventure Sports, LLC- Don Cheyette 2067953776
- Child Protective Services - (360) 902-8400

If involving any SAS employee:

- Inform Don Cheyette or Rob Yates
- If the allegation is regarding either Don Cheyette or Rob Yates seek advice from Child Protective Services: (360) 902-8400