

**REPORTING AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT POOR PRACTICE**

## Recognising Poor Practice

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, Rules of Shooting, Code of Conduct, Codes of Practice, Code of Ethics and Coaching Manuals, which are constituted around the following three R’s (Rights, Responsibilities and Respect):

• Rights – e.g. of the child, young person, the parent, the adult.

• Responsibilities – e.g. responsibility for the welfare of the child, young person, the sport, the   
 profession of coaching and their own development.

• Respect – e.g. of other children, young people, adults, and their decisions and all policies and   
 procedures in place.

## Relationship of Trust

A ‘Relationship of Trust’ exists where a member of staff, coach, official or volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a child or young person by virtue of the nature of the activity being undertaken. Adults must develop an appropriate working relationship with children and young people based on mutual trust and respect.

## Code on Abuse of Trust

• Any behaviour which may allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position   
 of trust and individual/s in their care must be avoided.

• Any sexual activity which is not freely consensual is a criminal offence.

• All those within Archery GB have a duty to raise concerns about behaviour of adults, which may be   
 harmful to those in their care, without prejudice to their own position.

• Other forms of abuse of trust may be physical or psychological i.e. singling out a child or young   
 person by allowing them to struggle to put equipment away, or leaving them to wait on the field.

## Abuse

Everyone working with children or young people has a responsibility to ensure their safety and welfare and under the Government Guidance “Working Together to Safeguard Children” Archery GB has a responsibility to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect.

## What is Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child or young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

Abusers can be adults (male or female) and are usually known to and trusted by the child, young person, and the family, e.g. the abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child or the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities.

An individual might abuse or neglect a child or young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child or young person. The influence of a coach, official or team manager over children and young people may lead to abusive situations developing.

It is generally acknowledged that there are several types of abuse as follows:

## Physical Abuse

• Where adults or other young people physically hurt or injure children including by hitting, shaking,   
 throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating or drowning. This category of abuse can   
 also include when a parent reports non-existent symptoms of illness or deliberately causes ill health   
 in a child or young person they are looking after.

• Most children and young people sustain accidental cuts and bruises throughout childhood. These   
 are likely to occur in parts of the body like elbows, shins and knees. The age of the child or young   
 person must also be considered. It is possible that some injuries may have occurred for other   
 reasons, e.g. skin disorders, and rare bone diseases.

• Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when a child or young person is forced into training and   
 competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body; or where the child   
 or young person is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.

## Physical Abuse Indicators include:

• Unexplained or inappropriately explained injuries.

• Improbable excuses explaining injuries.

• Excessive physical punishment.

• Avoiding activities due to injuries or possibility of injuries being discovered.

• Medical problems that go unattended.

• Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of particular people.

• Aggression towards others.

• Fear of parents being approached for an explanation.

• Running away.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children and young people that they are:

• Worthless or unloved.

• Inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

• It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children and   
 young people e.g. interactions that are beyond their developmental capability.

• Over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning.

• Preventing the child and young person from participating in normal social interaction.

• It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

• It may involve serious bullying, or the exploitation or corruption of children and young people.

• Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person.

• Constantly shouted at, threatened, taunted, humiliated or ignored.

• Constantly criticised and bullied.

• An unrealistic pressure to perform consistently to high expectations is placed upon the child or   
 young person by the coach, officials or parents.

• Pressure not to succeed i.e. constantly demeaning the efforts of the child or young person.

## Emotional Abuse Indicators:

• Person exhibits low self esteem.

• Running away.

• Extremes of passivity or aggression.

• Self decline in concentration.

• Indiscriminate friendliness and neediness.

• Self-harm or mutilation.

• Untypical changes in behaviour e.g. sleep disturbance, etc.

## Sexual Abuse

When adults (male or female), or other young people, use children to meet their own sexual needs. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of, or consent, to what is happening.

These include the following:

• Physical contact, including sexual intercourse and/or sexual activity with a child and/or young   
 person under the age of 16.

• Inappropriate touching.

• Non-contact activities such as involving children and young people in looking at, or, in the   
 production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in   
 sexually inappropriate ways.

• Some of the aforementioned activities can occur through the internet.

• Exposure to sexually inappropriate language or jokes.

• Taking or possessing inappropriate photographic materials involving children or young people.

• Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and females, including persons to whom they are   
 and are not related and by other young people. This includes people from all walks of life.

* It should be noted that in sports situations where physical contact is made i.e. in stretching exercises or supporting, sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

• The child or young person may be targeted by the abuser through a deliberate grooming process   
 involving secrecy testing to ensure that the abuser can trust them “not to tell” and to gain the   
 confidence of the child or young person. The parents may also be groomed so that they can trust   
 the abuser implicitly and the abuse can carry on without question

• Some children or young people may never be able to tell someone they have been sexually abused.   
 Changes in their behaviour may be a sign something has happened. In some cases there may be no   
 physical or behavioural signs to suggest that that they have been sexually abused.

## Sexual Abuse Indicators include:

• Child and/or young person appears unusually subdued, withdrawn or has poor concentration.

• Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults, fear of a particular adult.

• Sleep disturbances (nightmares, bed-wetting, fear of sleeping alone).

• Stained underwear, soiling or wetting.

• Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for games.

• Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse.

• Sexual promiscuity, over-sexualised behaviour.

• Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting.

• Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors.

• Having irrational fears.

• Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal or headache pain.

• Social isolation – being withdrawn or introverted – poor peer relationship.

• Running away from home.

• School problems e.g. failing standards, truancy.

• Low self-esteem.

• Display of sexual knowledge beyond the child’s age.

• Eating disorders.

• Anxiety, depression, self harm/mutilation.

• Pregnancy.

• Fear of medical examination.

• Abnormal sexual drawings.

• Developmental regression/acting younger than their age.

## Neglect:

Neglect is when adults fail to meet a child or young persons’ basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s or young person’s health or development, for example; failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or young person from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children or young people are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

## Racial Discrimination and Equity:

Children or young people from British minority ethnic groups (and their parents) may have experienced harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism. Although not formally recognised as a form of child abuse, racism can be emotionally harmful to them. Some racist acts also involve acts of physical violence towards individuals or groups. Through adherence to Equity Policy, problems such as discrimination against ethnic minority groups must be avoided.

## Other Types of Abuse

In addition to the above types of abuse, children and young people with disabilities in residential homes or other institutions might experience:

## Abuse of Children or Young People with Disabilities

Some children or young people are mentally or physically more vulnerable than others, which could make it easier for abusers to exploit them. They may also find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse and to be believed, e.g. if their disability means that they:

• Have limited life experience and have not developed the social skills needed to work out what the   
 behaviour and attitudes of others mean. This could make them less able to understand what   
 appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is.

• Have been encouraged to comply with other people’s wishes and not to question authority figures.

* Are afraid to challenge potentially abusive situations because of fear of the consequences. It is   
   often easier to be compliant and pleasing rather than risk angering and authority figure and getting   
   into trouble.

• May not be able to report abuse because there is no-one they can report it to or because they do   
 not have the appropriate language to use.

• May not be able to recognise that abuse has taken place.

• Feel powerless because they have to depend on others for personal support.

• May not be able to physically remove themselves from abusive situation.

• Are not believed because their authority figures cannot accept that anyone would abuse a child or

young person with disabilities.

• May not have anybody they can trust and confide in.

• May feel guilt or shame about the abuse which prevents them from reporting it.

* May not have a sense of ownership of their own bodies because they are so used to being   
   examined physically by others as part of their medical and physical care.

• Have low self-esteem and a poor self image.

## Institutional Abuse

When staff in a home or other institutions sacrifice the needs, wishes and lifestyle of a child or young person in favour of the institution’s regime, e.g. by showing lack of respect for a their dignity or privacy, or denying them opportunity to make day-to-day choices or decisions about their life. An example in sport could be if coaches or volunteers followed their club’s usual procedures where these conflicted with the rights and needs of a disabled child or young person.

## Financial Abuse

Deliberate misuse and exploitation of any person’s money or possessions, e.g. if the person is not allowed to spend their money as they wish, or if someone takes it from them to spend on themselves.

**It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in archery to decide that a child or young person is being abused but it is their responsibility to act upon their concerns.**

**If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person YOU MUST ACT! Do not assume somebody else will – IT MAY BE TOO LATE.**

These raised concerned lists are not exhaustive for suspected abuse and the presence of one or more of these symptoms is not proof that abuse has taken place, but it should raise concerns.

## Bullying

Bullying may be seen as particularly hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms including children or young people being bullied by adults, their peers and in some cases by members of their families. Bullying can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and those who are bullied often do not tell anyone.

Bullying is a significant issue for children and young people and has been the main reason for calls to Child Line for the last number of years.

## Bullying can include:

• Physical e.g. hitting, pushing, punching kicking (in some cases, this might constitute an assault).

• Verbal (including teasing) e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, spreading rumours, threats or   
 name-calling, ridicule or humiliation.

• Emotional e.g. being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful   
 text messages, ridiculing, humiliating, threatening gestures and ignoring.

• Harassment e.g. using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or   
 distress.

• Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

• Cyber: All areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text   
 messaging and calls

## Bullying Indicators:

• Hesitation or reluctance to come to attend training or activity.

• Reluctance to go to certain places or work with a certain individual(s).

• Has unexpected cuts or bruises.

• Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.

• Often the last one picked for a team or group activity for no apparent reason or being picked on   
 when they think your back is turned.

• Clothing or personal possessions go missing or get damaged.

• Losing pocket money repeatedly.

• Suddenly prone to lashing out at people either physically or verbally when normally quiet.

• Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

• Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged.

## Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

• Take all signs of bullying very seriously.

• Encourage all children and young people to speak and share their concerns (it is believed that up to   
 twelve children or young people per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks   
 about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and   
 tell the Club Official/CPO. Create an open environment.

• Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and   
 bully(ies) separately.

• Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise not to   
 tell anyone else.

• Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).

• Report any concerns to the Club Official/CPO (whenever the bullying is occurring).

## Action towards the bully(ies):

• Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the   
 consequences of their behaviour.

• Seek an apology to the victim(s).

• Inform the bully(ies) parents.

• Insist on the return of ‘borrowed’ items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.

• Provide support for the victim’s coach.

• Impose sanctions as necessary.

• Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change their behaviour.

• Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.

• Inform the Archery GB CPO of action taken.

• Keep a record of action taken.

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