

# **Devizes and District Wargames Group** **Child Protection Policy**

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# 1 Summary of Key Points

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately by DDWG. This child protection policy is designed to ensure these objectives are met.

All children attending DDWG events and meetings MUST be accompanied and supervised by one of their parents (or legal guardian/carer). Children not accompanied shall be denied entry to, or asked to leave, DDWG events and meetings. All DDWG adult members are responsible for enforcing this aspect of the policy. Provision can be made, via the DDWG Secretary, for parents to nominate other parents of child members to act as a Parentally Nominated Carer and supervise their children at DDWG.

On written application from a parent, at the discretion of the DDWG Committee, child members over 16 years may be exempted from parental supervision for nominated DDWG events or meetings.

DDWG has a Child Protection Officer who can be contacted in confidence if any child, parent, or member has concerns over the welfare or a child at the club.

All DDWG members shall be trained in provisions of the DDWG Child Protection Policy.

## 2 Introduction

DDWG has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in the club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. DDWG will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in the club through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines described herein.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

## 3 Policy aims

The aim of the DDWG Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of (Organisation/Club), and
- Allowing all members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## 4 DDWG Child Protection Organisation

The following individuals and groups have the responsibilities described under the DDWG Child Protection Policy:

DDWG Chairman. The Chairman has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that children attending or visiting DDWG events and meetings are appropriately protected and that their welfare is ensured. He is assisted in this duty by the Club Child Protection Officer, DDWG Secretary, DDWG Committee, and DDWG Adult Members. The Chairman shall approve the members' election of the Club Child Protection Officer satisfying himself that the CPO is a proper and fit person to hold the position. The Chairman shall supervise the work and conduct of the Club Child Protection Officer. Should the Chairman also be the CPO, then another committee member must be nominated to supervise the Chairman in the performance of his role.

- DDWG Secretary. The Secretary shall ensure that a record is kept of child members, their parents/guardians (including emergency contact information), parentally nominated carers, child members 16 and over exempted from parental accompaniment, and adult member's DDWG Child Protection Policy training status. He shall also ensure that appropriate details of this child protection policy are promulgated on the Club's website, to members, and to the parents of prospective and current child members.
- Club Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Officer shall be an elected member of the DDWG Committee. The Child Protection Officer duties are defined throughout this policy document.
- DDWG Committee. The DDWG Committee shall advise the Chairman in the approval and assist in the operation of this policy.
- DDWG Adult Members. DDWG adult members shall undertake training in DDWG Child Protection Policy, adhere to the policies requirements, and assist the Committee in ensuring that all children attending or visiting DDWG are supervised by their parents, guardians, or parentally nominated carers.
- Parents or Guardians of DDWG Child Members or child visitors. Shall ensure that they accompany and supervise their child members or child visitors at DDWG meetings and events or ensure that a Parentally Nominated Carer undertakes this responsibility for them.

## **5 Child Member's Attendance at DDWG Meetings, Events, & Trips**

All children attending DDWG events and meetings MUST be accompanied and supervised by one of their parents (or legal guardian/carer). Children not accompanied shall be denied entry to, or asked to leave, DDWG events and meetings. All DDWG adult members are responsible for enforcing this aspect of the policy.

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Provision can be made, via the DDWG Secretary, for parents to nominate other parents of child members to act as a Parentally Nominated Carer and supervise their children at DDWG. Parents wishing to make such a nomination shall enter into a private arrangement with the other child member's parent and notify the DDWG Secretary in writing of the name(s) of the Parentally Nominated Carers. A Parentally nominated carer must be over 18 and cannot supervise more than 4 under 18's (including their own children) at a DDWG event or meeting.

On written application from a parent, at the discretion of the DDWG Committee, child members over 16 years may be exempted from parental attendance for nominated DDWG events or meetings.

A list of all child members, their parents, any parentally nominated carers, emergency contact details, and if they are 16+ and exempted from parental attendance, shall be provided at all club meetings and events for the use of adult members to ensure that child members are supervised in accordance with the these rules. This list shall be provided and maintained by the Secretary.

## **6 Good Practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Club members with regular contact with young people can be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

### ***6.1 Good practice guidelines***

All members should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with 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 or achieving goals.
- Making club activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.

### ***6.2 Practices to be avoided***

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be 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:

Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.

Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

### ***6.3 Practices never to be sanctioned***

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- 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
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers 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 players 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.

## **7 Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child member or visitor
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner

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## **8 Use of photographic/filming equipment**

There is evidence that some people have used events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people in vulnerable positions. DDWG members should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Consent must be obtained in writing before any young person shall be photographed or videoed as part of club activities by anyone other than their parent or carer.

## **9 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers**

DDWG recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from contact with children.

To achieve this:

- All children must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or parentally nominated carer.
- All club members shall be trained in the contents of this child protection policy and be expected to adhere to it.
- Children, parents, carers, and adult members shall have a confidential method of reporting any concerns regarding child protection at DDWG

## **10 Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone in DDWG to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

DDWG assures all members that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

### ***10.1 Reporting concerns about suspected abuse***

Any suspicion that a child has been abused shall be reported to the Club Child Protection 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 Organisation/Club Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

If the Organisation/Club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to another committee member or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.

## ***10.2 Confidentiality***

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

The Club Child Protection Officer

The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused

The person making the allegation

Social services/police

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## ***10.3 Enquiries and further action***

The (Organisation/Club) 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 Club Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member 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 Club 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. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## ***10.4 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse***

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

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@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk .

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

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### ***10.5 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 member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person.

### ***10.6 Reporting concerns outside the immediate club environment (e.g. a parent or carer)***

Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

Social Services and the Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

## **11 Bullying**

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above. Good practice, including those described below shall be followed:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak 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). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever 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's parents.



- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

## **12 Information to be recorded regarding suspected abuse**

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

The child's home address and telephone number.

Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.

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. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

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## **13 Emergency Contact Number if Child Abuse is Suspected**

If you have any concerns about a child or young person call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, text 88858 or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) for immediate advice.

## **14 Members Summary of DDWG Child Protection Policy**

The following short summary of this policy shall be circulated to DDWG members as part of their training in DDWG Child Protection:

### **Members Summary of DDWG Child Protection Policy**

This is an extract intended as an aide memoire. The full child protection policy is available via the DDWG website.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). All children have the right to protection from abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately by DDWG. The DDWG Child Protection Policy is designed to ensure these objectives are met.

**DDWG has a Child Protection Officer (CPO) who can be contacted in confidence if any child, parent, or member has concerns over the welfare or a child at the club. The DDWG CPO is Andy Cross and he may be contacted on 07742 426 596.**

Alternatively if you have any concerns about a child or young person call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, text 88858 or visit [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) for immediate advice.

*The following are a summary of the key rules in the policy:*

**All children attending DDWG events and meetings MUST be accompanied and supervised by one of their parents (or legal guardian/carer).** Children not accompanied shall be denied entry to, or asked to leave, DDWG events and meetings. All DDWG adult members are responsible for enforcing this aspect of the policy. Provision can be made, via the DDWG Secretary, for parents to nominate other parents of child members to act as a Parentally Nominated Carer and supervise their children at DDWG. The Secretary holds a full list of Child Members, their parents/guardians, emergency contact numbers and details of any parentally nominated carers.

On written application from a parent, at the discretion of the DDWG Committee, child members over 16 years may be exempted from parental supervision for nominated DDWG events or meetings. Club members and their guests shall:

- Obtain consent writing before any young person shall be photographed or videoed as part of club activities by anyone other than their parent or carer. This written consent must be forwarded to the club CPO.
- For the protection of themselves and children, avoid spending time alone with children away from others.

Club members and their guests shall should **never**:

- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching with children
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun

Reduce a child to tears as a form of control

Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child

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