



MINDFUL MOVEMENTS
Physical and Cognitive Engagement

CORNERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S SAFETY

Please ensure that you have the latest version of this policy. If you are in doubt, you can request an updated version by emailing us at policy@mindful-movements.org

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WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S SAFETY

Safeguarding concerns regarding children can come to light in a number of ways. For example, sometimes an adult will notice something of concern in a child's behaviour, a third party may raise a concern or information on a DBS disclosure could indicate that an individual may pose a working risk of harm to the children they are with.

In all instances where there is a safeguarding concern about a child, whether it concerns a Mindful Movements member or in a Mindful Movements environment, the concern must be reported to a Mindful Movements recognised welfare officer as soon as possible.

Remember – It is not the responsibility of Mindful Movements staff or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to pass on concerns to the appropriate authorities who will make this decision.

Initial steps to be taken to ensure the safety of the child

- **Where the child is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical treatment**, the emergency services (police or ambulance, depending on the issue) should be called without delay and informed that the concern is a safeguarding issue.
- a Mindful Movements Safeguarding Referral Form is to be completed. In the first instance, this will be the staff member's responsibility. Where there is any case of difficulty or doubt, refer immediately to the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager (CSM). A copy of the referral form must be sent to the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager within 24 hours.
- **Informing the parents** must be an early consideration. If it is considered in anyway detrimental to the child that the parents are informed, advice must be sought as soon as possible from the CSM or the statutory services (i.e. police or children's social care).
- **All referral forms are to be sent to the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager.** This may be via the divisional/regional welfare officer according to local practice but must be done within 24 hours and with no delay.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained with information shared on a 'need-to-know' basis only.

Disclosures by a child

Occasionally a child may disclose abuse themselves directly to an adult they trust. Although this is the least common way in which concerns come to light, where this does happen the following should be considered:

- Take the child's name, date of birth and address.
- If appropriate, take details of bruising or other injuries.
- Do not pre-judge what you are told and never say that you do not believe what the child or young person says.
- Tell the child or young person that telling you is the correct thing to do.
- Tell the child or young person that they are not to blame.
- Do not under any circumstance continue to question the child or young person beyond confirming what they said.
- Do not make promises to the child or young person that you cannot keep, for example - promising absolute confidentiality, as any disclosure will be referred on and other appropriate agencies may be involved.
- Do not take action against anyone mentioned in such disclosures and never against an alleged perpetrator.

Case Management

On receipt of a Safeguarding concern, the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager will consider engaging the Board.

The criteria for engaging the Board are if one or more of the following apply:

- Suspected child abuse incident
- More than trivial harm to child (including emotional).
- Preventable harm to a child
- Significant breach of Mindful Movements Child Protection Policy or other relevant rule or legislation.
- Issue leading to potential change of Mindful Movements Child Protection Policy.
- Likelihood or actuality of statutory agency involvement or media interest.
- Any other matter the CSM or any other senior Mindful Movements member or employee regards as appropriate.
- History/pattern of similar issue with group or individual.

What the Board will do

- Review the actions taken b
- Review the actions taken by necessity prior to the meeting.
- Direct the future course of events.
- Make decisions that are in the best interest of children first and then also for Mindful Movements.
- Report the conclusion to the Mindful Movements Compliance Committee.

If a conclusion of the Board is that disciplinary action against a member is appropriate, the Mindful Movements disciplinary procedures will come into effect immediately that decision is made.

If a case is judged to be potentially serious poor practice or abuse, the Board may decide

to take the neutral act of temporarily suspending the individual pending further investigations (this decision will be made on the basis of actual or potential deemed risk to the children).

Following a children's social care or police investigation, Mindful Movements will assess the available information to decide whether the individual can be reinstated to their role. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence for the police to act or obtain a conviction.

In such cases, the Board or Disciplinary Panel 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 person poses a risk.

The Board may decide that an individual should undertake certain actions such as further training or completing a new DBS disclosure, with failure to comply resulting in suspension.

The Board can suspend a member pending the appointment of the Board if circumstances require urgent action.

See the flowcharts which accompany this section.

Whistle-blowing

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a coach, volunteer or other child or young person has abused, or may be, abusing a child will raise concern amongst other coaches or volunteers, particularly in relation to the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. It is important, however, that any concerns for the welfare of any child arising from the abuse or harassment by a coach, volunteer or child/young person should be reported immediately.

The welfare of the child must always be of paramount importance and, you should ensure someone takes immediate steps to remove the child or young person from a position of harm or potential harm. If in an unsafe environment, this can be done by recruiting the help of a colleague or by contacting the parents/carers in order that the child or young person may be removed from the position of harm whilst the matter is resolved.

If as a member of staff, a coach or other volunteer, you become aware that a member of staff, a coach or other volunteer has or may abuse a child/children, you **MUST** inform an appropriate person, in confidence if necessary. That person could be the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager or another member of the safeguarding team.

All information received and discussed will be treated in confidence and only shared with those individuals within Mindful Movements who will be able to manage and resolve the situation.

In cases where you do not feel able to disclose your concerns to any or all of these people, you **MUST** contact the police, the children's social care services or the NSPCC. All these agencies are experienced in such matters and you can be confident that the concerns will be addressed in a professional way.

If in the event that you feel only able to disclose your concerns anonymously, you are

urged to contact any of the agencies named providing as much detail as possible to assist those agencies and to minimise the harm or risk that the child/children may come to.

Remember: Doing nothing is not an option.

Supervision and support for staff and volunteers

Mindful Movements assures all coaches, volunteers, helpers, staff or officials that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports their concerns that someone has abused, or may be, abusing a child.

We will also ensure that supervision and support is available both during and following an incident or allegation.

The first person within the organisation to consider is the welfare officer. This officer should whenever possible be on hand to offer help and advice at this difficult time. The welfare officer may draw on Compliance & Safeguarding Manager, a part of whose role is to provide help and assistance in this area.

In the most serious cases, it may be possible to access counselling from the statutory agencies; particularly the children's social care services, who will have links to other branches of social services.

In any event, you will not be expected to deal with this difficult area alone and you should always seek help and advice from the network of welfare officers within Mindful Movements. Do not forget that the Compliance & Safeguarding Manager is available to advise and help at any time.

If an allegation is made against you

Any concerns regarding the inappropriate behaviour or abuse by an adult towards a child or young person will be taken seriously and investigated. If you are the person who is the centre of the allegation, the situation will be explained to you and you may be asked to stop working with children and / or young people or you may be required to withdraw from work for the period of any investigation. This is to protect all parties involved.

On completion of the investigation, depending on the outcome, Mindful Movements will assess the appropriateness of you returning to work and how if applicable, this may be managed.

Mindful Movements will assess, on a case by case basis, any support needed for the person who has allegations made against them. Mindful Movements may choose to appoint an independent officer to provide support to the accused person

When there is a complaint there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and children's social care services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

In cases where unacceptable or abusive behaviour is reported to a member of staff or the organisation - whether the complainant be a member of the organisation or not - such complaints shall be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner.

The recipient of the complaint, if not the organisation or Welfare Officer, shall refer the matter to such a person. This Welfare Officer shall confirm receipt of the complaint to the complainant personally or preferably in writing.

The complaint will be entered onto the Mindful Movements Safeguarding Referral Form (available in the Child Protection and Safeguarding section of the Mindful Movements website). The procedures above will be adhered to.

Within the constraints of confidentiality, the witness shall be kept informed of the position on a regular basis until it is resolved.

In the case of a child or young person abusing another child, this can be notoriously difficult to deal with however, it is important that such matters are dealt with sensitively and parents of both the victim & the alleged perpetrator are informed. In serious cases where a referral is made to a statutory agency (police, children's social care services or NSPCC) the agency may be best placed to do this.

It is important that both children/young people in this case scenario are supported and pre-judgment does not take place. In all other respects the process of dealing with the alleged incident/offender is the same as outlined further in this policy.

Always seek the help of your divisional or regional and/or Compliance & Safeguarding Manager and/or NSPCC Helpline if in doubt.

With regard to bullying see the Child Protection and Safeguarding section of the Mindful Movements website.

It is important that this organisation is seen to take complaints seriously and that we are transparent and effective in our methods of dealing with them.

The following is a guide to assist you through this process:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, it will be dealt with as a misconduct issue following advice and guidelines obtained from your divisional or regional welfare officer and/or the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager.
- If the allegation is about poor practice or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to refer the matter to the Case Management Referral Panel for disciplinary proceedings (see the Mindful Movements Disciplinary Proceedings, available in the Child Protection and Safeguarding section of the website).
- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a coach or volunteer should be reported to the welfare officer or the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child and any other child who may be at risk.
- In cases requiring immediate action, the welfare officer or the Mindful Movements

Compliance & Safeguarding Manager will refer the allegation to the children's social care services (previously social services), who will involve the police in appropriate cases.

- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the children's social care services.
- If not informed at the outset, the welfare officer must also notify the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager, who will decide who will deal with any media enquiries.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- If the welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion or allegation, immediate contact should be made and a subsequent report must be sent to Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager, who will then be responsible for taking all further appropriate action.
- The Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager will make an immediate decision regarding any individual accused of abuse regarding their temporary suspension pending further police and children's social care services enquiries. • Irrespective of the findings of the children's social care services or police enquiries, the Mindful Movements Case Management Referral Panel, the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager and/or the Chairman of the Mindful Movements Equity Commission will assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure to decide whether an individual can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This may be a difficult decision particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any decision by the police. In such cases those considering this matter will reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not the allegation is true. *The welfare of the child WILL always remain paramount.*

The Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager will involve the Mindful Movements Case Management Referral Panel in the making of all decisions regarding suspensions leading from allegations against coaches and volunteers.

Consideration will be given regarding available support to the child; the parents/carers/guardians, coaches, members and volunteers. This includes alleged perpetrators.

Support for victims and / or accused staff, coaches, officials and volunteers

As a sport that cares for all its members we seek not to pre-judge and to minimise trauma particularly around child protection cases – this does not preclude our primary stance that the child's welfare is paramount.

The child victim

In minor incidents it may only be necessary for the welfare officer to offer help, advice and support within the organisation. In more serious cases, generally the child will be supported by the family, a friend or both.

In cases where matters have been referred to police or the children's social care services both these agencies have, and regularly call upon support agencies and groups who will help the victim through this traumatic part of their life these agencies would include the local Victim Support Scheme and contracted counselling and therapy providers.

It is important that the welfare officer maintains links with the child victim and the child's parents in order to best support the child when returning to the activities. Upon their return this support must continue, and consideration should be given to discrete chaperoning without causing undue embarrassment to the child. Parents and carer should be consulted, and agreement made regarding this delicate process.

The accused staff, coach, official or volunteer

Although generally isolated, there have and no doubt will continue to be cases where staff, coaches, officials or volunteers have been the subject of interim sanction (suspension, etc). Until an allegation has been proved, the principles of natural justice must prevail and without unwanted intrusion, the accused excluded person should be permitted a link with the sport.

Having access to activities of Mindful Movements whilst suspended would not be appropriate however, it is recommended that the welfare officer maintains a tentative link with the accused person for the purposes of a managed and supported return to the activities if a matter is subsequently not proceeded with or a serious matter subsequently becomes a matter for the disciplinary process.

All welfare officers engaged in 'accused person' liaison shall maintain an accurate log of contacts, timings, matters discussed, and advice given. At no time should such officers discuss blame or any forthcoming case or proceedings.

When engaged in the liaison with accused members, divisional and regional welfare officers must maintain continuous links with the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager, who will continually assess Mindful Movements' position.

If the accused person is subsequently exonerated, then their re-entry into activities should be carried out with care particularly if contact with the victim may occur.

Whilst every effort should be made to manage this process with common sense and compassion it will not be an easy situation to resolve and welfare officers are urged to seek advice from the Mindful Movements Compliance & Safeguarding Manager.

Further supporting agencies can be found elsewhere in these procedures.

If you are not sure what to do

Advice can be obtained by telephoning the NSPCC helpline on: 0800 800500 or contact Mindful Movements on 020 3576 4572

Urgent referrals to police / social services by Welfare Officers

In normal circumstances the referral to an outside agency will be carried out by the CSM however, in cases of emergency and in liaison with either the divisional / regional welfare officer and/or the CSM, the welfare officer must contact the relevant agency (police/children's social care services, etc.) This action should be treated as 'immediate'.

Whilst speaking to the agency, the following must be borne in mind:

- Ensure that you make a written record of everything you say/discuss with the agency.
- Ensure you note down the exact instructions you were given.
- Secure the full details, rank, position and contact details of the person you spoke to.
- Fully complete the Mindful Movements Referral Form and email the completed document to them.
- You must send a copy of this referral document to the regional welfare officer who will instigate a case management file for Mindful Movements record purposes.
- Reference must be made immediately to the CSM before attending any proposed strategy meetings¹ with an outside agency – the CSM or his deputy may attend such meetings in some circumstances together with other members of the organisation.
- Ensure that the disclosure/referral remain 'confidential'.
- In cases where a member of the organisation is felt unsuitable to remain in their position as a result of such disclosures, in the interests of the child/children the matter shall be immediately referred to the CSM who shall consider the interim sanction of suspension.

It should be noted that although a person is suspended, it does not indicate guilt however, the welfare of the child is paramount and initial suspension in relevant cases will / must take place.

1. A strategy meeting involves persons from various agencies (which may include social services, police, education and health) the purpose of which is to discuss whether a Section 47 police investigation should take place. It has various other roles including the formulation of care plans that safeguard the child(ren) referred to one of these agencies.



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