



Procedure for Responding to Concerns About a Child

These procedures apply to all staff/volunteers involved in Edinburgh Fencing Club.

1. Concerns about the General Wellbeing of a Child (not involving concerns about child abuse)

Edinburgh Fencing Club is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers whenever there are concerns about a child. Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children.

Where the concern **does not** involve the possibility of abuse, worries may be discussed with parents/carers. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents which cause concern about the wellbeing of a child should be recorded on the *Incident Report Form* and reported to Edinburgh Fencing Club as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

Advice should be sought from Edinburgh Fencing Club if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general wellbeing of a child.

2. Concerns about the abuse of a child: Recognise, Respond, Record Recognise

Always respond to allegations of abuse. It is not up to you to decide whether or not a child has been abused.

Do not investigate allegations of abuse: that is for the police or social services to do.

Members of the sports volunteers/staff may be informed in different ways with regards to details of a concern about a child. This may be:

- A direct disclosure by a child
- Through observation of a child, demonstrated by a change in their behaviour, appearance or nature
- Information that is shared from another individual or organisation

Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. **False allegations are very rare.** If a child says or indicates they are being abused, or information is obtained that gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure. Allegations may also be made by another child, an adult or another agency/organisation.



Respond

Good practice:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Consider what requirements a child may need to communicate effectively (e.g. do they have an additional support needs, is English their first language etc.).
- Listen to the child and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief.
- Reassure the child they are not to blame and were right to tell someone.
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the possibility that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. Who? What? Where? When?
- It's important to explain to the child who you may need to share information with and why. Don't promise to keep information to yourself.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.
- Pass on the information to the Club Wellbeing and Protection Officer/or social work services or the police without delay

Avoid:

- Panicking.
- Showing shock or distaste.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- Speculating or making assumptions.
- Making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Making promises
- Agreeing to keep secrets or giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of the child:

- Take whatever action is required to ensure the child's immediate safety.
- Call the police on 999. Pass the information to them and seek their advice.
- Call the Club Welfare Officer and tell them about the situation.

Backup contacts

If the Edinburgh Fencing Club Welfare Officer is unavailable, these are your back-up contacts:

Scottish Fencing

Ross Morrison, Director (Safeguarding and Development)

- Email: safeguarding@scottish-fencing.com

Children 1st Safeguarding in Sport Service:

- Telephone: 0141 419 1156
- Email: safeguardingsport@children1st.org.uk.

British Fencing



Record

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the Concern Recording Form, completing as much of the form as possible.

If completing the form electronically, do not save it anywhere. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete the file immediately. Pass the record to social work services or the police and to the Edinburgh Fencing Club Child Protection Officer that day.

Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parents/carers may place the child at further risk. In such cases advice must always firstly be sought from the police or social work services as to who informs the parents/carers.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD FLOWCHART

