

Child Protection policy

“Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.” [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19]

COG is committed to this ethos and seeks to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the prevention of all forms of bullying among members. To this end all COG activities should have in place rigorous anti-bullying strategies.

COG’s policy is to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

For the purposes of the Child protection policy children are classed as minors under the age of 18. All participants have to be members of COG or are made aware, that if they are not on the initial occasion they join an event, they will not be suitably covered by COG insurance.

All Duke of Edinburgh participants are not permitted to join the programme unless family membership of COG is in place.

Accordingly COG is committed to:

- taking into account in all its considerations and activities the interests and well-being of young people;
- respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the young people with whom it is working;
- taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm;
- Promoting the welfare of young people and their protection within a relationship of trust.

Code of Behaviour

DO treat everyone with dignity and respect.

DO set an example you would wish others to follow.

DO treat all young people equally - show no favouritism.

DO plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others.

DO follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities.

DO respect a young person’s right to personal privacy.

DO avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust e.g. a sexual relationship with a youth Member over the age of consent.

DO have separate sleeping accommodation for young people & adults .Where it is deemed that children are too young to be in separate rooms from parents/guardians, they are suitably accommodated to sleep in shared facilities with responsible family member.

DO allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have.

DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like.

DO avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour e.g. tantrums and crushes.

DO make all members of COG aware of the child protection procedures

DO remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse.

DO remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.

DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately **DO NOT** trivialise abuse.

DO NOT form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust.

DO NOT permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying.

DO NOT drink alcohol when you are directly responsible for young people and never allow young people on Expedition activities to drink alcohol.

DO NOT engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual.

DO NOT play physical contact games with young people.

DO NOT make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun.

DO NOT use inappropriate language – writing, phoning, email or internet.

DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported.

DO NOT just rely on your good name to protect you.

Ensure if photographs of children are posted on the COG website or other public forums (e.g. Facebook) the permission of the children's parents is first obtained

If you have a concern about a young person's safety and well being:

1. Immediately tell the Family Liaison officer or another member of Committee at an event
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to the Family Liaison officer

If a young person tells you about abuse by someone else:

1. Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement
3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on to the Family Liaison office or another member of Committee

4. Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible
5. **Note: In an emergency (young person at imminent risk of significant harm) contact police or social service/work department direct. Inform of the action you have taken.**

If you receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. Immediately tell the Family Liaison officer
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to Family Liaison officer
4. Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

Note: Any Adult in COG has the right to report any concerns, or suspicions about another Member in confidence and free from harassment.

Family Liaison Officers within COG currently work within the Education Sector and as such have either CRB or DBS checks in place . In addition as part of their Education training will have received extensive training relating to Child protection issues.

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