

## Safeguarding Guide for Parents



Parents play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting their child's participation, success and fun when training and competing in Triathlon.

Everyone involved in triathlon for young people should be committed to ensuring that children's participation is supported. British Triathlon believes that the welfare of young people is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting young people from abuse. However, it is important to remember that it is not the responsibility of those working in Triathlon and its associated disciplines to determine if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

### Why parents/careers are important to children's participation in triathlon

Parents/careers are important to sport because they can:

- encourage their children to take up, enjoy and achieve
- support their children in practical ways - such as by providing transport or buying kit
- support their children effectively by being aware of club rules and participation guidelines at training sessions and events
- help out with activities
- become coaches, helpers and volunteers within the club
- help out with things such as club websites and fundraising
- support and motivate their child and/or the team
- reinforce positive aspects of sports participation

### Helping children reach their full potential

To continue to ensure a child reaches their full potential and enjoys their time playing sport, parents need to consider:

- what do they want their child to get out of sport? Is it the same as what their child wants?
- do they understand what their child is trying to achieve and what support they need to achieve it?
- are they being the best role model they can be to help their child enjoy their sporting experience?
- are they focused on their child's development and enjoyment?

### Poor parental behaviour and its effects on children in sport

Often, complaints and concerns arise about the negative behaviour of some parents and the impact this can have on their own and other children, coaches, officials and the club itself.

The behaviour of some parents can be challenging. They may:

- get carried away on the sidelines - leading to intimidating, aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour towards their own or other children, coaches, officials or other parents and spectators
- push their child to achieve in sport while neglecting other aspects of their lives
- have a 'win at all costs' approach to their child's participation in sport
- have aspirations for, or expectations of, their child that are not realistic or that differ from those of the club
- are verbally or physically abusive towards their own or other children during or following competitions
- make negative comments about their child or other children's efforts, or mock and humiliate them
- threaten or fight with coaches, officials or other spectators
- contradict the advice of the coach

Coaches have witnessed:

“His dad was shouting ‘you’re a disgrace to the family’.”

“The opposition coach shouted at the referee and one of our parents started shouting at the opposition coach. The official couldn’t control it and the next thing parents were squaring up - all a bit mental and scary.”

### **Effects of poor parental behaviour**

Poor parental behaviour can affect young participants in a variety of ways:

- threatening words or behaviour, regardless of who this is directed at, are frightening and upsetting for children
- behaviour such as this certainly contravenes the parents' (and spectators') code of conduct
- in extreme cases, it may also constitute criminal actions that result in the involvement of the police
- shouting from the side-lines may disrupt the attention of the athlete
- parental 'advice' may distract athletes from what the coach is telling them, particularly if they're giving conflicting information
- children can be embarrassed by parents who draw attention to themselves in negative ways
- children may be worried that their parent's behaviour will annoy the coach or affect their selection.
- consistently bad parental behaviour can lead to the child's exclusion from their sport
- focus on the sports activities at the expense of other aspects of the child's life can put undue pressure upon the child, impact upon their social and educational development and potentially lead to disappointment if the child does not meet expectations

- negative feedback to a child can undermine their confidence, with the possible result that the child underperforms or withdraws from the sport

## A guide to Child Protection

There are 4 categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. In addition, bullying, harassment and grooming also need to be safeguarded against.

British Triathlon has produced **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures** as part of its commitment to ensuring that the sport provides a safe, friendly and enjoyable experience for young people and to protect them from abuse.

The Policy and Procedures provides the sport with the tools to ensure that the whole sport takes up the challenge of continuously improving the participation conditions for young people. They greatly enhance the value of existing activities and practices throughout British Triathlon's extensive Club network ensures that the many hundreds of coaches/instructors and volunteers integral to the sport are continually supported.

The policy is backed up by a comprehensive structured implementation plan and a sensitive process to respond to concerns.

How will child protection affect me?

Child welfare and protection in Triathlon and its associated disciplines is mandatory to all. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures has been developed to provide a comprehensive and complete guide to all those who compete are air parents, coach, officiate, assist and volunteer in Triathlon and its associated disciplines.

How does child protection affect my Club?

Abuse can occur anywhere there are young people of any age. Sadly, there are some people who will seek to be where young people are simply in order to abuse them; this includes the Triathlon Club. It is therefore imperative that each and every Club adopts and implements its own robust child protection policy.

What does my Club need to do?

Child welfare and protection will not be implemented overnight. It is a long-term process. It is the responsibility of the whole Club to implement the child protection policy and procedures.

Club Welfare Officers

- A Club must nominate a Club Welfare Officer who will advise and ensure that child welfare and protection is being adhered to in the Club.

- They will be the point of contact for all Child Protection concerns and queries.
- The Club Welfare Officer must be DBS checked.
- The Club Welfare Officer must attend relevant training to enable them to fulfil their role.

British Triathlon strongly recommends that all coaches, instructors, officials and volunteers involved with young people should read and have knowledge of the full British Triathlon Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy and Procedures available as a download from [www.britishtriathlon.org](http://www.britishtriathlon.org)

### **Acting on Concerns**

It is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has taken place, however, it is your responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

If you have any concerns regarding a young person or if a young person informs you directly that he/she, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour

towards them you should:

- React immediately
- Remain calm, so not to frighten or deter the young person
- Tell the young person that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell
- Make a detailed note of your observations and/or what was said exactly
- Contact the Club Welfare Officer immediately, if they are unavailable or part of the concern contact the British Triathlon's Lead Child Protection Officer
- You can use the 24 hour free telephone helplines for advice

NSPCC 0800 800 500

Childline 0800 1111

Useful Contacts

British Triathlon Lead Child Protection Officer - 01509 226159

NTC Club Welfare Officer - Fiona Ridley 07887 800169