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## **Seven Lakes Fishery**

Safeguarding Children and Young People in Angling  
Policy and Procedure Oct 2019

## **POLICY**

Seven Lakes Fishery believes that children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

This policy is only any use if it is implemented on the ground. In order to fulfil our commitment to safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults it is paramount that everyone involved in angling does their bit to implement the policy and its actions proactively. By following the sensible steps in our policy, you can help ensure that you will have reduced the risk of anyone being harmed or made to feel miserable or afraid as a result of getting involved in fishing.

### **Child Protection Policy Statement**

Seven Lakes Fishery acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of angling in all activities run and supported by Seven Lakes Fishery and are able to do so in a safe and child centred environment.
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in angling at Seven Lakes Fishery.
- Seven Lakes Fishery acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.
- As part of our safeguarding policy Seven Lakes Fishery will:
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and can recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation
- **Work** collaboratively and collectively with other organisations, outside of angling, to develop and maintain safeguarding for children and young people.
- **Checks** all coaches should have a DBS check and hold a valid certificate.
- The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in at Seven Lakes Fishery. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the fishery.
- **Principles**
- The principles followed, and guidance given in this document are based on the following.
- The child's welfare is of paramount consideration
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, any disability they may have, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse

- All incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- A young person is recognised as being under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 1989 definition)
- Adults with responsibility for children have a moral and legal duty for the care
- All young people have the right to participate in the sport of angling in an enjoyable and safe environment
- Young people have the right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development in relation to their involvement in the sport of angling
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts and agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 2000 and General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 May 2018

### **Safeguarding Children in Angling**

The aim of this section is to help you to identify concerns about children and young people and provide guidance on how to deal with them appropriately.

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can generate strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment.

A coach, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice must be reported to the owner at Seven Lakes Fishery. In such instances Seven Lakes Fishery must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the young person receives the required support.

### **Recognition**

It is not your role to diagnose or define what is abuse or neglect (there are people paid to do this) but it is yours and everyone else's responsibility to do whatever is necessary to ensure that any matters of concern are referred to the correct people to be dealt with in accordance with this policy. If the nature of the case makes this difficult then you should consider our whistleblowing policy.

The designated person for safeguarding concerns within the fishery must be informed of all concerns even if you feel able to deal with the matter personally. Depending on the seriousness of the case, they may take the concern further or provide advice on how best to deal with it. There are a number of ways in which you might be made aware of possible safeguarding concerns about a child including the following:

- A child may disclose directly to you about past or present abuse.
- You or a colleague may become suspicious that a child is being abused
- You may become suspicious about a colleague's behaviour
- You may become aware of children abusing each other

Regardless of how you are made aware, you have a duty of care to act on any concern and you must not ignore or trivialise them.

### **Poor Practice**

In many circumstances, a concern may relate to poor practice where the behaviour of a coach or other person may be causing distress to a child or young person. Relating to this policy, poor practice is any behaviour that conflicts the standards established in Seven Lakes

Fishery Code of Conduct or which infringes an individual's rights. Any behaviour causing abuse or harm that fails to fulfil the duty of care should be regarded as possible signs of abuse or harm and reported following the correct procedures.

Examples of poor practice in angling include:

- use of any physical or humiliating punishments;
- failure to act when you witness possible abuse or bullying;
- spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people when coaching;
- allowing any form of inappropriate touching;
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- making sexually suggestive comments even in fun;
- reducing a person to tears as a form of control;
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged or not acted upon;
- leaving a young angler unaccompanied on the water's edge for prolonged periods;
- doing things of a personal nature that young people can do for themselves

There may be occasions when some anglers require assistance with personal care due to being young or disabled. If anyone requires this level of support, it should be made clear that this can only be undertaken by his or her designated carer and not by the coach. This level of care may compromise the role of the coach and place other participants at a greater risk if this activity removes the coach from the coaching environment. Any additional support arrangements must be agreed and in place before any activity commences.

In addition to the list above, other incidents may occur which must be reported immediately to the owner or a colleague. Parents must also be made aware of the incident if:

- you accidentally hurt an angler;
- children or young anglers seem distressed in any manner;
- children or young anglers appear to be sexually aroused by your actions;
- children or young anglers misunderstand or misinterpret something you have said or done

**Physical abuse** – Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Bullying** – Bullying is the most frequently reported causes of abuse or harm for children and young people and you may find that you observe situations where a young person appears to be being bullied.

Every child has the right to participate in angling, free from the fear of bullying. Bullying can be described as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over time where those being bullied find it difficult to defend themselves.

Bullying has the potential to cause permanent harm (physical, emotional or psychological). Seven Lakes Fishery should take steps to prevent bullying behaviour wherever possible and respond to incidents when they occur

More information can be found in our **Anti-Bullying Policy**.

### **Signs and Indicators of abuse**

Indications that a young person may be being abused whilst attending angling activities or events may include the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;

- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another;
- unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper);
- inappropriate sexual awareness;
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- sudden or unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- having difficulty in making friends;
- being prevented from socialising with other young people;
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite; or a sudden weight change;
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. A good working relationship with parent/guardians will help to identify any other concerns that a young person may be experiencing, e.g. a family bereavement, which could cause some of the changes listed above.

Remember it is not the responsibility of those working in angling to decide if child abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting them.

### **Additional Vulnerabilities**

There are a number of reasons why a child may be additional vulnerable to abuse, for example, their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or disability. Adults working with children need to be aware of issues of this so that they can work to counteract and challenge oppressive or abusive behaviour towards these children. These issues will specifically be addressed through our Codes of Conduct and Practice.

### **Deaf and disabled children**

Deaf or disabled children have the same rights to protection as any child but research suggests they are up to 4 times more vulnerable to abuse than non-disabled children, because they may be dependent on others for practical assistance and intimate care as well as having impaired capacity to resist, avoid, understand or report abuse.

Although the great majority of carers have the child's best interests at heart, some will use their vulnerability as an opportunity to abuse. Sometimes it may be difficult to tell that a disabled child is being abused as people might think a child is behaving differently because of his or her disability - not realising that they are being abused.

### **Reporting**

Although occurrences are extremely rare, staff and volunteers might encounter children or vulnerable adults who wish to share with them their unhappiness from being abused, discover that abuse has taken place or see what they consider to be abuse taking place.

It is important to take IMMEDIATE action in ALL Cases  
Do not assume that someone else will act.

Agree to help the person who wants to share the information with you.

Recognise that you will have to tell someone and avoid making promises you will be unable to keep, including that discussions held are confidential.

Only question the person to confirm what they have told you and not to investigate any further. Never push a child for more information, leave that to the relevant agencies.

If the child is with a host organisation (e.g. a school), inform the leader of the group directly of the alleged abuse and ask them to start their own procedures for handling the situation. In all cases contact the Child Protection Team within the local authority.

### **Barriers for children**

Children will often not disclose because they:

- they are scared they have been threatened;
- are scared because they fear what will happen next;
- are afraid they won't be believed;
- are ashamed or embarrassed;
- are dependent for their primary care needs on the person implicated in the abuse;
- may not want the abuser to get into trouble;
- may not have adequate language, vocabulary or understanding to describe what has happened;
- may think it is normal.

### **Barriers for adults**

Experience of professionals who work in this field has shown that there are many barriers that individuals often have to overcome before taking appropriate action when faced with having to deal with a concern. Personal initial reactions are commonly:

- shock or disbelief;
- fear or denial;
- a fear of getting it wrong;
- not believing the young person;
- fear of over or under reacting and making the situation worse;
- it is a reminder of similar past personal experiences;
- anxiety about jeopardising existing relationships, for example with parents.

Staff and volunteers should be clear in what they need to do and contact the designated contact at Seven Lakes Fishery.

### **Responding to a child or young person**

It is always difficult to hear about or witness harm or abuse experienced by a child or young person. The following points will be helpful for both you and the child should they choose to disclose abuse to you:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and try not to interrupt.
- Find an appropriate point early on to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow them to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest an answer (leading questions).
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in telling you.
- Ask them for their permission to inform appropriate others and explain why: that it is for their own protection and the protection of others. If they refuse permission (and are of an age to make decisions for themselves in some areas) you still need to

discuss this with the designated person who will assess whether there is an overriding public responsibility to share the information.

- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. If they are adamant that they do not wish the information to be shared, explain that you will have to tell your designated person and that it will be discussed further with them.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure relates to a recent incident of physical or sexual harm or injury and try to protect any supporting materials e.g. clothing.
- Record in writing as soon as possible, using their words as closely as possible. Note date, time, any names mentioned, names and addresses to whom the information was given and who else is aware of the allegation. Note or describe clearly any visible injury.
- Contact the owner at Seven Lakes Fishery

### **Actions to avoid**

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Panic or allow their shock to show.
- Ask questions other than to clarify enough information to act.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Discuss the allegations with anyone who does not have a need to know.
- Take sole responsibility.
- Delay in reporting the concerns.

### **Communication difficulties**

It should be noted that not all young anglers and vulnerable adults are able to express themselves verbally. Communication differences or difficulties may mean that it is hard for them to explain or be understood. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some disabilities or conditions, in relation to the nature of an individual's impairment. However, the welfare of the child is paramount and where there are concerns about the safety of a young angler, record what has been observed in detail and follow the procedures to report these concerns.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by a young person or an adult who were abused as young children but felt unable to say anything at the time). Where such an allegation is made, the club/fishery must follow the reporting procedures because other children, either within or outside sport, may still be at risk from the alleged perpetrator.

### **Allegations in coaching classes**

When delivering activities at Seven Lakes Fishery directly under the supervision/management of coaching staff, the fishery's arrangements for child protection will apply. You must inform the designated person who will then contact the necessary authorities if necessary.

### **Allegations outside angling**

If a person with a role in angling is the subject of relevant allegations outside of the angling environment, for example through their job as a teacher/coach, Seven Lakes Fishery may still be informed by the statutory services even if the allegations do not directly involve angling. This is to ensure that the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults remains the paramount concern. An individual may be suspended from their role as a licensed coach whilst the investigation is conducted – this should be a neutral act to protect all involved.

### **Allegations about a club/fishery/AT member of staff**

Seven Lakes Fishery is committed to the safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of all children and young people at their events or activities and this includes the possible abuse or exploitation by its staff or volunteers. We have whistle-blowing procedures in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and this area is also covered in the Code of Conduct.

Before you report an incident, you need to clarify the precise nature of the allegation that you are reporting. Where the allegation is about a member of staff or volunteer, this should be reported to the designated person at Seven Lakes Fishery.

Any allegation should then be reported by the designated person at Seven Lakes Fishery, directly to the local authority children's social care safeguarding manager or the police, if it is believed that a crime has been committed (this decision will be made by the fishery's designated person). This person will also make the decision if to call the parent.

If the allegations are of a nature to suggest that a child is at risk of harm or abuse, then the volunteer or member of staff will be suspended from duty pending the outcome of the investigation. Temporary Suspension is not a punitive measure but is intended to allow time for proper enquiries to be made. It does not imply that the volunteer or staff member is guilty of the allegation or an offence.

Support and information will be provided for a volunteer or member of staff who has been suspended pending an investigation. There may be three strands in the consideration of an allegation: a police investigation of a possible criminal offence; enquiries and assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; and consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the employed individual. In the case of a volunteer, the results of an investigation may be passed to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Seven Lakes Fishery should be aware of the disciplinary procedures and of the rights of the employee or volunteer, as well as the organisations' responsibility for the child or young person. He or she must liaise with Human Resources to ensure that they are following internal policies and procedures.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of Seven Lakes Fishery's whistle-blowing procedure to enable them to share, in confidence with the designated person, concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour.

### **Abuse or bullying by another child or young person**

Many children or young people experience disagreements or arguments with one another from time to time and on occasions may suffer the occasional slight injury. It is often a matter of judgment by a, coach, other staff or volunteers present to determine whether an injury sustained by a child as a result of action by another, constitutes abuse or harm. A physical (or other) injury must be reported where it is the result of an abusive action. The injury should be regarded as an incident and should be recorded.

In any situation where it is believed that a child, is being sexually abused by another child (or vulnerable adult), a referral must be made to the local authority child and adult social care services, following the same procedures as before.



Seven Lakes Fishery is committed to the elimination of all forms of bullying and harassment. It is the right of each child in angling to be free of fear of bullying or victimisation of any kind, including sexual, racial, and religious or disability harassment, or cyber bullying through mobile phones or the Internet social network sites.

Careful consideration needs to be given as to whether peer-to-peer abuse requires investigation under the procedures and specialist advice should always be sought where this is a possibility

### **2.3 Reporting and referring concerns of abuse or harm**

Safeguarding concerns may be incidents of minor poor practice, serious or repeated poor practice or actual abuse. The suggestion that a child or young person has or is being abused can evoke strong emotions. It can be very difficult to hear suspicions or allegations but it is important that concerns are acted on and reported to the appropriate authorities to deal with in a timely manner.

Sometimes concerns will involve individuals operating within angling (e.g. coaches, volunteers or other anglers and sometimes they will involve issues that have occurred outside of the sport (e.g. at home, school or in the wider community). In either case where you are concerned about a child's welfare this should be reported to the owner at Seven Lakes Fishery, the police or NSPCC Child Protection or local authority.

If a member of staff or volunteer is involved then they must be removed from the activity immediately and disciplinary procedures started. They should be reassured that this removal does not imply any guilt, but is it to protect them as much as the person making the allegation. At this point the police should be contacted to deal with such allegations.

### **Police**

The Police have specialist units who are trained to investigate allegations of child abuse, where there is a concern about the possibility of a crime having been committed. They will work in partnership with Children's Social Care where they are informed about a concern about a child.

**Remember it is not for you to decide if abuse has taken place, you are responsible for reporting the concerns.**

### **Information sharing and data protection**

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, relevant and secure).

The seven golden rules of information sharing are:

Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately

Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it may put them or someone else at risk or inappropriate to do so.

Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.

Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgment on the facts of the case. This includes collaborative working with outside agencies.

Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.

Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.