

# British Ski Academy Child Protection Policy

Aug'98. amended Sep '00, Dec '04, Sep '10

Note: This policy has been adapted from the Child Protection Policy of the British Ski and Snowboard Federation, latterly Snowsport GB. It has been abbreviated for ease of reference, and should be read in conjunction with our safety policy statement.

## 1 Purpose

To highlight the subject of child abuse, To detail procedures of good practice for the prevention of child abuse, and to detail measures to be taken in the event of alleged, suspected or actual child abuse.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 In this document the term **staff** refers to any adult vested with responsibility to look after children who are under the protection of the British Ski Academy.
- 2.2 The term **parent** refers to the parents or guardians of the child.
- 2.3 The term **child** refers to anyone under the age of 18.
- 2.4 Physical **abuse** refers to physical hurt inflicted through hitting, shaking, squeezing, suffocating, burning and biting, or through the provision of alcohol drugs or poison.
- 2.5 **Sexual abuse** refers to the exploitation of children by adults to meet their own sexual proclivities.
- 2.6 **Emotional abuse** refers to neglect of a child's feelings, threats, taunts, verbal aggression, undue pressure to perform, or any similar act which undermines the child's emotional wellbeing.
- 2.7 **Neglect** refers to failure to meet a child's basic physical needs including food, clothing, comfort, medical care and protection from dangerous situations.
- 2.8 **Child abuse** is a general term to describe any or all of the above (2.4-2.7), where adults deliberately take advantage of their position over children.

## 3 Policy statement

In this modern age the subject of child abuse has become much more widely known about and understood. Fortunately the proportion of adults who deliberately take advantage of children for their own ends is extremely small, and the problem should not be overstated. However, abuse can have a devastating effect on children and can effect them throughout their lives including the possibility of becoming suicidal or preying on children in their turn. Furthermore adults with abusive tendencies may actively seek a position where they have access to children. For these reasons an organisation such as the British Ski Academy, which accepts the responsibility of care for children who are away from their parents, must be prepared to prevent any such abuse from occurring and must be able to identify and deal with abuse if it does occur.

## 4 Good Practice

### 4.1 Recruitment, selection and training of regular staff

- 4.1.1 All applicants to work at the British Ski Academy on a regular basis will be required to declare in writing whether or not they have been convicted of a schedule 1 offence, and to give approval for checks to be made. Nobody will be recruited who has a conviction.
- 4.1.2 References will be taken out prior to any appointment, and referees will be asked whether they have any concerns about the applicant being in contact with children.
- 4.1.3 On appointment applicants will be made familiar with this document, and the guidelines of good practice to follow, and their responsibility to identify abuse should it occur.

### 4.2 Recruitment of occasional staff

In the event that adults are co-opted to assist the British Ski Academy on a short term basis, it may not be practicable to operate the same selection procedure. However they will be selected on the basis of their known character and suitability, and will be subject to the same scrutiny as regular members of staff:

### 4.3 Scrutiny of members of staff

- 4.3.1 Members of staff are under the constant scrutiny of management in the performance of their duties. Suspicion of abuse towards any child would immediately be examined under the procedure described in para. 6 below.
- 4.3.2 In the event that a member of staff had suspicions about an equal or superior member of staff, that member of staff should initiate the examination procedure by confiding in the most

highly placed trustworthy person. If there was no suitable person within the British Ski Academy, recourse should be made to Snowsport GB.

#### 4.4. Tell-tale signs of abuse

- 4.4.1 Unexplained cuts, burns or bruises.
- 4.4.2 A child describing odd behaviour toward themselves or another.
- 4.4.3 Changes in behaviour, e.g becoming withdrawn or temperamental.
- 4.4.4 A child showing exceptional sexual behaviour or awareness.
- 4.4.5 Changes in social behaviour including relationships, eating and hygiene.

Note British Ski Academy staff are not expected to be experts in recognising abuse. and all the signs listed in this paragraph could have a perfectly innocent explanation. However it is the responsibility of members of staff to raise any suspicions they may have so they can be examined.

#### 4.5 Guidelines for staff to follow to avoid raising unnecessary concerns

- 4.5.1 Be as public as possible when working with children. Avoid working privately and unobserved. If you must be alone with children, e.g on a car journey, ensure it is done with the full knowledge and authority of management
- 4.5.2 Great care should be exercised in physical contact with a child. A pat on the back may be appropriate and it may be necessary, for example, to physically adjust a skier's position, or apply first aid, but any touching or brushing against sensitive parts must be avoided.
- 4.5.3 It may be common practice for a trainer to rub a racer's thighs before the start of a race, but the trainer must be absolutely sure that the racer does not object, and that it is done appropriately and in public.
- 4.5.4 Avoid over-familiarity, suggestive remarks (even in jest), or horesplay.
- 4.5.5 Both male and female members of staff should be present in any residential situation where boys and girls are together.
- 4.5.6 If groundless accusations are made by a child, the matter must be reported to management for the protection of the member of staff concerned.

## 5 Procedure to be followed in the event of suspicion

5.1 The person initiating proceedings should make a written note of all the salient facts. the matter should then be brought to the attention of a member of the management team; i.e. The Operational Director, The Head of Studies or the Housemother. If this were not feasible the matter should be brought to the attention of the Company Secretary. If this were not feasible the matter should be brought to the attention of Snowsport England.

5.2 An investigation would then be carried out in accordance with the disciplinary procedure, with a view to either clearing the subject of any suspicion, or finding that the complaint represented misconduct but not abuse, or establishing beyond any reasonable doubt that abuse had taken place.

5.3 Such an investigation would involve talking to children. Any such conversation would be conducted with great sensitivity so as to reassure the child and cause no further distress. This would be done with the parents' knowledge and consent and might involve the assistance of the local social services if that was considered the best course of action.

5.4 A finding of child abuse against a member of staff would be equal to a finding of gross misconduct and would be subject to summary dismissal. Furthermore the British Ski Academy would have a duty to report the full facts of the case to the competent civil authority with a view to prosecution.

5.5 The full facts would also be reported to Snowsport England as the governing body of the sport, through whom media enquiries would be channelled. However every *effort would* be made to maintain confidentiality.

5.6 If child abuse was found to have occurred, consideration would be given to the best remedial treatment required by the child.

5.7 If it was found that there was no case to answer, the member of staff would be completely exonerated. By the same token the person raising the matter in the first place would have the full support of management for taking responsible action.