BUXTON MODEL BOAT CLUB
Safeguarding Policy

1 Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Buxton Model Boat Club is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Buxton Model Boat Club have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people and vulnerable adults, Members provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Buxton Model Boat Club is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the hobby accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children/vulnerable adults and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Buxton Model Boat Club and to allow Members to make informed and confident responses to specific child & vulnerable adults protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18
(Children's Act 1989)

1.1 Policy Statement

The Buxton Model Boat Club is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in model boating in a fun and safe environment taking all reasonable steps to protect children/vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all Buxton Model Boat Club Members who work with children/vulnerable adults will be appointed with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child/vulnerable adult protection procedures. Working in partnership with parents, children and vulnerable adults is essential for the protection of them

1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Chairman should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.
The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the Club or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children/vulnerable adults with the best possible experience and opportunities in model boating.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of Members or participants in model boating to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All Members should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situation and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of model boating fun and enjoyable:
- promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people/vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person/vulnerable adult first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with Junior Members (e.g. it is not appropriate for Members to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people/vulnerable adults. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person/vulnerable adult. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's/vulnerable adult's consent has been given.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible. Encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own child/vulnerable adult.

- request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people/vulnerable adults in their cars
- gain written parental/carer consent for any significant travel arrangements
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people/vulnerable adults
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- secure written parental/carer consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people/vulnerable adults away from others
- taking young people/vulnerable adults alone in a car on journeys, however short
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people/vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person/vulnerable adult, even in fun
- reducing a young person/vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person/vulnerable adult can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person/vulnerable adult in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person/vulnerable adult involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person/vulnerable adult, the young person/vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person/vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the Club Chairman and make a written note of it. Parents/carers should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child/Vulnerable Adult Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child/Vulnerable adult abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person/vulnerable adult regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person/vulnerable adult encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person/vulnerable adult directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person/vulnerable adult.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person/vulnerable adult at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people/vulnerable adults with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Club Meetings & Events

There is evidence that some people have used hobby events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Chairman.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of any Member of Buxton Model Boat Club to decide whether or not child/vulnerable adult abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person/vulnerable adult. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Buxton Model Boat Club and to allegations / suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those

listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person/vulnerable adult affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person/vulnerable adult says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- stay calm so as not to frighten the young person/vulnerable adult
- reassure the child/vulnerable adult that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- listen to the child/vulnerable adult, showing that you are taking them seriously
- keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child/vulnerable adult abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child/vulnerable adult has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- Inform the child/vulnerable adult that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child/vulnerable adult this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- safety of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount. If the child/vulnerable adult needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child/vulnerable adult protection issue
- record all information
- report the incident to the Club Chairman

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800-800500

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's/vulnerable adults' name, age and date of birth
- the child's/vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how

- any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents/carer been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

The Buxton Model Boat Club expects its Members to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the Club Chairman is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against a Member, there may be three types of investigation.

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection/vulnerable adult in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Buxton Model Boat Club will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document the Buxton Model Boat Club are not child/vulnerable adult protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child/vulnerable adults protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child/vulnerable adult has been abused by a Member should be reported to the Club Chairman, who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child/vulnerable adult in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Buxton Model Boat Club will refer the matter to social services department. The parent/carer of the child/vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- the Club Chairman will decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children/vulnerable adults in the hobby or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children/vulnerable adults is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.5 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The parents/carer's of the child/vulnerable adult
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.
All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.6 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

The Club Chairman will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should have their membership temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Buxton Model Boat Club Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a Member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases Buxton Model Boat Club Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.

The welfare of the child/vulnerable adult should remain of paramount importance throughout.