

HART ROAD RUNNERS LORD WANDSWORTH SERIES

Child Protection Guidelines

Aims:

Our aim, as organisers of the Hart Road Runners Lord Wandsworth Series, is to create an environment in which a person under 18 years of age and their parent(s), guardian(s), responsible adult, carer, closest relative, can feel confident that our club is providing a safe environment for all participants in the Lord Wandsworth series (LWS) of cross-country races.

We can support and offer advice to every participant in the LWS to protect them from neglect, exploitation and abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse against young athletes will be responded to, and followed up appropriately in accordance with this policy and local area Child Protection Policy guidelines and procedures.

Definitions:

1. All people under the age of 18 years are defined as children for the purposes of this policy.
2. All children regardless of their gender, racial origin, culture, religion, ability and sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse.
3. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will be responded to by any race organiser or volunteer, who, through HRR's child welfare officer, will refer the matter to the Social Services Department in whose area the incident or suspicion occurred.

Good practice guidelines:

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- + Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- + Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- + Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- + Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- + Being an excellent role model.
- + Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- + Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- + Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices never to be sanctioned. You should never:

- + Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- + Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- + Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- + Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- + Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- + Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- + Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.

Dealing with complaints:

An adult may become aware of abuse/poor practice in a number of ways: a child may well tell you, a third party may report incidents or suspicions or you may have seen an incident or have strong suspicions.

Do:

Stay calm, do not rush into inappropriate action. Reassure the child he or she is not to blame and make it clear that you know how difficult it must be to confide.

Communication should be at the child's pace, without pressure. Listen to what a child is saying and show that you take him/her seriously. Do not bring in any other adults in this stage, any discrepancies in statements may lead to legal problems. Keep questions to a minimum.

Use open-ended questions, i.e., those where more than a 'yes' or 'no' is required. The law is very strict and cases may be dismissed, if it appears a child is being led, or words or ideas suggested. Explain to the child what steps you intend to take having heard their account. Ensure that you clearly understand what the child has said and record it as soon as possible after the conversation.

Your report should include.

1. Child's name address and date of birth.
2. Date time and nature of incident.
3. Your observations of the behaviour and emotional state of the child and any obvious injuries.
4. The child's own account of what happened.
5. An account of any action you took and comments/advice made to the child. You should state whether parents/carers had been informed.
6. A statement as to whether the report is expressing your own concerns or passing on those of someone else. Sign and date the report and refer it to the Child Welfare Officer, so that a decision can be made as to the most appropriate action. Keep a copy and ensure maximum confidentiality is maintained.

Do not:

1. Ignore what has been disclosed, or make promises you can't keep;
2. Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily;
3. Delay;
4. Take sole responsibility for further action.