



Lancaster and District Canoe Club - Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

- To encourage individuals to feel confident in raising concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults involved in canoeing.
- To provide a method of raising concerns and to receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that individuals receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- To reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

Scope

All those involved in activity carried out under the jurisdiction of British Canoeing and its home nation associations are covered by this policy.

Key principles

The following important principles are contained within this policy:

- The code is complementary to British Canoeing's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adult Policies, procedures and Code of Ethics.

General principles

Members, coaches, officials, parents are often the first to realise that the safety and welfare of a child or adult are under threat. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be too difficult to handle. It may also be that they fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier for them to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of poor practice.

LDCC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, individuals are encouraged, if they have serious concerns about any aspect of someone else's safety and welfare, to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy makes it clear that individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The policy is

intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within LDCC and British Canoeing rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside of the sport. It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of potential abuse or concerns are dealt with properly, quickly and discreetly.

Safeguards

LDCC is committed to best practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone within the canoeing community. The club recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If an individual believes what they are saying to be true, they should have nothing to fear because in reporting their concern they will be doing their duty to the child, young person or adult concerned. LDCC will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith. Any investigation into allegations of alleged poor practice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals.

Confidentiality

LDCC will do its best to protect the identity of the whistleblower when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the whistle blower may be required as part of the evidence. They will be given prior notice of this and a chance to discuss the consequences. Support is available from the Chair of the relevant Safeguarding Case Management Group within British Canoeing.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages the whistle blower to put their name to their allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered (at the discretion of the relevant Safeguarding Case Management Group). In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised.
- The credibility of the concern.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources or factual records.

Untrue allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious or frivolous allegations, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, British Canoeing or home nation disciplinary procedure will apply.

The whistle blowing policy

The whistle blowing policy should only be followed if the person raising the concern feels unable to follow the standard reporting procedures as set out in British Canoeing Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adult policies and procedures.

How to raise a concern

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals should provide as much detail as possible, including any names, dates, locations and all concerns. The whistleblower is not responsible for proving an allegation but will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for their concern. Subject to legal constraints, the whistleblower will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations, and any actions taken. If applicable, they will also be informed of any subsequent policy changes implemented as a result of their concern.

How will LDCC respond?

The action taken by LDCC will depend on the nature of the concern. All cases will be referred to the British Canoeing or relevant home nation Safeguarding Case Management Group.

In order to protect individuals it is likely that the Safeguarding Lead will conduct initial enquiries so that the Safeguarding Case Management Group members can decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Receipt of the individuals concern will be acknowledged immediately and, within five working days of the concern being received, the Safeguarding Lead will write to them:

- Indicating how the matter will be dealt with.

- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- Tell them whether any initial enquiries have been made.
- Tell them whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the people considering the issues and the whistle blower will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the whistle blower as part of the investigation process.

When any meeting is arranged, the whistleblower has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a friend or a person of their choice who is not involved in the matter to which the concern relates.

LDCC will take steps to minimise any difficulties which individuals may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if the whistleblower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, LDCC and British Canoeing will advise them about the procedure.

LDCC accepts that the whistle blower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, they will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations, and the action that is to be taken against those whose actions caused them concern. Also, if appropriate, what policy changes are to be made to minimise the possibility of a similar concern being raised in the future.

How the matter can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide individuals with a way in which they can raise concerns about the safety and welfare of someone involved in any canoeing activity under the jurisdiction of British Canoeing. LDCC hopes individuals will be satisfied that any safeguarding matter they raise has been considered properly. If they are not satisfied, and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside of LDCC and British Canoeing they should contact:

- The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).
- Their local area Child Protection Committee.
- Their local Social Services.

- Their local police.

If they do take the matter outside of LDCC and British Canoeing, they will need to ensure that they do not disclose prohibited confidential information. They must check this before they make contact.