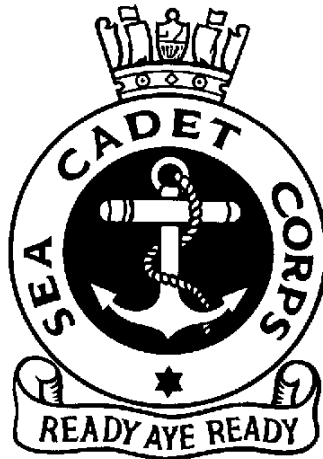


The Sea Cadet Corps

“Protecting our children”



Child Protection

ASCR 24

This document contains the Policy, Regulations and Guidance
for protecting children in the
Sea Cadet Corps

LETTER OF PROMULGATION

This Sea Cadet Corps (SCC) *Child Protection* document aims to provide under one cover all the information SCC adults need to protect cadets from all forms of abuse and to help build a safer environment for both cadets and SCC adults themselves.

No document, however comprehensive, can cover all the situations in which an SCC adult may be required to take action to prevent or respond to child abuse but those who follow the principles and guidelines laid down here can be confident that they are properly discharging the most important aspect of the Corps's duty of care towards its cadets. Knowledge of this document alone will give members the information they need to properly discharge their Child Protection responsibilities in accordance with The Children Act 1989 (England & Wales), The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, and The Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Together with Sea Cadet Regulations, Training Instructions and the *Code of Conduct*, it provides the information needed to safeguard all Sea Cadet activities.

All adult members of the SCC have a part to play in the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and need to be familiar with the *Child Protection* document.

Commanding Officers are to ensure that all members of their instructional staffs read this document as well as the *Code of Conduct*. Unit Chairmen's duty of care requires that they bring the document and the need to read it to the attention of other SCC adult members of their Units.

This document is directed at the adult members of the Sea Cadet Corps but there is nothing in it which is secret. It may and should be used, with the *Code of Conduct* to show anybody who might be interested how the Corps discharges its duty of care towards its cadets.

Finally, some of you to whom this *Child Protection* document is directed will see where omissions can be corrected or improvements made. Do not hesitate to write to me with constructive proposals. There is nothing more important for us to get right.

APPROVED BY

September 2003

R M Parker
Commodore Sea Cadets

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CHILD PROTECTION

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CHAPTER 1

101 INTRODUCTION

This Sea Cadet Corps Child Protection Policy document (1st Edition – September 2003) has been produced by:

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Telephone: 020 7928 8978

The Sea Cadets are grateful to all who advised, assisted and contributed, including the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, and St John Ambulance National Headquarters.

101.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

- a. A child** is anyone of less than 18 years of age
- b. A cadet** is a child involved in Sea Cadet activities, whether or not a formal member of a Sea Cadet Unit
- c. SCC Adults or Adult members of the SCC** are the Commodore; Sea Cadet Officers and Uniformed Instructors, including those on the District Reserve; Civilian Instructors; members of Unit Management Committees and Presidents and Vice Presidents of Sea Cadet Units; Area Chairmen; Unit Assistants; and Sea Cadet Association (SCA) employees on the staff of the Commodore Sea Cadets at Sea Cadet Headquarters, Area Offices, and other SCC outstations.
- d. The Term Commanding Officer** includes Commanding Officers and Officers-in-Charge of Sea Cadet Units, Camps, Competitions and Events and Superintendents and Wardens of Boating Stations and Training Centres.

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CHAPTER 2

201 CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

201.1 It is the primary responsibility of all adult members of the Sea Cadet Corps to safeguard the moral, psychological and physical welfare of cadets regardless of sex, religion, race, social background or disability by protecting them from any form of physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect.

201.2 All cadets have the right to protection from all forms of abuse and harm when engaged in Sea Cadet activities and when in contact with members of the Sea Cadet Corps.

201.3 All adult members of the Sea Cadet Corps have a duty of care, which makes them responsible both for safeguarding cadets from abuse and harm and for responding swiftly and appropriately when suspicions or allegations of inappropriate behaviour arise.

201.4 The Sea Cadet Corps aims to ensure that all cadets are kept safe from harm while they are in our care by:

- a. Providing parents and cadets with information about what we do and what they can expect from us.
- b. Making sure that Officers, Instructors and Unit Assistants are carefully selected and given training appropriate to their supervisory roles.
- c. Providing a means for cadets and parents to report their concerns if there is anything they are not happy about.

201.5 The Sea Cadet Corps also aims to protect our volunteers and staff against false allegations by:

- a. Establishing rules for an appropriate balance of male and female adult supervisors in relation to the gender of cadets in a unit.
- b. Establishing the correct ratios of adults to cadets for best practice.
- c. Ensuring where possible that a single adult is not alone with any cadet for any length of time or placed in situations where his/her conduct can be misconstrued.
- d. Ensuring that only those adults who are properly entered as Officers, Instructors or Unit Assistants have unsupervised access to cadets.
- e. Developing a culture of thinking safely, and acting safely.

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CHAPTER 3

301 RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

301.1 Child abuse is a term used to describe when someone causes some form of harm to a person under the age of 18 years. The abuser is usually someone more powerful than the child. Often it is an adult but it can be another child. Abuse happens when someone either deliberately inflicts harm on a child or does nothing to prevent a child being harmed.

301.2 Some Forms of Child Abuse are:

a. Physical

Can involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or drowning

b. Emotional

Is the ongoing ill treatment of children which affects their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate.

c. Sexual

Is forcing or enticing a child to take part in any form of sexual activity. It may involve inappropriate touching, sexual assault, showing pornographic material or encouraging sexual behaviour.

d. Neglect

Is when children experience serious impairment of their health or development because their physical and/or psychological needs are persistently not being met. This may be due to inadequate food, warmth, shelter, clothing, emotional care or medical treatment. Neglect also includes failing to protect a child from a physical danger such as leaving a young child "home alone".

e. Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully is often another child. Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

(NB – all child abuse is emotionally abusive and often more than one type of abuse is experienced at one time)

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CHAPTER 4

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

401 Responsibilities of all SCC Adults

401.1 Safeguarding the welfare of children and protecting them from harm is every adult's responsibility. Most child abuse can be prevented. Children will see adult members of the Corps as people they can trust and from whom they can seek help.

You must do something if:

- a. A child tells you, or shows signs that, he or she is being abused in any way
- b. You have reason to believe anyone is abusing a child
- c. Someone tells you that a child is being abused
- d. You become aware that someone who has contact with and access to children has offended against them or poses a risk to them.

402 Access to Cadets

402.1 For all Sea Cadet activities only properly entered Officers, Instructors or Unit Assistants of the Sea Cadet Corps are to be allowed unsupervised access to cadets except on a most irregular basis. (eg. Driving a cadet to hospital in an emergency) It is the responsibility of:

- a. Sea Cadet Headquarters to ensure that all people entered as Officers, Instructors and Unit Assistants have been vetted in accordance with legal requirements and/or best practice.
- b. Commanding Officers to ensure that only SCC Officers, Instructors or Unit Assistants have unsupervised access to their cadets.

403 Adult Duty to Speak Out

403.1 Child care concerns must be an exception to the SCC requirement on other occasions to stick strictly to the chain of command and no SCC adult should feel bullied or intimidated into not reporting them. Adults should normally, where time and circumstances allow, use the chain at paragraph 406.1. However, adults who firmly believe that their genuine concerns reported through the SCC chain are not being properly dealt with must take those concerns either directly to higher levels of the chain; or, to the Police, Social Services, NSPCC or local child care support group.

404 Cadet Freedom to Speak Out

404.1 Cadets should feel free to report, at any time, any child care concerns within the Sea Cadet Corps to any member of staff, and all Commanding Officers should ensure there is some means for cadets to do so. For cadets who wish to report their concerns outside the Sea Cadets, contact details for a Child Helpline (either one of the national organisations shown at paragraph 406.4, or a local organisation) are to be prominently displayed.

405 Specific Child Protection Responsibilities

405.1 The main burden of child protection within the Sea Cadet Corps falls on those in direct contact with cadets. To promote and maintain the highest standards of child protection within the Sea Cadet Corps, Commanding Officers hold additional specific responsibilities to:

- a. Disseminate and implement the child protection procedures promulgated within the Sea Cadet Corps.
- b. Provide a point of contact to all staff, cadets, and parents/guardians for any child protection issues. Where Commanding Officers have members of staff with appropriate skills and/or experience they may wish to delegate the point of contact role, but must ensure that everybody is aware who holds it, and to whom any suspicions or concerns should be reported.
- c. Handle and control all information received concerning child protection issues, and ensure information is assessed promptly and appropriate action is taken.
- d. Make themselves familiar with the organisation of the local child protection arrangements provided by the Police and Social Services and with the procedures for contacting them both routinely and in an emergency.
- e. Ensure that the procedures for contacting the local Police/Social services are widely promulgated and easily available.

406 Support and Advice

406.1 The SCC will offer support and advice on child protection issues through the chain: the Director of Administration at Sea Cadet Headquarters to Area Administrators at Area Offices to District Officers to Commanding Officers. This chain should also be used for raising general child care concerns and issues upwards, eventually to the Commodore.

406.2 Where SCC adults with suitable specialist child care skills and experience are available and are volunteers, Area Administrators may include them in their Area chains and will ensure that their positions and how to contact them are promulgated.

406.3 Child protection issues can, however, be complex and distressing and both adults and, especially, cadets may wish to seek help from specialist services outside Sea Cadets.

406.4 In addition to any local services you may be able to find in your phone book, the two major national help lines are:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline - Open 24hrs - Tel 0808 800 500

A helpline for anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse, including children themselves. Provides counselling, information and advice. Staffed by social work counsellors.

Childline - Open 24hrs - Tel 0800 1111

A helpline for children and young people in danger and/or distress.

407 Good Practice

407.1 Good practice will help to protect cadets from abuse and adults from false allegations. Adults should always conduct themselves in accordance with Sea Cadet Regulations and Instructions and follow these guidelines together with the *Code of Conduct*:

Do treat everyone with respect and provide an example you wish others to follow

Do plan activities to ensure more than one person is present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others. If you must be alone with a cadet, ensure that someone else knows: why it is happening, what the purpose of the activity is and how long it is expected to take.

Do respect a cadet's right to personal privacy

Do provide access for cadets to talk to others about any concerns they may have

Do encourage cadets and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like

Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned

Do act promptly on any allegation, suspicion or concern made by a cadet regarding abuse, including those made against members of staff

Do respect and be sensitive to the individual beliefs, faiths and religions of cadets

Do exercise judgement and common sense

Do NOT spend time alone with cadets away from others

Do NOT take a cadet alone in any form of transport without parental consent, other than in circumstances of extreme emergency or where circumstances arising could place the cadet in danger.

Do NOT take cadets to your home

Do NOT permit abusive youth peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)

Do NOT participate in physical contact games, or indulge in horseplay, with cadets

Do NOT allow or engage in any forms of inappropriate physical or verbal contact including any inappropriate sexual behaviour or contact

Do NOT allow cadets to use inappropriate language unchallenged

Do NOT allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes

Do NOT show favouritism to any individual

Do NOT rely on just your good name to preserve your integrity

Do NOT overreact or jump to conclusions without checking the facts first

Do NOT believe "it could never happen to me!"

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CHAPTER 5

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

501 Dealing with Allegations, Suspicions or Concerns

501.1 It is not the responsibility of any individual within the Sea Cadet Corps to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. But all adults in the Sea Cadet Corps have the responsibility, if they are suspicious or concerned, to:

- a. Take whatever action is necessary to protect cadets who are the subject of concern.
- b. Report their concerns to the appropriate agencies for them to investigate and take necessary action.

502 Reporting Allegations, Suspicions or Concerns

502.1 The guiding principles for reporting child abuse cases in Sea Cadets are:

- a. The proper authorities for dealing with cases of child abuse are the Police and Social Services. Arrangements differ across the country and Commanding Officers should ensure everyone knows (see paragraph 405.1e) who to contact locally.
- b. In urgent cases, where the immediate health or safety of a cadet is at risk, all SCC adults must be prepared to make direct contact with the Police/Social Services, reporting later to their Commanding Officers that they have done so.
- c. In all other cases, adults who hear allegations or hold suspicions or concerns are to report them to their Commanding Officers, or the Child Protection point of contact if appointed (see paragraph 405.1b), at the earliest opportunity.
- d. The responsibility for making reports to the Police/Social Services lies at Commanding Officer level (see definitions at paragraph 101), and Commanding Officers, if they believe child abuse has taken place, are to report their concerns directly to the Police/Social Services.
- e. Where time and circumstances allow, Commanding Officers should seek advice from the support chain at paragraph 406.1 and, in the case of Units, consult their Chairmen before approaching the Police/Social Services.
- f. The parents/guardians of the abused cadet should be informed by the Commanding Officer that a report is being made to the Police/Social Services unless they themselves are implicated by the report.

502.2 In cases where adults hear allegations or hold suspicions or concerns in which their Commanding Officer is implicated, they should normally consult the support chain at paragraph 406.1, and their Chairmen in the case of Units.

503 Follow Up Action

503.1 For reasons of confidentiality the number of people to be informed, within Sea Cadets, of child abuse cases already reported to the Police/Social Services are to be kept to a minimum. The only people whom Commanding Officers, or other adults where Commanding Officers are implicated, must inform of these reports are their Chairmen, in the case of Units, and their Area Administrators.

503.2 In practice, it will usually be appropriate to inform the District Officer as well, if not already involved prior to the report being made to the Police/Social Services, but the decision to do so is to be made by the Area Administrator, in discussion with the Commanding Officer, and Chairman in the case of Units.

504 Actions to take if a cadet confides in you

504.1 In the event of incidents, complaints or allegations, or suspected incidents involving cadets, the person in whom the cadet confides should take the following actions:

- **Do** stay calm, do not panic, see, listen and hear what the cadet is communicating to you
- **Do** give cadets time to say what they want
- **Do** reassure cadets that they have done the right thing
- **Do** record in writing (signed and dated) what was said and what you saw as soon as possible
- **Do** warn cadets that although you will act in confidence and as few people as possible will know what has happened, some people will have to be told
- **Do** inform cadets what will happen next, who you will report the information to, and what will happen once it has been reported
- **Do** report the incident
- **Do NOT** inquire into any details of abuse
- **Do NOT** let your shock or distaste show
- **Do NOT** make any negative comments about the alleged abuser
- **Do NOT** make promises you cannot keep

505 Suspension of Those Involved in Child Abuse Incidents

505.1 Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by a Sea Cadet Officer, Instructor or Unit Assistant, the person concerned is to be suspended in accordance with Sea Cadet Regulations (Art 414.5).

505.2 Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by other adult members of a Unit, the Unit Management Committee (UMC) is to take measures to ensure that the person involved takes no part in Sea Cadet activities until the matter is resolved.

505.3 Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by a cadet, it will usually be appropriate to suspend the cadet concerned in accordance with paragraph 12 of the White Guide.

505.4 Only rarely will it be appropriate to suspend a cadet who has made an allegation, even if the allegation is later found to be groundless, and Commanding Officers are to consult their support chain before doing so.

506 Local Unit Information

506.1 Use this space for keeping your own contacts/telephone numbers:

Nominated Officer within Unit:

District Officer:

Area Office:

Social Services:

Duty Social Worker

Police – Local number:

OR 999 in any emergency

