

I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

- **Introduction**
- **Policy statement / aims**
- **Promoting good practice**
- **Good practice guidelines**
- **Use of photographic / filming equipment**
- **Recruitment and training of committee members and volunteers**
- **Responding to allegations or suspicions**
- **Reporting concerns about poor practice or suspected abuse**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Bullying**
- **Providing information to police or social services**

Introduction

I CAAN shall ensure that:

- The welfare of the child / vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children / vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All committee members / volunteers working on activities and events have a responsibility to report concerns to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

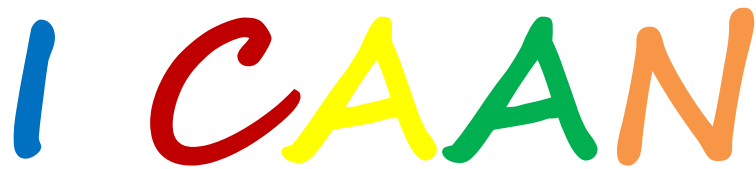
N.B. Committee members / volunteers are not trained to decide if abuse has occurred.

Policy statement / aims

I CAAN has a duty of care to safeguard all children / vulnerable adults involved in I CAAN activities / events from harm. All children / vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children / vulnerable adults must be taken into account. I CAAN shall ensure the safety and protection of all children / vulnerable adults involved in I CAAN activities / events through adherence to this Policy.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or being exploited.



Policy aims

The aim of the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children / vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst participating in activities / events organised by I CAAN.
 - Allow all committee members / volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child / vulnerable adult protection issues.
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Promoting good practice

Child / vulnerable adult abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.

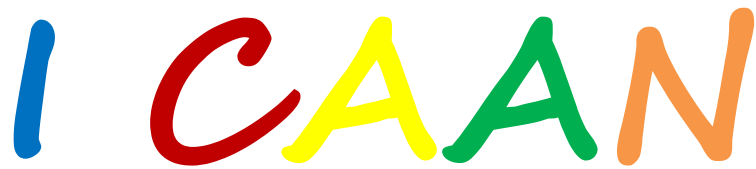
Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school as well as while taking part in I CAAN activities / events. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children / vulnerable adults in order to harm them. A committee member, volunteer, coach, instructor, teacher, or other official may have regular contact with children / vulnerable adults and are an important link in identifying cases where protection may be needed. All suspicious cases of poor practice shall be reported following the guidelines in this Policy.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel shall be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to promote children / vulnerable adult's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children / vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of children / vulnerable adults first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance (e.g. it is not appropriate for committee members or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children / vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual / physical support is required during an activity / event, it shall be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents shall always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.



- Involving parents / guardians / carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children / vulnerable adults in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents / guardians / carers, committee members / volunteers, teachers, coaches or other officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed groups are taken away, they shall always be accompanied by a male and female committee member / volunteer. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at activities or residential events, adults shall not enter children's / vulnerable adult's rooms or invite children / vulnerable adults into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children / vulnerable adults.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and vulnerable adults with disabilities, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing written consent from the parent / guardian / carer for all activities / events that the parent / guardian / carer will take responsibility for the welfare of a person during an activity.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if committee members / volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars.

Practices to be avoided

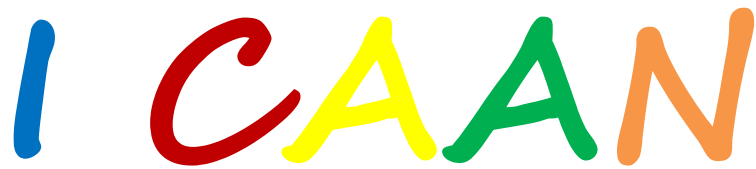
The following shall be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it shall be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's parent / guardian / carer. For example, a child / vulnerable adult sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent guardian / carer fails to arrive to pick a child / vulnerable adult up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending time alone with children / vulnerable adults away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an activity / event.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following shall **never** be sanctioned. You shall never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child / vulnerable adult.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children / vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child / vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Reduce a child / vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child / vulnerable adult.
- Do things of a personal nature for children / vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children / vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home unsupervised.



N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for committee members or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children / vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks shall only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the people involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child / vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported / recorded

If any of the following occur you shall report this immediately to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer and record the incident. You shall also ensure the parent / guardian / carer of the child / vulnerable adult is informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a participant in an event.
 - If he / she seems distressed in any manner.
 - If a participant appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
 - If a participant misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
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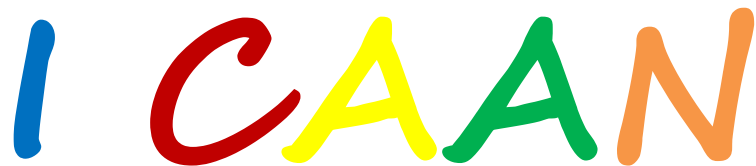
Use of photographic / filming equipment

There is evidence that some people have used social and sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children / vulnerable adults in vulnerable positions. All involved shall be vigilant and any concerns shall to be reported to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

Recruitment and training of committee members and volunteers

I CAAN recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children / vulnerable adults in some way and that all reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children / vulnerable adults. Pre-selection checks shall include the following:

- All committee members / volunteers shall complete an application form.
 - Consent shall be obtained from all committee members / volunteers to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
 - Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo).
 - All committee members / volunteers must sign a register to acknowledge receipt and acceptance of this policy.
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Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for I CAAN in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child / vulnerable adult abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or the appropriate authorities.

I CAAN shall fully support anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child / vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint against a committee member / volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child / vulnerable adult protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child / vulnerable adult protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation. All available information shall be used to reach a decision.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child / vulnerable adult has been abused by either a committee members or a volunteer shall be reported to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child / vulnerable adult in question and any other child / vulnerable adult who may be at risk.

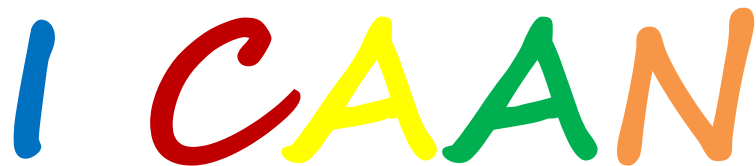
The I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer shall refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.

The parent / guardian / carer of the child / vulnerable adult shall be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

Confidentiality

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

- I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services / police



I CAAN shall seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or their parent / guardian / carer if the alleged abuser is a child / vulnerable adult).

Information shall be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Consideration shall be given to the kind of support that children / vulnerable adults, parents and committee members / volunteers may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counseling Directory is available from The British Association for Counseling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk.

Consideration shall be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

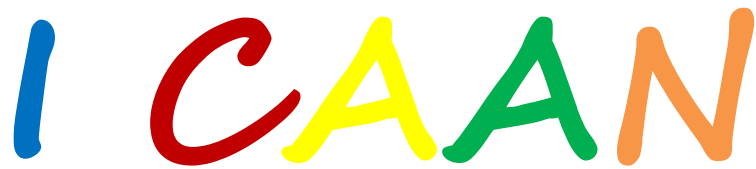
Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child. Where such an allegation is made, I CAAN shall follow the procedures as detailed in this Policy and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children / vulnerable adults may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children / vulnerable adults. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Bullying

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure shall be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children / vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.



- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer

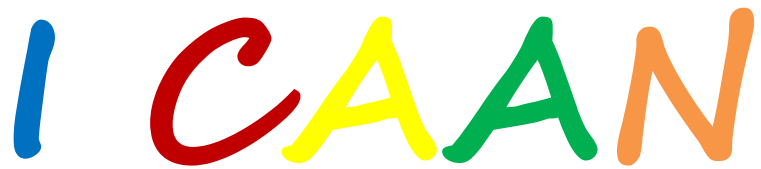
Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parent / guardian / carer.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents shall be referred to the I CAAN Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer as in "Responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

Providing information to police or social services

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record shall always be made at the time of the disclosure / concern. It shall include the following:

- The child / vulnerable adult's name, age and date of birth of the child / vulnerable adult.
- The child / vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child / vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Has the parent / guardian / carer been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child / vulnerable adult was not the person who reported the incident, has the child / vulnerable adult been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services shall be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral shall be recorded.



Signed

Chairperson

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Secretary / Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Treasurer

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____