



CHILD PROTECTION AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY AND GUIDELINES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERING INSTRUCTORS

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 - AMI recognises the requirements of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (P.O.C.A. '99), in England and Wales and similar legislation in other home nations, which also extends to protecting vulnerable adults

1.2 - POCA covers children less than 16 years of age and young people aged 16-18 years as well. For clarity throughout this and associated documents, both groups are referred to as children.

1.3 - POCA covers sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children as well as neglect of children and failing to ensure the safety of a child.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 - AMI recognises the importance of the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult and their right to protection from all forms of abuse as set out in section 1 of this document.

2.2 - AMI recognises its duty of care to children & vulnerable adults by all its members, whether trainees, full and honorary members, its officers both voluntary and paid.

2.3 - AMI will take all allegations of abusive behaviour and/or practice in all forms seriously and will respond to such allegations quickly.

2.4 - AMI considers that in any aspect of work carried out by its members etc that the safety of the participants and conservation of the environment are of paramount importance at all times.

2.5 - For the purposes of clarity, activities are defined as all related mountaineering activities, which are within the remit of the various awards as defined, by MLTUK and Home Nation Training Boards. The definition also extends to any work carried out by AMI members for which there is no recognised qualification (e.g. gorge walking), or if they work in another role (e.g. as a canoe coach, or social worker, or teacher etc).

3. AMI – ITS MEMBERS, OFFICERS STAFF & AGENTS

3.1 - Should AMI receive an allegation of abusive behaviour by or against any of its members, officers, staff or agents, then AMI will treat the allegation as a possible criminal activity and report it to the appropriate local authority or Police Child Protection Unit.

3.2 - Additionally, the Executive (Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary) will be informed and authorised to take prompt action to:

- Protect the good name of the Association
- Support the protection of the child/adult from further abusive behaviour
- Examine_ways of working with the alleged perpetrator (if a member) and of supporting them where necessary.

4. POLICY NOTES

4.1 - Nothing in this policy should over-ride the paramount concern, that of protecting children or vulnerable people. This policy will be used to support the work of the relevant agencies to protect such groups.

4.2 - AMI recognises that the above statement may on occasions lead to a potential conflict with an individual member or members, who may be affected by such active implementation. The Executive (Chair, Treasurer & Secretary) are expected to discharge their duties and responsibilities in respect of this policy and towards members in a clear and transparent way.

4.3 - This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure its relevance and currency.

Pete Stacey, AMI Secretary, March 2002

CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

MEMBERS SHOULD...

Put the welfare of a client and their enjoyment of the sport first

Act as positive role models

Recognise the developmental needs of a client, whether a child or adult.

Set and monitor appropriate boundaries and relationships when working with clients, based on openness, honesty and respect for the client's personal space.

Plan activities that avoid you working in isolation with a child or vulnerable adult

Arrange appropriate residential accommodation for adults and children of both sexes

Create and maintain a safe and caring environment that enables children and vulnerable adults to raise concerns about attitudes or behaviour they do not like

Challenge activities which are abusive e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying, including those from a child's peers

Take action if they have concerns about a client's welfare, or if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child – **NON-ACTION IS UNACCEPTABLE**

Ensure physical contact occurs only when necessary, e.g. spotting on a bouldering session is appropriate, is kept to the safe minimum. Only use a "hands-on" approach when necessary, i.e. to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should be done only with the knowledge, informed consent and agreement of the child and their guardian/parent.

Support a child or vulnerable adult making a complaint

Challenge sensitively, inappropriate behaviour from a child or vulnerable adult, such as a crush on an Instructor, or attention seeking behaviour. If this is focussed on you, seek support; inform your colleagues and/or employer.

MEMBERS SHOULD NOT...

Engage in flirting, innuendo or make suggestive terms or gestures, or indicate favouritism for a client.

Dismiss an allegation of any sort of abuse relating to a client's welfare

Delay the reporting of an allegation

Spend excessive time with one participant more than or away from other participant.

VULNERABLE ADULT/CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE NOTES

WHAT HAPPENS IF...

A – YOU SUSPECT A CLIENT IS AT RISK

1. Record the facts, as you know them.
2. Ensure the client's safety.
3. Contact your employer if appropriate and ensure their policies are implemented.
4. Contact the local child protection authorities or local Police for a vulnerable adult and report the details to them. Do not make any investigations yourself.

B – A CLIENT DISCLOSES ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

1. Remind them at the earliest opportunity that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Explain what this means and ensure they understand this.
2. Listen to what they say without prejudice and accept what they say without judgement.
3. Use only OPEN questions when it is necessary to ask a question – e.g. would you tell me what happened?
4. Tell the individual what has happened is not their fault.
5. Consider what steps might be necessary to ensure the individuals safety.
6. Follow steps 1-4 in section A above.

C – IF YOU RECEIVE AN ALLEGATION ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON

1. Record the facts as you receive them.

2. Ensure the safety of the person and any others who are making the complaint.
3. Follow the steps in Section A above.

D – IF YOU RECEIVE AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN

1. Record the facts as you receive them.
2. Consider contacting the appropriate agencies at the earliest opportunity and use your employer's procedures as necessary.
3. Consider ways of delaying the handover of the child or client to their parents/guardians, e.g. a delay in travelling back from activities, to enable contact to be made with the relevant authorities.

E – IF YOU ARE ACCUSED OF AN ABUSIVE ACTION

1. Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child or client in question as soon as possible after the allegation is presented to you.
2. Ensure you are no longer working with the child or client making the allegation.
3. Ask your employer for a copy of their procedures and ensure they follow these procedures correctly.
4. Consider seeking professional and legal advice.
5. Inform the Chair, or Treasurer or Secretary of AMI for advice/support.
6. If your employer has access to a staff-counselling programme, consider using it or try to find other sources of support.
7. Accept that colleagues will be expected not to contact you whilst an investigation is underway. They will be as concerned about the situation as you are.

GENERAL POINTS

Don't believe it could never happen to you.

Read this policy and make sure you are aware of the procedures relating to the nature of your work, and for your employer's policies re abusive behaviour.

Discuss the procedures in staff meetings and use scenario style training to discuss how all might respond.

Think about your relationship with a colleague who is under investigation. Ask your employer to confirm the contact arrangements and what support is available to your colleague, and to all other staff who are part of the staff group.

Pete Stacey, AMI Secretary, March 2002

