

Clwb Athletau Aberystwyth Athletics Club

GUIDANCE ON HANDLING A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD

Aim

This guidance aims to assist in understanding our responsibilities should a child come to us and discloses an incidence of abuse. Following these guidelines will help to decrease the risk of causing more trauma to the child and / of compromising any criminal investigation during the disclosure phase.

Guidelines

It's normal to find that the situation is overwhelming and feel confused in this situation. Child abuse is a difficult subject that can be hard to accept and even harder to discuss. We need to remember that for a child to tell an adult takes a great deal of courage, and that children who are abused are often threatened by the perpetrators of the abuse to keep it a secret.

Before disclosing, the child will have dealt with many issues, including the fear that no one will believe them. You must remain calm and show support to the child during the disclosure phase.

RECEIVE INFORMATION

- Listen to what is being said without showing any shock or disbelief. Denial is a common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse. However, if you show that you are questioning the disclosure, or show shock or disgust to what is being said, then the child may be afraid to continue and will stop talking.
- Accept, but do not judge, what is being said.
- Take it seriously.

REASSURANCE

- Reassure the child, but only in so far as you can do so honestly and reliably. Do not make promises that you are not sure you will be able to keep e.g. don't say "everything will be ok now".
- Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong, and that you are taking what they have told you seriously.

- You have a duty to report your concerns. Do not promise confidentiality / agree to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to keep them safe.
- Acknowledge that it must have been difficult to talk to you. Remember that it takes courage for a child to come to you to talk about abuse.

RESPOND

- Listen quietly, carefully and patiently. Do not speculate or jump to any conclusions.
- Do not investigate, question or decide if the child is telling the truth. Remember that an allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so it's important not to do anything that might jeopardise a Police investigation.
- Allow the child to explain to you in their own words what happened, but don't ask leading questions. You can ask open question such as "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?".
- Remember to communicate with the child in a way which is appropriate to their age, understanding and preferences. This is especially important for children with additional needs or who use a different language / or languages in the home.
- Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you need to do next, and to whom you have to talk.

REFERRING

- Refer directly to one of [Clwb Athletau Aberystwyth Athletics Club](#)'s named **Welfare Officers**.
- Follow the steps noted in the **Safeguarding Policy**.
- Do not discuss the disclosure or the steps you have taken with anyone outside those who are essential to referring the disclosure.

RECORDING

- Make brief notes at the time of the disclosure.
- Write-up the notes in detail as soon as possible following the disclosure.
- Do not destroy your original notes – these might be needed by the Court.
- Record the following information:
 - Date
 - Time
 - Place

- Words used by the child
- How the child appeared to you – be specific
- Record the actual words used by the child – including any slang / swear words
- Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Keep the record factual.

Clwb Athletau Aberystwyth Athletics Club's Welfare Officers are:

Helen Williams:

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Dai James