

BWL Running a Safe Club Guidance and Procedures

Club Registration

When lifters register with a club it is essential that the club obtain appropriate personal information about them. The type of information that should be collected at the point of registration would include:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Parent/carer information
- Emergency contacts
- Medical details - allergies, existing conditions
- Information on any disability or special needs, including English not being the first language
- Medical consent
- Consent for participation in lifting/para-powerlifting
- Consent to film lifters for training purposes
- Equality profile

Clubs should ensure that this information is collected at the earliest opportunity to enable any necessary risk assessments based on medical information and/or disability to be completed prior to participation.

Parental consent should always be sought prior to participation in 'regular club activity'. In addition, consent should be requested if there is an intention to film lifters for training purposes as standard part of club training.

Additional informed consent must also be sought in the following circumstances:

- For participation in other activities beyond regular training eg competitions
- For using membership information for other reasons beyond that which it was

originally collected

- Photography/filming that leads to potential publication of images or use of the images for any purpose other than training (if a blanket consent has already been obtained for this purpose).

Informed consent would require the person providing the consent to have full understanding of the circumstances for which consent is sought and should be obtained on every occasion.

NB All information is obviously confidential and should be kept securely to avoid any breach of Data Protection.

Safeguarding Letter

It is very important that new members and/or their parents/carers are provided with information about the club's approach to safeguarding. It is advisable that all clubs prepare a new member information pack which, in addition to providing information on training times and other club activities, should include a letter to parents highlighting the following policies and where they can be accessed:

- Child Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Anti-bullying policy
- Details of what parents/carers should do if they have concern regarding the welfare of a child
- Social Media Policy
- Transport policy
- Photography policy
- Equality policy
- All Codes of conduct

NB All sample policies can be found on the British Weight Lifting Website

This letter should also include names and contact details for the following key club officials:

- Welfare Officer
- Chairman/Manager
- Secretary
- Coach

The letter should highlight that BWL and the club are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and include the following statement:

In a situation where a child is at risk of significant harm or has been harmed in connection with their involvement in lifting, the parent/carer should contact the Club Welfare Officer who has responsibility for referring concerns of possible abuse to Children's Social Care Services/Social Services and/or the Police and informing British Weight Lifting.

Alternatively, the parent/carer can contact Children's Social Services/Social Services and/or the Police directly. It is requested that where a parent/carer has made a direct referral to Children's Social Care Services/Social Services and/or the Police, that the BWL Safeguarding Lead and, if appropriate the Club Welfare Officer is provided with details of the concern as soon as possible so that any necessary action can be taken to safeguard all children in the sport

Parental Responsibilities/Code of Conduct

Parents play an important role in the success of their child, with the right kind of support and encouragement; young people will progress steadily and enjoy a rewarding experience. It is likely that with the right support at home alongside a positive club environment a child will remain in the sport. Good communication between the club/coaches and parents is essential to avoid misunderstanding and to ensure cooperation.

It is good practice to clearly outline what is expected of parents when their child joins the club. Parents are very important and greatly valued in weightlifting and it is hoped that as

many parents as possible will volunteer to help at the club. Without the support of parent volunteers, the club and Governing Body would not function effectively. Codes of conduct are a vital element in managing challenging behaviour.

Other Responsibilities

- If parents wish to raise a concern about their child welfare, they should contact the club Welfare Officer. If they feel they are unable to discuss this concern with the club Welfare Officer, they should contact the Safeguarding Lead for advice.
- If parents do have concerns about the coaching that their child is receiving they should arrange to meet with the coach involved.
- Coaches should always have the best interests of the lifters in mind. A disagreement with a coach should never be made known to the child as this could destroy a positive relationship between coach and lifter.
- If parents remain unhappy about their child's training and wish to move clubs, they should discuss the matter initially with their child and the coach before approaching another club. Parents should remember that although the child may no longer train at the current club, they are likely to come across the coaches and lifters at future competitions and events. Therefore, it is important that any transfer is conducted with the minimum of upset for the child.
- If parents wish to make a complaint about any matter other than safeguarding or child protection, they should put the complaint in writing and address it to the Club Secretary. For more information, please refer to the club's complaints procedure.
- Parents of any lifter under the age of eighteen years will be informed in writing if their child is subject to any disciplinary action.
- Parents are welcome to observe training if they sit in the designated viewing area but

they should not interfere or interrupt the session. It is imperative that coaches have the child's full attention at this time. Any parent who disrupts training may be refused access to the viewing area.

- During competitions parent and family members should adopt a positive and sporting attitude and remain in the spectator arena. They should never dispute results and rulings of coaches and officials or behave in an inappropriate way towards other spectators.
- All families are encouraged to participate in club related activities.

Provision of a Safe Environment

Safeguarding is fundamental in the delivery of the sport and the conduct of those involved. Everyone must place the protection of young people as the paramount consideration and ensure that the environment where the weightlifting/para-powerlifting activity takes place is one where young people are safe and helps to reduce the risk of young people being abused through their participation within the sport. Clubs and organisations must address the following environmental factors:

- Providing open training environment
- Ensuring there is a clear policy for use of changing rooms and toilets
- Maintenance of apparatus, equipment and other club property eg minibus
- Provision of first aid facilities
- Storage of personal and sensitive information

Open Training Environment

It is essential that clubs work in partnership with parents/carers and are open about training sessions. Clubs should welcome parents who wish to observe and in the case of new or potential members, encourage them to view a session and remain with their child until the child is happy to be left.

In some facilities there may be logistical problems in providing a suitable area for viewing. Clubs without viewing areas should designate a small area of the gym for viewing. This will need to be carefully managed and there may need to be limits on the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated. Clubs should also ensure that a viewing policy covering acceptable standards of conduct is in place.

An alternative way of providing viewing is to use CCTV technology. The use of CCTV would allow parents to view what is going on inside and if appropriate, outside the building without taking up space in the gym. It is also possible to enable remote access with appropriate security systems in place. However to do this the club must have written consent from all parents/carers that they agree to it. BWL will not support clubs who actively discourage parents from viewing by:

- Obscuring windows
- Refusing reasonable requests to view
- Asking parents to leave without due cause
- Justifying the prohibition of viewing on spurious health and safety grounds

The provision of an open training environment is much wider than simply providing parents with a viewing area. It involves creating a culture of openness between the club and parents. This will include:

- Providing regular feedback on a child's progress
- Opportunities to discuss the child's progress and training regime
- Opportunity to raise concerns and receive feedback on the outcome
- Encouraging parents to become involved in the club
- Inviting parents to attend events or keep in close contact with their child
- Setting up parent forums
- Appointing a parent liaison officer who is responsible for communication, information and encouraging involvement

Changing Facilities

All BWL clubs must have a policy or rules relating to the use of changing facilities. There can be difficulties where the weightlifting activity is provided within a multi-use sports

centre and will have to be subject to the availability and access to facilities, whether groups are mixed gender, and whether the changing facilities are open for public use.

Although clubs should develop a policy that best meets their specific circumstances, the following underlying principles must be adopted:

- Where a club is fully responsible for changing facilities, adults must not be permitted to change in these facilities at the same time as children
- There must be separate changing facilities or times for males and females
- No-one should enter changing rooms whilst these are being used by members of the opposite sex
- Mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms
- Codes of conduct should address behaviour while using changing facilities
- Everyone should be aware that they must report any concerns or incidents without delay

Parents should only be in the changing rooms with their children if the children age range of the session is for an age group where parental help is generally required. This is normally around 7 or 8 years old. Additional arrangements may be required if there are young people with disabilities in the group.

Clubs which are unable to provide safe changing facilities must ensure all members arrive wearing their lifting suits/shorts under their clothes.

Where possible, parents should be responsible for their own children in the changing rooms or toilets. If a group of children must be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure that adults work in pairs to supervise their children.

Supervision

It is essential that appropriate ratios for supervision are adopted and everyone is clear of their supervisory responsibilities. Ratios should be determined considering age, the type

of activity and where it is taking place. For club training, BWL would recommend a minimum ratio of one adult to fifteen lifters. Where events are external to the regular club training venue a minimum ratio of one adult to ten lifters is required. This ratio should be increased for lifters aged eight years. In addition, there must always be a minimum of two responsible adults present. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.

Provision of Personal Care

There may on occasion be circumstances where some lifters will need help with personal and intimate care such as going to the toilet, changing and washing. In the main this is most likely to arise for some lifters with severe learning or physical disabilities. This will depend on the maturity and ability of the child.

Children with Disabilities

Some children with disabilities, as a result of their need for practical assistance in daily living, may be more vulnerable to abuse, and the risk may be greater where there are a number of carers. This may increase the likelihood of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries. It can be difficult, particularly for children with severe learning disabilities to differentiate between different roles if carried out by the same person. This may lead to confusion and additional vulnerability.

Taking account of the above factors, and the safeguarding concerns that can arise from coaches and other putting themselves in a position where they are alone with a child, BWL views as unacceptable the routine provision of personal care by coaches. BWL requires all intimate care to be carried out by someone other than the coach (except when the coach is also the parent), whose sole role in relation to the young person is to address these care needs.

In order to provide adequate support to lifters, British Weight Lifting advocates that either a professional carer approved by the lifters family or the lifters parent or guardian should carry out the role of carer.

Although it is acknowledged that some disabled children who take part in events that require an overnight stay may require overnight support, BWL considers that it is not acceptable for BWL coaches or other BWL members in responsible positions to share a room with an unrelated lifter in order to provide overnight support. British Weight Lifting suggests that the parents or guardians together with the coach consider and agree:

- Whether to provide a paid or voluntary professional carer to be awake during the night to give overnight support
- Invite the lifters parents or guardian to give the overnight support

Supporting Access for ‘Children in Need’ to participate in lifting

It is the responsibility of every club to consider the needs of the children, making reasonable adjustments to help provide for the inclusion of any child who wishes to participate. All BWL registered organisations should support young people and their parents to ensure the necessary support is in place for children with disabilities and other special needs to access weightlifting and para-powerlifting activities.

Under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, Local Authorities are required to provide services for any child who would be defined as a ‘Child in Need’. This includes the disabled children and children with impaired health and development. Although the Local Authority is responsible for ensuring appropriate needs are met, services may be provided by voluntary organisations acting on behalf of the Local Authority. BWL expects that where a child with a disability requires support from a carer to access weightlifting and para-powerlifting activities, and support is not already provided by a professional carer or family member, organisations should look with parents at the child’s needs and if appropriate to approach the Children’s Social Care Services to request support. In the event that no support is available, the club or service provider should examine whether they can meet the needs of the young person without significantly affecting the organisation ability to provide lifting/para- powerlifting activities to others. Not every child will need continual one-to-one support. Additional support may be required just for a temporary period until he child settles into the club, for a transition period (eg for the first half hour of the club) or for personal care.

Key points to consider

Consultation and working in partnership

Consult with families, Children's Social Care Services/Social Services, Health and other relevant professionals and voluntary groups with the family's permission to determine a child needs and identify support. Start by asking parents and, if appropriate the child about the specific needs and if other professionals should be approached so there is a clear understanding of the support required.

Funding

Additional funding may be required where there is a requirement for one-to-one support or a higher ratio of staff to children (depending on needs). Funding sources include: local authorities, community councils, lottery grants, private businesses, voluntary services and charities that provides grants to support children with disabilities. Local authority schemes may be able to help with funding for one-to-one support workers.

Facilities

Are they suitable and accessible?

Are there reasonable adjustments that can be addressed?

Learning Needs

Although BWL requires all coaches to hold a BWL level 2 coaching Weight Lifting Coaching qualification there is no specific qualification for coaching people with disabilities, however, specialist training may be beneficial to help with communication methods, ensuring a positive attitude towards inclusion etc.

Updated: 2020