**Club Athlete/Child Protection Policy**

**(Date)**

**1. Policy Statement**

…… (The Club) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all athletes/children participating in training and events run or supported by the Club. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practices that protect athletes from harm and exploitation while participating in our activities.

Coaches and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of our athletes/children.

**Policy Principles**

* The welfare of our athletes/children is the primary concern.
* Athlete/child protection is everyone's responsibility.
* All athletes/children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm.
* Athletes/children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.
* Our organisation will work in partnership with athletes and coaches to promote the welfare, health and development of our young developing athletes/children.

**The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through-**

* Promoting the health and welfare of athletes/children by providing opportunities for them to take part in training and events safely.
* Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of athletes/children.
* Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of athletes/children and protect them from harm.
* Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect athletes/children from harm and to reduce the risk of allegations or complaints against themselves.
* Requiring athletes/children, coaches, support staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Athlete Safety Policy and these procedures.
* Responding to any allegations of misconduct or harm to athletes/children in line with this Policy and these procedures, as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant investigative, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
* Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and these procedures. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

**2. Athlete Safety Policy – protocols**

The following protocols are designed to ensure the utmost is done to provide a safe environment for athletes/children in the Club. They provide guidance to those working with athletes/children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations. The intention of these protocols is to reduce the likelihood of harm to a child as well as minimising the risk of an allegation or complaint being made.

**Applying an athlete-centred approach where all athletes/children are treated equally and with dignity**

* Activities should be appropriate for the age and stage of development of the athlete/children in your care.
* Ensure feedback to athletes/children is about their performance and not of a personal nature.
* Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to athletes/children and in their presence.

**Creating a safe and open working environment that also reduces risk to staff and volunteers**

* Exercise common sense.
* Ensure that children use appropriate protective gear and have appropriate safety protocols in place and that all equipment being used is in good working order.
* Do not send athletes/children off to train alone and out of sight and supervision.
* Ensure that any filming or photography of athletes/children is appropriate.
* Explain the purpose and obtain consent (from parents/caregivers) prior to filming or photographing athletes/children.
* Ensure that athletes/children have appropriate means of returning home after camps and are handed over to their caregiver, or other authorised person at the conclusion of the camp.
* Obtain parent consent to publish photographs of athletes/children involved in all CRNZ programmes.
* Request parental consent before transporting athletes/children in a vehicle. Ensure that the vehicle is insured, has a current Warrant of Fitness and registration.
* Except in an emergency where it is unsafe to delay, ensure you have parental consent to administer first aid if required.
* Do not use alcohol, cigarettes or electronic cigarettes in the presence of an athlete/child and do not offer any of these to children under any circumstances.
* Do not engage in communication with an athlete/child, on a one-on-one basis, through social media, texting or email, other than for relevant coach/athlete feedback or administration.
* Ensure that all physical contact with athletes/children is relevant and appropriate to the activity and done in the presence of others.
* Do not engage in any intimate, over-familiar or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18 years.
* Do not engage in any bullying activity.
* Do not allow parents, coaches, other children, or spectators to engage in any type of bullying behaviour (this includes cyber/text bullying)
* Do not encourage, engage in or condone any watching of pornographic or age-inappropriate images or literature at any time with any children under the age of 18. Those 18 or older should be discouraged from this in the context of the Club environment and this should not be allowed at any Club sanctioned training or event.

**Avoiding situations where you are alone with an athlete/child**

* Avoid private or unobserved situations, including being alone with a child in the changing rooms.
* Avoid entering changing rooms - if you must enter, knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you.
* Avoid driving a child unaccompanied.
* Do not invite or encourage children to your home without their caregiver.
* Always have a female adult present at all camps acting as a chaperone.
* Do not share a room with a child, other than your own in the absence of their caregiver.

**3. Recruitment and Training Processes for Staff and Volunteers**

The Club seeks to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all people participating in the activities of the CRNZ Camps and National Age Group Squads. To ensure that suitable and appropriate staff and volunteers (including parents) are working with athletes/children in canoe racing, a robust recruitment and screening process should be followed for all roles. Screening is also required for staff and volunteers currently engaged in existing roles.

**Screening**

The Vulnerable Children’s Act requires all persons who have direct contact with any person(s) under the age of 18 years to be screened.

It is the responsibility of the Club to undertake the screening process of all current and future coaches and volunteers involved in training and/or events and record and review processes involved with the screening.

1. Screening is mandatory for all persons currently engaged in the following types of roles-
2. Coaches who are employed or contracted by the Club or on a voluntary basis.
3. Persons appointed by the Club to a role in which the person is likely to have individual and unsupervised contact with participants under 18 years of age.
4. Any person appointed by the Club to a role or any contractor or volunteer working in the Club where that person has been the subject of rumour, suspicion or complaints regarding harassment or abuse.
5. As set out under the Vulnerable Children’s Act screening shall include:
6. Interviewing the applicant.
7. Verifying the applicant’s application form and referees.
8. Obtaining a Police Check for the preferred applicant.
9. Obtaining a Ministry of Justice Criminal check for the preferred applicant.
10. The purpose of the Police Check or Ministry of Justice Criminal Check is to see whether the person has any previous criminal convictions and/or had any contact with the NZ Police. If the person has had contact with the NZ Police, then the following requirements apply:
11. If there is no conviction but the contact with the NZ Police (whenever it occurred) involved dishonesty, drugs, threatening behaviour, harassment, violence, or other crimes against a person (e.g. sex offences, assault) then the Harassment Free/Child Protection Officer will provide the person with the opportunity to respond. The response will be provided to the Club Chair for a final decision on whether an appointment can be made or a person can continue working in the programme.
12. If the conviction (whenever it occurred), is one involving dishonesty, drugs, threatening behaviour, harassment, violence, or other crimes against a person (e.g. sex offences, assault) then they must not be appointed to the role.
13. If the conviction is other than those in 4d (ii), and is a matter that does not suggest that the person is a potential risk to the Club members and staff, then the person may be appointed, subject to satisfaction of other criteria for the role.
14. If the preferred applicant is not willing to agree to the Police Check or Ministry of Justice Criminal Check, then the Club, shall not appoint that person to such a role.
15. All information obtained during the course of screening (including any Police or Criminal Checks) is personal information and shall comply with the Privacy Act. It must be kept confidential to the persons or committee within the Club, who has been delegated the task of investigating and/or making the appointment for the role. Information collected during the screening about a person who is not appointed to the role, other than a record of the result of any check, must be destroyed within twelve months and not retained by the Club, unless the applicant agrees for them to do so.

In addition, the Club, are required under the Vulnerable Children Act, to conduct police vetting for existing staff or volunteers in the roles of the type set out in clause 3a and 3b in this policy.

**4. Appoint a Child Protection Officer (CPO)**

A CPO shall be appointed for the Club. The CPO must be named and communicated to the various squad members, volunteers, coaches, and team management.

The primary role of the CPO is to manage child protection issues. Their main duties/responsibilities would include;

* Ensuring that athlete/child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members and staff.
* Organising promotional activities, training and raising awareness within the organisation.
* Establishing and maintaining the complaints procedure.
* Reporting to the Board/Executive Committee/Management as appropriate.
* Acting as the main contact and support for child protection matters.
* Keeping up-to-date with developments in child protection legislation.
* Liaising with local child protection agencies as required.
* Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken.
* Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures.

**5. Education and training of staff and volunteers**

In addition to the pre-selection checks, the child protection process should include subsequent monitoring and training of staff and volunteers in order to ensure that they are working safely and effectively with children.

* Staff/volunteer induction is an ideal time to introduce child protection training and the procedures set out in this policy.
* Staff/volunteers should be clear what constitutes inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour.
* Identify any potential risk situations and provide staff/volunteers with guidelines to ensure every step is taken to remove them from situations where potential for abuse or allegations of abuse could occur.
* Identify and respond to any unacceptable behaviour or practices of staff and volunteers and respond in a positive manner i.e. via training to improve practices.

**6. Complaint and Investigative process - Breaches of the Club Child Protection Policy**

Any person may make a complaint about a person to whom this the Club Child Protection Policy applies if they consider that a person has, or may have, breached any part of this policy.

Any complaint relating to this policy must be forwarded to the CPO and should be dealt with in line with the procedures outlined in the diagram below on pages 8 & 9.

**7. Responding to suspected harm in the nature of physical or sexual abuse**

Physical or sexual abuse is at the most serious end of the harm spectrum and will require an immediate response. In responding to suspected child physical or sexual abuse there are a few key principles that should be applied immediately. These are;

* The welfare and interests of the child are the first and paramount considerations.
* Suspected and actual incidences of reported harm should be responded to and  recorded accurately and appropriately and as soon as possible.
* Notify The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga if you are worried about suspected physical or sexual abuse. If you think the child is at immediate risk, the Police should be notified. (Police are the only people who can remove a child from a family. The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, must first apply through the court)

Responding to suspected or disclosed harm in the form of physical or sexual abuse

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| SITUATION | ACTION | CONSIDERATIONS |
| Harm suspected, witnessed, reported or disclosed | Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm | Do not formally interview the child or make any judgements or commitments you cannot keep. Confidentiality is important. Avoid questioning the child beyond what they have already disclosed. Record facts concisely following: type of harm, signs and symptoms noted, any particular incidents with dates, times and place and any action taken |
| If alleged harm is by a staff member or volunteer | LISTEN to the child and reassure them | A staff member or volunteer must be informed of any allegations against them. Be guided by the Police on this as each situation will be judged in its merits. Where there is a criminal offence the Police may want to notify the person. The employee or volunteer may be stood down while the matter is being investigated |
| If alleged harm is by a non-staff member | RECORD accurately and appropriately any information received/observed | Decide who will inform the parents and provide support to the family. Seek help from trained personnel in order to manage this process effectively. |
| Investigation by the police | CONSULT immediately with CPO  | Note that there is a difference between a criminal investigation and an employment matter and that these must be kept separate |
| The Club Debrief | CPO to REPORT the concern to CYF or the Police | Debrief will include decisions about the person’s future involvement and a review of how the situation was managed and what changes to policy or safeguards need to be made. |
|  | Follow the advice of CYF or the Police. Ensure there is no contact between the staff member or volunteer and the child |  |
|  | Follow the advice of CYF or the Police. Ensure the child is in a safe place. |  |

* Managing the rights of the alleged offender – People who have allegedly acted improperly also have rights e.g. privacy. They also have a reputation and families of their own and it is important to carefully investigate any complaints and follow a robust and fair process.

**9. Policy Review**

The policy may be reviewed or amended at any time in line with legislative changes or where specific concerns might be identified about the protection of children that warrants an immediate policy change.

Any changes will be communicated with the canoe racing community.

**10. Supporting policies, documents and important links**

* Vulnerable Children Act http://www.legislation.govt.nz
* Ministry of Justice https://www.justice.govt.nz
* New Zealand Police http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/register-new- zealand-police-vetting

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| **Date of Policy:**  |  |
| **Review Frequency:**  |   |
| **Next Review Date:**  |  |