

Participant welfare and child protection case studies

There are three steps to dealing with allegations of abuse:

- 1. Receiving**
- 2. Recording**
- 3. Reporting**

The aim of the following resource is to identify some scenarios of alleged abuse that might occur and to provide some worked examples of appropriate actions in receiving, recording and reporting these, as guidance for coaches.

Case study 1

A parent of a junior in your club expresses concern about a coach in your club, with whom you share the coaching of the junior section. The coach has been at your club for a long time and has recently begun to help coach your new junior section.

They feel that the coach is too demanding and is pressurising their 15 year old daughter too much; she no longer looks forward to attending the sessions with that coach and she does not enjoy them, and comes home upset after most sessions. They complain that the coach does not take account of the other things that are going on in the lives of the juniors. The parent feels that a number of other parents of juniors in your group feel the same about this coach.

How would you receive, record and report this allegation?

1. Receiving

Draw out the points from the person making the allegation without being leading. Be sympathetic and ensure that you will look into the matter and report back to the individual.

2. Recording

Record the details using an ARA report form.
Keep a copy of the form for yourself.

3. Reporting

Talk to your club welfare officer as soon as possible, and give them a copy of the report form.

Report back to the parent that you have passed the matter on to your club welfare officer who will deal with their concerns appropriately.

Case study 2

One of the juniors that you are coaching appears at training with a black eye. When you ask them about how they got it, they tell you that they walked into a rigger in the boathouse.

What do you do as a coach?

- Do you accept their response or do you investigate it further?
- Whom would you talk to?
- Is your club a school club? Are there teachers associated with the club whom you could talk to?
- Is your club an open club? Are the juniors in your club all from the same school or from different ones?
- Can you ask their friends?

Having accepted their version of events on the first occasion, about six weeks later, the junior returns with another black eye and when you ask, tells you that they fell over.

How would you receive, record and report this incident?

1. Receiving

Ask to see their hands / knees - are these injured? It is very unusual for someone to fall over and get a black eye. There is very often some damage to hands / knees during a fall.

2. Recording

Record the details using an ARA report form.

3. Reporting

Speak to your Club Welfare Officer, and give them a copy of your report (ensure that you make reference to the previous incident and the response from the junior).

You can contact the ARA Club Welfare Officer for further advice.

Case study 3

An individual comes to you directly, to make an allegation of sexual abuse against a coach whom they have found out has recently started coaching in another club locally. The allegation relates to some time ago, when the individual used to be coached by this coach. They tell you that they had not made any allegations as they thought that the coach had stopped coaching, but that they were very upset to have seen them coaching a group at a recent local regatta.

What do you do as a coach?

- Would you report to your club welfare officer, and/or the club welfare officer of the relevant club?
- Whom could you contact in the ARA if you had further worries about the process?
- Would you contact the police and social services?

How would you receive, record and report this allegation?



1. Receiving

You should make it clear that in order to stop any similar abuse potentially happening to others that you will need to involve others to help. Remember not to ask leading questions and to stick to the facts.

2. Recording

Record the details using an ARA report form.

3. Reporting

Speak to your club welfare officer as soon as possible, give them a copy of the ARA report form, and keep one yourself.

You can contact the ARA Child Protection Officer directly for advice.

The Club Welfare Officer will get in touch with the ARA Child Protection Officer, and may decide to contact school or social services to establish if the story is correct (e.g. it could be a case of bullying at school, abuse at home, or they fell over).

In a case where a child is at risk of harm (either the one making the allegation or another) and your club welfare officer or the ARA Child Protection Officer is not available immediately the police or social services should be contacted and the club welfare officer and ARA Child Protection Officer should be informed of the situation as soon as possible.

The club welfare officer will keep you informed about when the matter has been dealt with, but you should be aware that it may not be possible for you to be party to all of the details, once you have passed the matter on.

Case study 4

A participant in your club tells you that a relative is abusing them at home but that you mustn't tell anyone else as they are scared about getting into trouble.

1. Receiving

You must explain that if they want the abuse to stop then you will need to involve other people to help.

Remember not to ask leading questions and to stick to the facts.

2. Recording

Record the details using an ARA report form.

3. Reporting

You should speak to your club welfare officer as soon as possible, and contact the ARA Child Protection Officer, who will be able to give you further advice.

As in all cases, if a child is at risk of harm in any way, and your club welfare officer or the ARA Child Protection Officer is not available immediately, you should contact the police or social services immediately and then speak to the club welfare officer or ARA Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. Keep a copy of your report form and give a copy to your club welfare officer

Key points in receiving, recording and reporting allegations of abuse

1. Receiving	2. Recording	3. Reporting
<p>Be vigilant to possible indicators of abuse. Make the individual aware that you are taking the allegation seriously and are concerned. Make it clear that you will need to involve others to help.</p>	<p>Use the ARA report form Keep a copy of the information that you have recorded and give your club welfare officer a copy</p>	<p>Speak to your club welfare officer, and/or the ARA Child Protection Officer. If they are not available immediately in cases involving more serious allegations, or where children are at risk of harm, you should contact the police or social services immediately.</p>