



Scottish Association of Young  
Farmers Clubs

**Policy & Procedure for the protection of  
Young Persons**

## **POLICY & PROCEDURE for the protection of Young Persons**

This document outlines the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, pursuant to the “Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act” (February 2011) dealing with the care and protection of young people and is drafted with particular reference to the unique nature and structure of the Association. The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act brought in a new vetting scheme through which those individuals working with young people regularly can be vetted.

The Association recognises that young people attend SAYFC events for enjoyment, social contact, and personal development. They should not suffer from abuse wherever or however it occurs.

Staff, office bearers, volunteers and members who are selected, elected, or appointed to work with young people in the Association, should also enjoy their involvement, confident in the knowledge of the existence of clear guidelines and, if required, access to good support and advice.

For the purpose of this document the term young people refer to SAYFC members aged 14 up to the day before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday inclusive.

### **Policy Statement**

While the Association recognises that the primary responsibility for the care of young people rests with the parents and guardians, the community as a whole has a responsibility for their wellbeing and for protecting them.

The policy of the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs is to safeguard the welfare of all young people who come into contact with the Association by protecting them from neglect along with physical, sexual and emotional harm. The Association is truly committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members and young volunteers who should at all times show, and be shown, respect and understanding regarding their rights, safety and welfare and should conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the principles of the Association.

It is also the Associations policy to develop staff, elected office bearers and volunteers’ awareness of child protection issues and to review the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs Child Protection Policy annually.

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## Code of Conduct

The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs expects all Staff, Office Bearers and Volunteers to adhere to this code of conduct. The code of conduct has been drawn up to support SAYFC Staff, Office Bearers and Volunteers to perform their youth work, and protect them, especially when working in isolation and vulnerable situations.

### **Staff, Office Bearers and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to equal opportunities and to young people**

- ✓ By being honest with, and showing respect for, young people.
- ✓ By respecting the confidentiality of the young person and by being clear and open when confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- ✓ By offering challenging and exciting experiences undertaken in a safe environment.
- ✓ By recognising unacceptable behaviour and acting, which enables changes to take place.

### **Staff, Office Bearers and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to themselves and colleagues**

- ✓ By being honest with, and showing respect for colleagues
- ✓ By respecting and keeping appropriate levels of confidentiality
- ✓ By working and planning to the best of their ability within the constraints of the club or allocated responsibilities.
- ✓ By only working alone when immediate support is available and / or the Health & Safety of the young people is at risk.
- ✓ By offering support to colleagues and seeking it when necessary.

### **Staff, office bearers and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to educate members, office bearers and staff**

- ✓ By leading by example and setting good, positive role models:
  - Not using language which is abusive to any member with a protected characteristic.
  - Dressing appropriately to the occasion task, and company present.
  - Not smoking, drinking alcohol, or using other substances whilst on duty and working with young people.
- ✓ By creating an environment within which young people can feel safe and learn

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- ✓ By enthusiastically seizing all learning opportunities either programmed or otherwise.
- ✓ By fully implementing the aims and objectives of SAYFC.

**Behaviour of all Staff, Office Bearers and Volunteers whilst on duty must, of course be within the law.**

## Recommendations

The Association does not recommend the following when assuming positions of responsibility.

- Spend excessive time alone with young people away from others.
- Take young people alone on car journeys no matter how short except in emergencies or with specific permission from parents / guardians.
- Take young people to their home except in emergency situations.

While in many young farmers clubs this is unavoidable practice it should only occur with the pre determined knowledge and consent of the young person's parents.

Staff, office bearers and volunteers should never:

- Engage in inappropriate physical contact.
- Engage in inappropriate digital interactions.
- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay – apart from structured sports activities.
- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person even in fun.
- Let allegations a young person makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do themselves.

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## Sanctions

Failure to comply with the above code of conduct will result in the implementation of sanctions, as detailed in the Code of Conduct, which may be imposed by the appropriate Club Committee, District Committee, Regional Committee or National Council.

Parents of members, office bearers or volunteers will be informed and given the right to representation throughout the process.

## Supervision of young people

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of young people is one of the most effective ways of minimising opportunities for the young people to suffer harm of any kind. Our duty of care suggests that it is good practice when organising journeys / visits / trips that the following should be adhered to:

### Planned Activities

- The organizers of journeys / visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the young people who are involved in the project.
- Organisers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the young people for the full duration of the time that they are away from home.
- Organisers are made aware which members have parental consent for photography to be taken.
- Ensure all content on social media has the consent of each individual involved.
- Young people should not be left to their own devices in, for example, a town for the evening or shopping expeditions.
- All young people should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times.
- In circumstances where planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to adverse weather conditions, then organizers should have a number of alternative activities planned.
- Organisers should obtain in writing, parental consent to junior members joining a trip

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- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events and the activities in which junior members will be engaged.
- Separate sleeping arrangements should be implemented on residential visits or exchanges for each gender. Staff and leaders must not share arrangements with participants or allow young people to enter their rooms. Staff and leaders should not enter young people's rooms unless accompanied or in emergency situations.
- In the event of a disclosure, allegation or concern during SAYFC activities the Associations reporting procedure should take precedence.

### Supervision of Under 18s

- The Association may be satisfied that those staff and elected office bearers who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so.
- Young people should be supervised at all times under normal circumstances.
- Workers should know at all times where young people are and what they are doing.
- Any activity should be Risk Assessed and appropriate measures in place, any activity that is deemed unsafe by the matric with adjustments made should not go ahead.

### Definitions of Abuse and Reporting

Good protection of young people means ensuring that staff and volunteers know how to recognise abuse of young people. This does NOT mean that they are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred but that they have a responsibility to be alert to behaviour by young people or staff / office bearers/volunteers which suggests something may be wrong.

Who can abuse?

- You can't tell by looking at someone if they are an abuser – they don't appear different from the rest of society.
- Abusers come from all classes in society, all professions, genders and all races.
- Abuse of young people may sometimes be carried out by strangers but is much more common that the abuser is known to the young person and is in a position of trust and / or authority.

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- It is not only adults who abuse young people. Young people may suffer abuse from other young people.

Please see appendix 1 for different types of abuse.

What is a disclosure?

A disclosure is when a young person tells someone that they have been, or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may be physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

What is a concern?

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence are examples of what may constitute a concern if observed by an office bearer or volunteer.

## Bullying

It is important to recognise that bullying is a very common form of abuse, both physical and emotional, and causes great stress. Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred; they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst bullying can result in a young person attempting suicide.

## Reporting Procedures

It is not the role of SAYFC to investigate an allegation but to simply note the facts. If any member of staff, office bearer or volunteer suspects that a young person has been abused it is important that evidence is given to the situation and followed up with immediate action.

However, do not contact an investigating agency directly. In the first instance, listen to the young person, collect relevant information and immediately inform the designated member of staff. Responding to incidents of alleged abuse, affecting members within the association is based upon clearly defined procedures. It is important that you follow the outlined procedure, and that you adhere to the following Do's and Dont's.

Do:

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- Stay Calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what they want
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing
- Record in writing what is said
- Report to the designated member of staff
- Keep a note of your report, giving the date, time, name of the individual whom you have told, and course of action agreed

#### Don't

- Do not panic
- Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not enquire into details of the abuse
- Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem

If you are concerned that the young person has been abused or is at risk of abuse, there is one thing that you must not do and that is **NOTHING**

Details should be reported to:

Chief Executive, Royal Highland Centre, Courtyard (East), Ingliston, Edinburgh, EH28 8NE.  
Tel: 0131 333 2445

Or [emily@sayfc.org](mailto:emily@sayfc.org)

It is important that you take what the young person says seriously and follow it up with action straight away. The sooner you take action, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop, and the child will recover from their experiences.

If you know someone you think may be abusing a young person, or a young person's words or behaviour indicate to you that it is likely that they are being abused, report it to the designated member of staff.

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## Confidentiality

On the premise that the welfare of the young person is paramount considerations of confidentiality must not be allowed to override the right of young people to be protected from harm.

Staff, Office bearers, volunteers and members must be aware that there are circumstances in which confidentiality must be broken, specifically if it is suspected that abuse has occurred and an offence committed.

On receipt of both a verbal and a written report on suspected abuse, the Child Protection Officer will make a formal referral to the appropriate authorities. Who will then take on the responsibility for dealing with the matter.

## Sensitivity

Due to the nature of child abuse, the whole matter and those involved, must be dealt with the utmost sensitivity. This however should not be a stumbling block to making a report of an incident nor a subsequent referral.

## Recruitment and Management of Staff, Office Bearers and Elected Officials

While most office bearers are elected annually from within the membership it is important to recognise the need to validate the credentials and ability of staff, office bearers and volunteers who have access to young members. In order to secure validation staff, office bearers and volunteers (trainers) the following process will be adhered to:

1. Each appointee will be provided with access to the Associations Child Protection Policy and will provide the appropriate committee with confirmation they have read this.
2. All Staff, Office Bearers, Volunteers and trainers will complete a Disclosure Scotland check if their work is directly connected with junior members. This will apply to all club chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary and assistant secretaries along with volunteers / trainers who have contact with members on more than one occasion over a twelve-month period (no more than 6 hours). Each club must have

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at least 1 male and 1 female identifying member representative through the SAYFC PVG procedure.

## Definitions of Abuse (as defined by the NSPCC)

There are several different categories of abuse those you may witness within your time as an office bearer/volunteer within SAYFC may be:

**Physical** – where someone hurts or harms a young person on purpose. It includes but is not limited to : hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, burning or scalding, biting and scratching, drowning and/or breaking bones.

**Emotional** – any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. It can include but is not limited to : humiliation or criticising, threatening or shouting, manipulation, ignoring the young person, never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating young people on their success.

**Sexual** - Sexual abuse is when a young person is forced, tricked or manipulated into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong for the abuser to do this to them. They might be afraid to tell someone or behave as though this is normal for them to experience, both are valid for the child to be displaying. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online and be both contact and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a young person or forces the young person to make physical contact with someone else. This includes: sexual touching of any part of a young person's body, clothed or unclothed, using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a young person, forcing sexual activities upon a young person or making a young person undress or touch someone else. It is important to note that contact abuse can also involve touching, kissing and oral sex and does not need to be penetrative to be classed as sexual abuse. Non-contact can be online or in person and where a young person is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can include : exposing or flashing, showing pornography, exposing young people to sexual acts, making a young person masturbate, forcing a young person to make, view, or share images or videos and forcing a young person to participate in conversations online or through a smart phone.

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**Neglect** – ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision, or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. Within SAYFC the most common signs of neglect can be physical: A young person's basic needs, such as food, clothing, or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe. Or emotional: when a young person doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating, or isolating them.

Ensure as you are working with young people and vulnerable adults that you are aware of the other types of abuse and how to recognise these.



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