

## RED ROPE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (As adopted at AGM September 2006)

### INTRODUCTION

Red Rope has children going on trips and day walks with their parents who will occasionally be looked after by members other than their parents. Red Rope does not offer organised childcare but does support members who wish to arrange childcare with other members.

It is not possible for Red Rope to obtain criminal records checks on these ad-hoc occasional childcare workers. It is important that parents are aware of this (and sign the trip booking form to indicate they have understood this) and understand that it is their responsibility to decide if someone is suitable to look after their children.

It is still important that Red Rope takes seriously the possibility of child abuse occurring, has guidelines to make it less likely to happen and procedures to put in place if child abuse is suspected.

On nearly all occasions children will be on trips with their parents. If another adult (friend or relative) brings a child on a trip the actual parent must countersign the trip booking form and sign a form to allow this adult to act in loco-parentis. In no circumstances should Red Rope, as an organisation, take unaccompanied children on trips or day walks

### GUIDELINES

- a) If at all possible two people should look after the children at the same time. In particular try to avoid one adult and one child travelling in a car alone.
- b) Childcarers should not take children to their own homes.
- c) Children should be encouraged to carry out as many tasks as possible for themselves e.g. putting on sunscreen. If help is needed ask the child first if this is all right.
- d) Childcarers should discuss suitable activities with parents. In particular, if it is intended to take children walking or climbing, it should be clear that the parent agrees (and understands that Red Rope members are in no sense qualified instructors) 'that the child has sufficient equipment, that the child themselves wants to do this and that what is being suggested is within the child's capabilities.
- e) On a trip it is preferable for families to sleep in a separate family room together. However this may often not be possible, in which case a parent should usually sleep in a space next to their child in the communal room. Parents should understand and agree to the sleeping arrangements before they book on a trip.
- f) If a member of a trip has doubts about the suitability of someone (who is volunteering to do childcare) to look after children, they should discuss this with the parents.
- g) No one should be encouraged to look after children who does not wish to do so.
- h) Photographs should only be taken with the permission of the children and their parents. Permission should also be sought to use photographs for publicity purposes.
- i) All serious accidents concerning children should be recorded and reported to the National Secretary.
- j) If any member thinks these guidelines are not being respected they should inform the National Secretary.

If in any doubt, NSPCC 24 hour helpline is 0808 800 5000.

## IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

- a) All suspicions of child abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- b) If a child needs medical attention, arising from a possible incident of abuse, inform the medical professional of the possibility of abuse.
- c) If a child discloses that they are being abused tell them that they are right to tell you and reassure them that they are not to blame. Do not promise to keep the information secret, as it is your responsibility to inform others.
- d) Only ask questions to clarify the situation (do not suggest things which might have happened to the child). Do not ask the child to repeat the account more than is absolutely necessary.
- e) Make a full record of what was said, heard or seen and of any physical injury as soon as possible.
- f) If possible discuss the situation with the National Secretary or (if he/she is not available) another responsible Red Rope member (e.g. the trip organiser on a trip) but bear in mind the need for confidentiality and do not discuss the matter publicly.
- g) Do not discuss the matter with the alleged abuser (or inform them of the allegation if they are unaware of it).
- h) Inform Social Services and/or the police of the allegations
- i) If the alleged abuse occurs on a trip which is still taking place, then consider informing Social services and/or the police locally straightaway. If this is impossible (e.g. trip about to finish) inform the child's home Social services and/or police immediately on return.
- j) Inform the National Secretary of Red Rope with full written details as soon as possible.
- k) If parents are not already aware of the allegations you should normally tell them but if in doubt discuss with Social services or the NSPCC first. Do not tell parents if you consider it would put the child in danger. You are still obliged to inform social services and the National Secretary even if the parents do not want you to do so.
- l) Whilst on a trip a child may reveal details of abuse (or you may have reasons to be concerned that they are being abused) outside a Red Rope context.-You should still follow the above procedure.
- m) If you are in any doubt about what to do in any circumstance ring the NSPCC 24 hour helpline on 0808 800 5000.

## CLUB POLICY CONCERNING SUSPECTED/PROVED CHILD ABUSE

- a) Members who have been convicted or are being investigated for child abuse are not allowed to go on trips/day walks at which children are present. The National Secretary shall keep a list of such people.
- b) If a child abuse incident occurs on a trip the National Committee shall set up a disciplinary committee (after police and social services have completed their investigations) to consider expelling the member concerned.
- c) The same shall apply if a person on the list attempts to go on a trip knowing that children will be present.
- d) Any person who knows that another member (or non member attending club activities) has been convicted/is being investigated for child abuse (or the person has reasons to be seriously concerned about the possibility of the member being a child abuser or otherwise unfit to look after children) should inform the National Secretary.
- e) The National Secretary may discuss any Child Protection issues with the BMC Youth Officer and (as long as the club is affiliated to the BMC) should report any incidents of child abuse occurring/suspected during Red Rope activities to the BMC Youth Officer. The National Secretary may also discuss Child Protection problems with one or two other members who may have appropriate professional experience but the need for confidentiality should be remembered.

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