



## Policy for Safeguarding

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## Section 1 - Safeguarding and duty of care

This document represents Snowbility's policy for safeguarding children and young adults involved in our sport. This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, board of trustees, volunteers, students, or anyone working on behalf of Snowbility. All have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and young people involved in our activities.

### Snowbility policy statement

Snowbility is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children and young adults, including staff, volunteers and other people who access its services. We have a legal duty of care, as well as a moral responsibility, to ensure we provide a safe and secure environment for those taking part, in whatever capacity.

Snowbility believes that anyone who has the responsibility for the care of a child should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare" in accordance with the Children Act 1989, and The Care Act 2014. Adoption of, and adherence to, this policy is mandatory for any staff, senior managers, board of trustees, volunteers, students, or anyone working on behalf of Snowbility.

### General principles

To ensure procedures are followed to their utmost, Snowbility is committed to following the principles set out below:

- The welfare of all students is paramount in accordance with the Children Act 1989, and The Care Act 2014.
- Snowbility will take seriously all concerns and allegations of abuse and respond swiftly and appropriately.
- Snowbility will ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place to provide a safe and secure environment and to deal with issues concerned with reported abuse of children.
- Snowbility is committed to ensuring that the activities it provides are conducted safely and that the welfare of the staff including senior managers, board of trustees, volunteers, students, or anyone working on behalf of Snowbility are protected from any abuse.
- Snowbility recognises that working in partnership with parents, guardians and children is essential for the protection of children.
- Snowbility will endeavour to respect the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
- All Snowbility staff and volunteers who work with children are recruited regarding their suitability for that responsibility and are provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and Child Protection procedures.

- Training and support are provided for staff and volunteers, so they are aware of, and understand, best practice and how to manage any safeguarding issues.
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Children and young people have a right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development regarding their involvement in activities.
- All persons, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, religious belief, and sexual identity, have a right to access snow sports in an enjoyable and safe environment and to be protected from abuse.
- All those in a position of responsibility in Snowbility recognise it is not their responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is their responsibility to report and act on any concerns they have.
- Personal information will be treated in strict confidence, within the limits of the law (principally the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Human Rights Act 2000), which requires that the Police, Children's Services (social care) and/or any other statutory agencies, including the NSPCC, be informed where there are concerns that a child is at serious risk of harm or it is believed that a crime has been committed.
- Snowbility will ensure that this Safeguarding Policy will be appropriately communicated to all new and volunteers' staff during induction.
- Snowbility will ensure it keeps this policy up-to-date and reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, the board of trustees, paid staff and volunteers or anyone working for, or on behalf of, Snowbility.

## **Responsibilities**

Everyone who participates in the activities of Snowbility is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment and will ensure that, all staff and volunteers will provide the highest standard of care for all children and young adults whilst taking part in activities.

Snowbility will ensure that its safeguarding policy is implemented so that everyone engaging in our activities accepts the responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from harm and abuse. The following procedures will be used to protect them and report any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities.

To promote good practice, Snowbility aims to help staff, volunteers and members make informed and confident responses to specific Safeguarding and Child Protection issues, therefore promoting and maintaining professionalism and high standards of practice.

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Snowbility therefore has a responsibility to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests and wellbeing of everyone involved in the delivery of Snowbility activities.
- Respect and promote the rights and welfare of all involved in Snowbility activities.
- Maintain confidentiality with respect to the Human Rights Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1988.
- Recruit, select, train, and supervise its employees and volunteers to promote best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse.
- Ensure that the Snowbility Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is communicated, understood, and implemented throughout the organisation.
- Promote the development of a safe environment.
- Respond to any complaints about poor practice or allegations of abuse.

Snowbility has appointed a Safeguarding Officer (SO) who is Lesley McDonald who will be responsible for ensuring that:

All cases of poor practice that may be abuse and any allegations of abuse are investigated and where appropriate, referred to other agencies.

- Provide opportunities for all staff and volunteers to access training and guidance opportunities that are updated on an annual basis.
- Where there are concerns about possible abuse, ensure that these are referred appropriately to the statutory agencies to investigate whether any abuse has taken place.
- Make decisions on misconduct and/or poor practice within agreed timescales.
- Inform all appropriate individuals and bodies of decisions within agreed timescales.
- Maintain records of suspended, disciplined, and disqualified persons and where appropriate, refer people disqualified to relevant government agencies for consideration by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Work in partnership with clients and parents/carers to ensure that the needs of our clients are understood.

### **Duty of care**

All individuals have a duty of care to ensure the safety and welfare of all children involved in their activities and to safeguard and protect them from reasonably foreseeable forms of harm.

Snowbility is aware that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; it is not a standalone process to be done in isolation from the other activities provided. Everyone working at or for Snowbility should be aware of safeguarding, and be able to distinguish good practice, poor practice, and abuse. Together, everyone should embrace and promote the idea that the most important thing they can offer children and young people is to work together, providing an enjoyable and safe environment where the needs and requirements of children and vulnerable adults are put first.

Therefore, all those involved in the planning, development, management, and delivery of Snowbility activities to children and young people have a duty to ensure that participants are:

- Coached and trained by appropriately qualified people in a safe environment.
- Are encouraged to participate in Snowbility activities at an appropriate level for their age and ability.
- Not subjected to abuse and/or poor practice from any source.
- Not subjected to bullying or undue pressure.
- Supported to play an active role in the community, both in and out of the sport environment.

### **Guidance on physical contact**

Many sports, by their nature, require a degree of physical contact between adults and children. Physical contact can be used appropriately to instruct, encourage, protect, or comfort. The aim of guidelines relating to physical contact is to provide adults and children with appropriate types and contexts for touching and an understanding of what physical contact should reasonably be expected within the sport and the purpose of this.

The following guidance is intended to safeguard children whilst they are in the care of staff and volunteers in a snow sports environment.

Where instructors are delivering a 1:1 session with a child or a vulnerable adult, the presence of Snow Centre staff (Slope Patrol) ensures there are always other adults present to help should an incident occur. The presence of other adults in proximity will also help to protect staff, volunteers, and other responsible adults from unnecessary or malicious allegations when working with children.

By its nature, the teaching and coaching of snow sports may require some physical contact between coach and pupil. In this context the term “coach” includes instructors of all grades; coaches, instructors, volunteers, and anyone else engaged in the assistance, guidance, or supervision of children in a snow sports situation – provided they have had the recommended training to do so. This is accepted as reasonable practice and will be reviewed on a regular basis by Snowbility. Following principles of good practice will help to ensure that problems and difficulties do not arise.

At all times, coaches should be aware there is a multi-cultural mix of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, children who may already be on the Child Protection Register or have previously been or are currently being abused at home. Not all people are used to, or are comfortable, with any type of touching, be it friendly or otherwise. In many cultures, girls are uncomfortable about any kind of touching by a stranger.

Physically or visually impaired people may need to be touched to help them understand, acquire, or visualise a posture or position. If a person is visually impaired, you should tell them who you are and ask their permission before you come into physical contact with them.

Physical contact between adults and children should only be used by appropriately qualified people when the aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques.
- Treat an injury.
- Prevent an injury or accident occurring.
- Meet the requirements of the sport, eg. sports massage.
- Give appropriate comfort to a child or appropriately celebrating a success with them.

Physical contact should:

- Not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, or breasts.
- Meet the need of the student and not the need of the adult.
- Permission should always be sought.
- Not take place in secret or out of sight of others.
- Be fully explained to the student and, apart from an emergency, permission should be sought.

In the early stages of learning to ski, the student may require help that necessitates physical contact eg. putting on boots, getting up after a fall etc. The manner and context in which this is done will determine if the student understands what is happening. It is expected that the student's permission will be sought before the instructor takes any action eg. "May I help you get up?" – offer your hand and let the child take it rather than grabbing hold of the child and picking him/her up.

If it is thought necessary to use physical contact to put the child into appropriate skiing positions the instructor should first review their teaching strategies and look for alternatives. Perhaps moving to more suitable terrain to remove the "fear factor" or using verbal images to which the child can respond eg. "like a goal keeper waiting for a penalty". Explanation and demonstration might make physical contact unnecessary. If there is no alternative, ask permission and ensure that touching is done in an appropriate manner. Never use any physical contact in an isolated environment – always be in public view.

- Repeated physical contact, with the same child, is inappropriate and may be misconstrued by both the child and observers. Instructors should always consider appropriateness, potential carelessness, unnecessary repetition, and context. Think it through and if in doubt – don't do it.

## **First aid**

Where possible, two first-aiders should treat casualties, or a first aider accompanied by another adult of the same gender as the casualty. Never take the casualty alone into a room and close the door behind you. Always leave the door open or attend to them in an open environment. Sometimes a little privacy for the casualty may be required, for example where they need to remove clothing and unless it is an emergency, there should always be two adults present.

Ideally it should be done in the presence of a first aider of the same gender unless the wellbeing of the casualty is jeopardised by delaying eg. in the event of cardiac arrest or a major bleed.

## Section 2 – Child abuse

### Defining child abuse

All those involved in snow sports have a responsibility to be able to recognise and respond to signs of abuse.

**Remember, it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to report and act on any concerns you have.**

Any person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. People may be abused in the family, in an institution, or in a community setting (including snow sports). Abusers are usually known to the person and can be adults or other children. If untreated, the effects of abuse can be extremely damaging and have a lifelong impact on the person. Abused people may feel useless or worthless, go on to become abusers in the future, they may find it difficult to have a meaningful and trusting relationship, or turn to drugs, prostitution or attempt suicide.

The types of abuse below refer to all settings and are not limited to the snow sports setting.

### Types of child abuse

#### Physical abuse

This may involve: Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, biting, or other physical harm of a child.

In snow sports, physical abuse may occur where the level and intensity of training or competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body, or where drugs are used to enhance a child's performance.

#### Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may include:

- Constant belittling, shaming, or humiliation of a child.
- Telling a child, he is worthless, no good, bad, or useless.
- Constantly ignoring a child.
- Not giving the child any signs of affection or physical contact (in the home setting).
- Exposing the child to violence or abuse by others.
- Not allowing a child to express their views, or making fun of them when they do, or letting others make fun of them.
- Imposing unrealistic expectations on them relative to their age or ability or preventing them from participating in normal social or age- appropriate activities.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another and doing nothing about it
- Serious bullying or cyber bullying.

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There is a degree of emotional abuse involved in all types of child abuse, though it can occur alone.

In snow sports, emotional abuse may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism or name calling, sarcasm, bullying or racism. Coaches or other team members may be putting unrealistic pressure on them to consistently perform to high expectations.

### **Neglect**

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve:

- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter.
- Failure to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Failure to adequately supervise children.
- Failure to provide the child with adequate medical care or treatment.

Within snow sports, neglect could occur if children are subjected to undue cold, or not recognising the need for a child to have a rest. It could include subjecting them to unnecessary risk of injury either through pushing the child too hard or beyond their capability.

### **Sexual abuse**

This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware or not of what is happening. It may involve:

- Rape or oral sex
- Masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of the clothing.
- Enticing a child to watch sexual activities, look at sexual material or participate in sexual discussions.
- Involving the child in the production of sexual images including photos, online or videos
- Encouraging the child to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

It should be noted that some individuals deliberately target sports activities to gain access to, and abuse children. Grooming may occur over several years before an individual makes his or her move. There is evidence within sports that some individuals have deliberately ignored governing body codes of practice and used physical contact within a coaching role to mask their inappropriate touching of children. Some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photos or videos of children in vulnerable positions. Boys and girls can be sexually abused. Men, women, and children can be the abusers. The shame of sexual abuse often prevents children from coming forward. Unfounded accusations of sexual abuse are not common; if a child confides in you, take him or her seriously.

**Remember, it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to report and act on any concerns you have.**



## Bullying

This is not officially defined as a form of abuse (UK Government Guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 (Appendix A) but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse above. Bullying is deliberately a hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the main three types are:

- Physical bullying including hitting, kicking, or stealing from.
- Verbal including name calling, homophobic or racist comments, threats.
- Emotional including isolating them from the activities of their peers, or the rest of the group.

**Snowbility will not tolerate bullies at any level.**

Every instructor, including volunteers, must be prepared to:

- Take the problem seriously.
- Investigate all incidents.
- Talk to bully(ies) and victim(s) separately.

Then decide on appropriate action, such as:

- Obtain an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim.
- Inform the parents of the bully(ies).
- If appropriate, ensure the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen.
- If appropriate, ensure the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the coach of the victim, if appropriate.
- Invoke disciplinary measures, if appropriate.

Snowbility endeavours to:

- Ensure the staff and volunteers adopt and are aware of the bullying policy.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of how to deal with bully(ies).
- Ensure children are aware of what to do if they feel they are being bullied.

## Cyber bullying

This is when a person or group of people use the internet, mobile phone, online games, or other kind of digital technology to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else. It is a form of bullying but because it happens online or on mobile phones can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A child cannot get away from the bully by going home, or going out, and it can feel as though there is no escape. It can be done anonymously by blocking the sender's details or setting up a fake account. Cyber bullying can also involve a lot of people and the child may feel as though everyone is ganging up on them. There is however always a trail and children should be asked to keep copies of the e-mails, abusive texts and messages and seek help.

## Hazing

Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone on joining a group, or maintaining status in a group, that humiliates, degrades, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing is known to exist in schools, universities and in sports environments and staff and volunteers need to be aware it could exist in snow sports.

Typical hazing activities include sleep deprivation, personal servitude, binge drinking and drinking games, being forced to wear embarrassing attire, carry out dangerous stunts and sexual assault. Hazing will not be tolerated and should be reported.

## Recognising signs of abuse

Recognising abuse is not easy. Below are some guidelines and common indicators of abuse.

People especially children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough and tumble of everyday life. Injuries should be interpreted considering the person's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental injuries occur over bony parts of the body, eg. elbow, knees, shins, and are usually on the front of the body. Except for the physical signs (bruising, bites, scalds, etc.) concern should primarily be given to changes in a child's behaviour. Some children may always have difficulty in interacting with other children. Indicators that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained bruising, marks, or injuries on any part of the body.
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- Describing what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- Multiple bruises, in clusters, often on the upper arm or outside of the thigh.
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Flinching when approached or touched.
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends or being prevented from socialising with others.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns (eg. over-eating or loss of appetite)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Reluctance to get changed
- Depression or withdrawn behaviour
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age or developmental level
- Dirty, smelly, or inappropriate clothing for the conditions, or getting clothes torn.
- Pain or itching in the genital area or discomfort when walking or sitting down.
- Sulking, hair twisting, rocking, fear of making mistakes, sudden speech disorders.
- Fears of parents being approached for an explanation.
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress
- Complaining of being tired all the time.

If a person is being bullied or abused, in addition to the above, the following may be observed:

- Behavioural changes can be reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down.
- An unexplained drop-off in performance
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- This is not a definitive list but should serve as a guide to assist you. Remember too there may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour.
- That many people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or two indicators should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place.

**To reiterate, it is not the responsibility of those working for Snowbility to determine if abuse has occurred. It is, however, our responsibility to act or pass on appropriately any concerns.**

In brief, be aware of signs of abuse and neglect:

- Disabled people might be at higher risk of abuse
- Athletes, especially disabled ones, might be at higher risk of abuse
- Be familiar with the different types and indicators of abuse
- There are many different types of abuse - indicators are not exhaustive and are not definite proof of abuse
- Ignoring abuse could make you as guilty as committing it

### **Section 3 - Responding to concerns and allegations**

Issues discussed here will be covered in Safeguarding Training received. This is a further reminder of your duty of care to respond to concerns you may have.

**It is not the responsibility of those working for Snowbility to determine if abuse has occurred but is the responsibility of Snowbility staff, instructors, and volunteers to report and act on any concerns. This applies to both allegations or suspicions of abuse occurring within snow sports activities and taking place elsewhere, such as a child's family or the community.**

Information should be shared on a strictly need to know basis and others not involved should not be informed to protect a person. All information should remain confidential. Further information can be found in the NSPCC CPSU briefing document about sharing information. Always speak in the first instance to the designated person within the organisation or the lead instructor on site.

## How concerns are raised

There are several reasons why you may become aware of a possible case of abuse, and these include:

- Something a person has said
- You may see it happening
- Signs or suspicions of abuse
- An allegation made against a Snowbility member
- An allegation made about a parent/guardian/carer or someone not working within the sport
- Response to bullying
- Response to a breach of a code of conduct, or poor practice
- Observation of inappropriate behaviour

You may witness something yourself, or someone might come to you with their concerns. There are three important steps in taking the appropriate action and they are essential.

Step 1 - Responding to the disclosure, suspicion or allegation

Step 2 - Recording the relevant information

Step 3 - Reporting the relevant information

**Throughout, confidentiality must be maintained.**

### **Step 1 – Responding to the disclosure, suspicion, or allegation.**

Anyone responding to a disclosure, suspicion or allegation must follow the SAFETY principles:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the person. This includes not showing your opinions or emotions to the person.
- Always reassure the person that they are not to blame and that it is right to tell. Do not make promises that you cannot or should not keep.
- Follow confidentiality procedures and tell the person that you may have to inform others to help stop the abuse. Information relating to possible abuse must be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Ensure the safety of the person. If medical attention is required, arrange for the person to be seen by a doctor, and inform the medical services in question about the safeguarding concern. If you are concerned for the immediate safety of the person, call the Police, 999.
- Take notes of the exact words that have been said in the Safeguarding Incident Report form. Listen openly to the person but keep your questions to a minimum. Report what you have been told, not what you are interpreting. Do not speculate or make assumptions. Avoid asking leading questions. The law is very strict and abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning.

Having to deal with a safeguarding issue can be a stressful experience, so be aware that there are support mechanisms to support you with this via the Safeguarding Officer, Lesley McDonald.

**NEVER:**

- Approach any alleged abuser to discuss the concern
- Make promises to the person you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from:

During office hours: Snowbility 01442 773007

During out of office hours: NSPCC helpline at 0808 800 5000

**Step 2 – Recording the relevant information .**

Any information passed to Snowbility, children’s social care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), etc. must be as helpful and accurate as possible. It is important to write down as much information at the time, or as soon as possible afterwards. The Safeguarding Incident Report Form should be used if possible and sent to Snowbility Office. When recording, distinction should be made between what is personal knowledge, and what knowledge has been learned from others. Do not include personal opinions.

Information recorded must include:

Details of the person (name, address, gender, date of birth, home telephone number)

- Details of the parent, guardian, or carer (name, address, telephone number)
- Whether or not the parents/guardian/carer have been informed
- Details of the person expressing their concern
- Details of the nature of the allegation – what you are told, use the exact words if you can, or observations.
- Description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Details of the person alleged to have caused the incident, injury (name, address, date of birth/approximate age, telephone number – if you are able to get this information without arousing suspicion)
- Witnesses to the incident
- Times, dates, and other relevant information
- It must be clearly documented what is fact, or you have been told, and what is opinion or hearsay.
- A signature, date, and time on the report

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### Step 3 – Reporting the relevant information.

All suspicions and allegations must be reported immediately to:

- Snowbility Office on 01442 773007
- The Lead Instructor – if the concern in question is in the framework of a lesson
- The authorities – if it has been determined with the Snowbility Office that the child is at risk.

It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings, but now allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

## How to proceed with a concern within the Snowbility environment.

If you are concerned with the behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer of Snowbility. Did someone approach you to tell you something happened to them that could be recognised as abuse?

**Stay calm** - If the child/young person is present, reassure him/her they are not to blame. Keep questions to a minimum. Record information accurately, as spoken by the child/young person.

Unlikely/not sure

Could this be child abuse?

Yes

Is the concern relating to an inappropriate action or breach of the Code of Conduct?

Yes

No

Report concerns to:  
Snowbility Manager  
Snowbility Safeguarding Officer  
Lead instructor if it is in a ski/snowboarding lesson.

**If the child requires immediate medical attention**

No

Yes

Dial 999 for an ambulance and inform them the concern relates to safeguarding.

Immediately refer the matter to Snowbility Office and to the authorities.

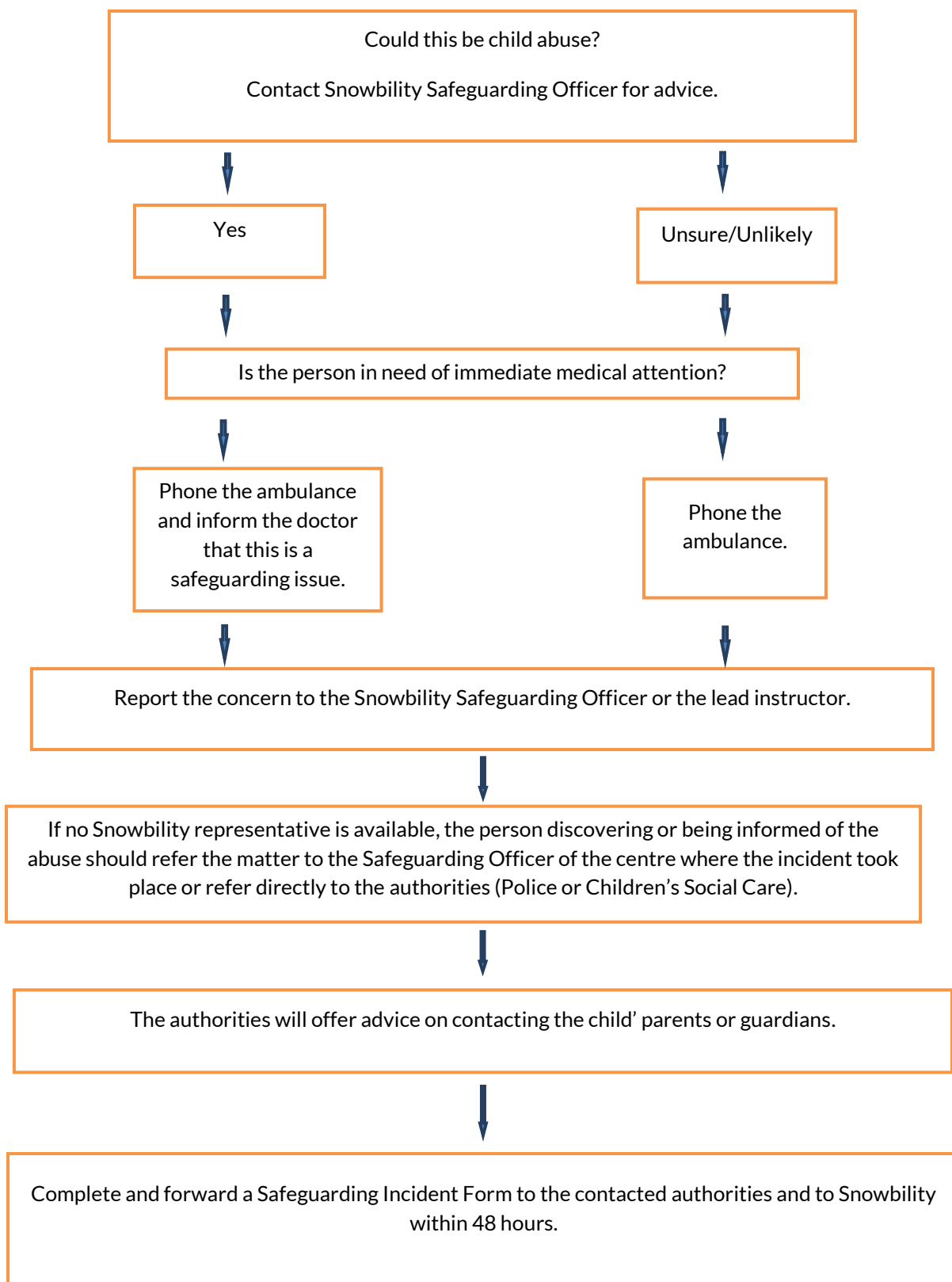
**Report concerns to the Snowbility Safeguarding Officer who will:**

Complete an Incident form and report to Children's Social Care or Police. Provide a copy of the form within 24 hours.

Alleged minor poor practice: instigation of either the complaints or disciplinary procedure or no further action.

Serious poor practice/abuse: possible child protection investigation, criminal investigation, investigation under disciplinary proceedings, including temporary suspension of person accused.

How to proceed with a concern outside the Snowbility environment.



**REMEMBER TO KEEP THIS CONFIDENTIAL – STRICTLY ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS.**



## What happens next?

### Outside of Snowbility

Where there is a complaint against a Snowbility employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal in which case the Police are immediately involved
- Child Protection in which social services and/or the Police are involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Snowbility will be involved (Snowbility Disciplinary Procedure which is available from Snowbility Office: email 01442 773007 richard@snowbility.co.uk)

### Involvement of authorities

Snowbility staff and volunteers are not Safeguarding experts, and it is not our responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for safeguarding and child protection. Children's Social Care and the Police have a legal responsibility to investigate all Child Protection referrals by talking to relevant people involved.

In England, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) have a responsibility to investigate where there is an allegation about someone who has potentially breached their position of trust. They support organisations where concerns have arisen in relation to the behaviour towards children by a member of staff or volunteer. Whether or not a parallel abuse investigation is considered or undertaken, LADOs will work with organisations (often to the conclusion of the case) to ensure that internal complaints and disciplinary and investigative processes are effectively applied.

Local Groups should establish who and where LADOs are in their area and how referrals are made to them.

Internal Snowbility investigations may be put on hold until statutory agencies have completed their investigations. Advice will be taken from statutory agencies about whether it is appropriate to discuss the concerns with the person's parents/carers etc. (where abuse has been alleged) or the alleged abuser, and whether it is appropriate to temporarily suspend the alleged abuser if they are in a position of responsibility within Snowbility.

If there is any doubt, you must report the incident. It may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause concern.

### Suspension and investigation

Snowbility will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services or Snowbility investigation – see Snowbility Disciplinary Procedure which can be obtained by emailing: richard@snowbility.co.uk

Sometimes the authorities will not wish such action to be taken immediately as it could jeopardise their enquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police enquiries, Snowbility will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

For example, this may involve debriefing of the Local Group and/or parents/guardians, or the use of alternative staff Snowbility will follow its Disciplinary Procedure.

Decisions can be difficult, particularly where there is insufficient evidence for the Police to prosecute. Snowbility will reach a decision based on the information available and on a balance of probability that the person may pose a risk towards children within snow sports.

The welfare of people will always remain paramount.

Where appropriate, consideration will be given to provide support for the person, parents and staff and volunteers.

Possible outcomes:

For alleged minor poor practice:

- no case to answer
- resolved with agreement between parties
- training/mentoring agreed
- more significant concerns emerged

For serious poor practice or alleged abuse:

- No case to answer
- Less serious – referred to complaint's procedure
- Disciplinary hearing – with sanctions, expulsion from Snowbility
- Civil proceedings

Appeals processes will be according to the outcome in question and clarified to interested parties.

### **Approaching alleged abusers**

Any person reporting or investigating an accusation should not contact the alleged abuser or child/person involved, and should seek advice from Children's Social Care, Police or Snowbility Safeguarding Officer.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse can be made some period after the event. For example, by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made, the same procedure should be followed. This is because other people, either within or outside of snow sports, may be at risk from this person.

### **Working with the aftermath**

After a suspicion or allegation about a safeguarding concern has been investigated, there are likely to be strong feelings amongst staff, parents and children and possibly among the wider community, which will need to be addressed.

There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication – if rumour or fact
- Guilt and blame – if suspicions had been around for some time
- Impact – on individuals, or the nature of what occurred and to whom
- Gaps in the organisation in terms of roles and post held

Careful thought will need to be given to the sharing of information and the provision of appropriate support. Once again debriefing sessions with the Local Group, other staff and/or parents/guardians may be helpful.

**Information should be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.**

## **Responsibility**

Snowbility expects its staff and volunteers to immediately discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a student with the person in charge of the activity (ie. Lead Instructor,) and with the Snowbility Safeguarding Officer and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

In addition, if deemed appropriate, staff and volunteers can report directly to the authorities. If you choose to report directly to the statutory agencies, then you must also report the matter to Snowbility Safeguarding officer 01442 773007 [lesley@snowbility.co.uk](mailto:lesley@snowbility.co.uk)

Snowbility staff and volunteers are not Child Protection experts, and it is not their responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. If they are concerned abuse might have taken place, they will share the information with professional agencies that are responsible for safeguarding.

## **Confidentiality**

Snowbility staff and volunteers may gather a great deal of personal information about people during their working relationship and this information may be confidential. Confidentiality does not, however, preclude the disclosure of information to the appropriate person/people where a person's welfare is concerned.

If a welfare concern is raised, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained wherever possible and for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only, which include the following people:

- Snowbility Manager - always
- The guardian of the person (only in certain circumstances and after receiving official guidance from statutory agencies).
- The person making the allegation
- Children's Social Care
- Police
- LADO
- Case Management Panel members

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the Data Protection Act 1984.

## Whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, 1998, more commonly known as the 'Whistleblowing Act', requires employers to make arrangements which allows their employees to make complaints on serious matters without fear of victimisation.

Snowbility has a Whistleblowing Policy in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). Snowbility is committed to developing a culture where it is safe, and acceptable, for all those involved in snow sports to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct. Whistleblowing can involve sharing potentially vital information about health and safety risks, environmental factors, fraud, and harm of children or covering up for someone.

### What is whistleblowing?

Whistle blowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious issues within the organisation, rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

It is important to have procedures for enabling staff and volunteers to share, in confidence with a designated person (this could be the Snowbility Manager) and concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour. This may include behaviour linked to child abuse or behaviour that pushes boundaries beyond acceptable limits.

If this is consistently ignored, a culture may develop within an organisation whereby staff and volunteers are 'silenced'.

Snowbility is fully supportive of whistleblowing for the sake of the child and vulnerable adults and will provide support and protect those who whistle blow. While it is difficult to express concerns about colleagues, it is important that these concerns are communicated to the Manager.

All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to talk to the Manager if they become aware of anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Reports made in good faith, but which are later assessed as unfounded will not result in any action being taken against the reporter. However, persons reporting for malicious reasons may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

The Whistleblowing Policy is available from the Snowbility Office.

### Information sharing

Snowbility information sharing policy is in line with the Child Protection in Sport Units "Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing".

- Data protection is not a barrier to sharing information – but provides a framework to ensure information is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest – with the person from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared.
- Seek advice – if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- Share with consent where appropriate – and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information.
- Consider safety and wellbeing – base your information sharing decision on considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.

- Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure – ensure information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those who need to have it, accurate and is shared securely.
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it.

## Section 4 - Recruitment

### Appointing Appropriate Staff and Volunteers to Work with Children and Vulnerable Adults

Most people working in snow sports with children have the best possible intentions. However, Snowbility recognises it has a responsibility to safeguard children participating in snow sports by providing a safe and enjoyable environment. Sound recruitment practices adopted by Snowbility help this process. Snowbility therefore takes all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. In addition, Snowbility ensures the selection process is fair and equitable.

It is Snowbility's policy that all staff and volunteers working closely with children and vulnerable adults go through an appropriate vetting process prior to their appointment to establish their suitability to work with children.

### Recruitment Policy (Could be a separate policy)

Snowbility recognises the need for careful consideration of all applications for people wishing to work or volunteer for the organisation and will follow the recruitment policy below:

Where the work or volunteering will bring the person into contact with children:

- All new applicants wishing to volunteer or work for Snowbility will be required to fill in an application form.
- Applicants will be asked to attend an interview, either formal.
- Provide 2 references, one reference must be the current or latest employer, and one reference should concern paid or unpaid work with children and/or vulnerable adults. The referees should have known the applicant for at least 2 years.
- References will be followed up before the appointment is made. The references should contain a statement relating to the referee's awareness of the responsibilities the post applied for requires.
- Where applicable, they will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (having a criminal record will not necessarily preclude anyone from working or volunteering for Snowbility, it depends on the nature of the offence)
- Where applicable, they will be required to have a check against the DBS barred list for working with children.
- If they are going to work or volunteer in Regulated Activity, applicants will not be able to do so until their Barred List status has been verified.
- Applicants will be provided with a job description for the work they will be undertaking.
- Applicants will be invited to attend an interview/informal meeting.
- Applicants will be required to accept and adhere to all other Snowbility policies and procedures.

- If successful, applicants will receive an induction which will include Verification of their identify\* Verification that they meet the UK Border Agency Requirements to work here (where applicable) - <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/> Verification of their qualifications (where applicable to their role). Signing up to the relevant Code of Conduct.

All people working or volunteering with children will initially be supervised by an appropriate person.

### **Attributes**

Upon application, all staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate the following attributes:

- An aptitude for looking after or working with children.
- The ability to provide warm and consistent care.
- A willingness to respect the background and culture of the people in their care.
- A commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern.
- Reasonable physical health, mental stability, integrity, and flexibility.
- Formally through probation meetings and appraisals.

### **Post recruitment**

- All new instructors and volunteers should be made aware of Snowbility's Safeguarding Policy and the requirements on them to sign and abide by the Policy and Code of Conduct
- The new appointee will be given a copy of their job description and told who to go to if they have any questions.
- Any training needs will be identified and met (where possible).
- Where applicable, a mentor will be appointed to enable a period of supervision to support the new staff member or volunteer.

Snowbility will endeavour to:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers who are eligible are subject to a criminal records' check.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers who are undertaking Regulated Activity are checked against the barred list for working with children and not allowed to commence work if they are barred.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers working closely with children undertake relevant child protection training.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers working with children are aware of good practice and bad practice and know what to do if they have a concern about a child, or about the behaviour of an adult towards a child.
- Ensure all coaches, instructors, trainee instructors and leaders have an up to date first aid qualification.

## Section 5 - Training and development

### Safeguarding training

Snowbility recognises the necessity for all staff and volunteers to be inducted and trained in safeguarding.

This is generic safeguarding training for sports organisations and will help them to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, to help ensure no concerns arise from misunderstandings or misinterpretation.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Snowbility recognises the need for instructors and volunteers to be kept up to date with Safeguarding legislation and as such all instructors and volunteers will be required to attend an annual refresher Safeguarding Children workshop.

In addition, the Lead Instructor/ company director/SO (RF) should attend the Time to Listen safeguarding training every 3 years. This course is specific to snow sports.

Dates and locations of these training workshops will be made available to Snowbility staff and volunteers. When internal training is organised, it will be communicated to all Snowbility staff and volunteers.

The training that staff and volunteers will be expected to attend will depend on their specific role.

**All staff and volunteers need to be familiar with this safeguarding policy. Snowbility recognises this area can be perceived as complex and, as such, will provide the necessary support to any enquiry from its staff and volunteers.**

## Contact details

Richard Fetherston - Snowbility Managing Director richard@snowbility.co.uk	07713888199
Lesley McDonald, Safeguarding Officer lesley@snowbility.co.uk	01442 773007 or 07904 584795
Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board Team	01992 588757
Children's Social Care Emergency contact	0300 123 4042
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults	0300 123 4042
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01992 555420
Police (First Action Call)	999
Police non-emergency local office ( Hemel Hempstead)	01442 27000

## National

Child line (24 Hours)	0800 1111
Child Protection Centre	0870 000 3344
Child Protection Support Unit (CPSU)	0116 234 72 78
Kidscape – help for adults with concerns about bullying	0845 205 204
NSPCC Freephone - 24hours helpline for adult with concerns	0808 800 5000
Samaritans	08457 9090
The Child Abuse Investigation Unit (National)	101