

BCA British Caving Association Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy document, and the accompanying Guidance Notes, are issued strictly for the guidance of caving and mining clubs and societies and individual members that constitute the main membership of the Association. Members and organisations controlled by Local Authorities and other non-member organisations are expected to have their own policies, guidance and working rules and arrangements that are entirely their own responsibility for developing, administering and updating within the same legal framework as the Association.

1.00 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.01 The British Caving Association (BCA) recognises the requirements of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) and subsequent legislation affecting children, young persons and vulnerable adults.

1.02 PoCA includes “children”, that is under 16’s, and “young persons”, that is 16 to 18s as well, (further referred to here with equal meaning as “young persons” or “children”).

1.03 PoCA takes in sexual, emotional and physical abuse and also “neglect” (which includes all aspects of failure to ensure the safety of young persons and vulnerable adults).

2.00 POLICY STATEMENTS

2.01 BCA recognises the importance of the welfare of young persons and their right to protection from abuse as set out in section 1.00 of this document.

2.02 BCA recognises its duty of care to young persons, for the actions of its trustees, officers & agents.

2.03 BCA will take all allegations of child abuse seriously and will respond to such allegations quickly.

2.04 BCA considers that in any caving or mine exploration activity safety of the participants and conservation of the cave are of paramount concern at all times.

2.05 Underlying this it must be borne in mind that BCA does not proactively promote the participation of young persons in caving or mine exploration. It takes this stance for a number of reasons:-

- a. caving can often be a strenuous activity requiring a mature physical and mental approach:
- b. a working knowledge of weather patterns & limestone hydrology can be vital for safe caving:
- c. caves are a strictly limited physical resource which deserve a mature appreciation of their conservation requirements.

3.00 BCA: ITS TRUSTEES, OFFICERS and AGENTS

3.01 If BCA receives an allegation of child abuse against one of its trustees, officers or agents, then it will treat it as a potential criminal activity and report it to the police.

3.02 In addition, one or more members of the Executive, (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer), will immediately be informed and will then take prompt action, as an executive body, to consider such matters as suspension of awards/benefits and all necessary further actions.

4.00 BCA: RECOMMENDATIONS TO ITS MEMBERS

4.01 BCA recommends that in any activity involving children, whether training or caving or preparing for caving, there should be at all times at least two adults present.

4.02 BCA recommends that where **regular** caving and/or caver training activities involving children are planned, then guidelines such as those set out in “Protecting Children – a guide for sportspeople” (NSPCC 2000) should be followed for the selection, vetting and recruitment of the participating adults.

4.03 All adults involved in **regular** activities with children should be made aware of best practice in responding to alleged or possible child abuse as set out in the above publication (see 4.02 above).

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