



MONTGOMERY FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Approved 17th March 2011

**MONTGOMERY FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS
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1. Introduction

The Montgomery Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs policy outlines the guidance for the protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who are members of the constituent Clubs within the Federation. The guidance is based on the Wales YFC Child Protection procedures.

2. Scope

The purpose of the policy is to provide assistance to all persons involved in management and administration at Wales, County and Club level, both paid and voluntary, as well as parents, helpers, Club Members, etc., in order to:

- a) Ensure that they are aware that abuse can take place within their club /movement and that abuse may take various forms;
- b) Assist them to recognise that abuse of children / young people (i.e. those under 18 years of age) can occur and that they have a system in place to help them deal with evidence of possible child abuse;
- c) Provide all persons involved with the care and responsibility of children / young people with guidance as to how to avoid situations that may give rise to allegations of abuse, and how to act pro-actively to ensure that both abuse and allegations are avoided;
- d) Ensure that all YFC members and officers understand that they have a responsibility to see that the abuse of children / young people, from whatever source, is prevented;

Guidance sheets & procedures to support the MontgomeryYFC Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy

Guidance sheet 1:	Do' and Don'ts for Young Members
Guidance sheet 2:	Recognising signs of abuse
Guidance sheet 3:	Recording incident or disclosure
Guidance sheet 4:	Parental Consent Form
Guidance sheet 5:	CRB Reporting Procedure
Guidance sheet 6:	Relevant Stakeholders

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3. Policy aim

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to help prevent abuse of young people / children and ensure that young people/children are protected and kept safe from harm.
- 3.2 Everyone involved in the care of children / young people should know what to do if there are concerns about abuse and this guidance is designed to support the YFC in following all child protection procedures.

4. Key principles for good practice in the care of children / young people

Anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people. It is essential that the same procedures be used consistently whether those involved are paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time.

- 4.1 It is possible to reduce situations for the abuse of children / young people and help to protect Club officials, staff, volunteers and helpers by promoting good practice. The following are some specific examples of care, which should be taken when working within a child's / young person's environment:

- Language must be acceptable and without innuendo;
- Always be publicly open when working with children / young people. Avoid situations where a member and an individual child / young person are completely unobserved;
- If any form of manual support is required it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Children's Service. Some parents / guardians are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be considered carefully;
- Encourage an open environment, (i.e. no secrets);
- Where mixed groups are away from home a senior male and female officer should always accompany them.
- Everyone should also be aware that as a general rule it does not make sense to spend excessive amounts of time alone with young members away from others.
- Everyone should consider the arrangements for transporting children / young people alone on car journeys, however short.
- Everyone should consider the arrangements for activities that may lead to children / young people being alone with you.
- Everyone should consider the arrangements where children / young people may attend an adult's home i.e. coaching / training for specific YFC activities.

- If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the child / young person's parents / guardians and preferably with the knowledge of another senior officer of the Club.
- Integration of Safeguarding at all YFC Events. Safeguarding procedures should be formalised for all YFC events i.e. All stewards briefings should include Safeguarding procedures relevant to that particular activity / event.

4.3 Those looking after, children/young people must never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay;
- Share a room with a child / young person;
- Allow, or engage in, any form of inappropriate touching;
- Allow children / young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child / young person, even in fun;
- Allow allegations made by a child / young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children / young people they can do for themselves;
- Invite or allow children / young people to be with them in their home while unsupervised.

4.4 All Members should receive information on keep themselves safe (Guidance sheet 1).

This information is available to all YFC members through the Montgomery YFC Website, from County Offices and will be distributed to all members at the point of joining the organisation.

4.5 All those teaching, training, giving instruction, care, supervision or providing advice and guidance or driving a vehicle used specifically for transporting children or young people should be subject to CRB checks. (Defined in Schedule 4, the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act).

The activity must happen frequently once a **week** or more or intensively four or more days in a single month or overnight.

4.6 Annual safeguarding training should be available through the local safeguarding children's board for Club / County officers so that they are continual updated and aware of safeguarding issues. The agreed level of training will be set out in the YFC Training Plan.

4.7 Supervision

YFC Officers should be sensitive to any concerns about abuse and act on them at an early stage. They should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns and discuss these with the County Organiser / elected Representative.

The County Organiser / elected Representative would seek advice and discussion with their line manager and / or County Council Children's services.

4.8 Visibility of Policy

All those involved in the organisation should be able to access the policy via the Montgomery YFC Website. Copies are also available from all County Federation offices who have adopted the policy and their local YFC clubs.

4.9 It is recommended that Montgomery YFC ensure that the County Organiser / elected representative meets the following requirements to ensure for the safeguarding of children and young people.

- Attends meetings / training sessions of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in order to keep up to date with Safeguarding issues.
- Monitor that CRB checks are being conducted on relevant YFC personnel.
- Monitor that annual training in Safeguarding issues is available for all YFC Officers (as set out in the YFC Training Plan) in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Work with Officer teams (Club / County) to ensure that a designated 'responsible adult' is identified at each YFC event at which members under the age of 18 are present.
- Work with Officer teams (Club / County) to ensure that the behaviour of older members at Club / County / events minimises the risk to younger members, and protects the reputation of older members. This will involve looking at activities and transport arrangements, for example.
- Discuss any concerns regarding possible abuse in a confidential manner, supporting the member or officer to refer on to the appropriate authorities.

4.10 Consent forms

At all levels (Club, County and Wales) the use of consent forms should be common practice in order for children / young people under the age of 18 to engage in YFC programmes of work.

5. Recognition of, and response to, signs of possible abuse of children

5.1 Identification of Possible Abuse

It is often difficult even for those who are experienced in the field of child abuse to be sure that abuse is taking place. Therefore great care must be taken to ensure that suitably experienced persons are involved at the earliest opportunity. Guidance sheet 2 provides further information on recognising signs of possible abuse and more comprehensive information is available in the All Wales Child Protection procedures.

5.2 Indications of Abuse

Please see guidance 2 and / or All Wales Child Protection procedures for further detail / advice.

Indications of abuse include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- The child / young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- Someone else (child / young person / adult) expresses concern about the welfare of a child / young person;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).

5.3 Symptoms of Abuse

Please see guidance 2 and / or All Wales Child Protection procedures for further detail/advice.

A Child / Young Person subject to abuse may:

- Show inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engage in sexually explicit behaviour;
- Become distrustful of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- Have difficulty in making friends;
- Show reluctance to socialise with other children / young people;
- Display variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- Lose weight for no apparent reason;

- Become increasingly dirty or unkempt.

5.4 Recommended Responses to Apparent Evidence of Abuse

If a child / young person says or indicates that he / she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child / young person is being abused, the person receiving this information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child / young person;
- Tell the child / young person that he / she is not to blame and that it was right to tell someone;
- Take what the child / young person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child / young person who has communication difficulties and / or differences in language;
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear, accurate understanding of what has been said;
- Reassure the child / young person but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be capable of being honoured in the light of subsequent developments;
- As soon as possible, make a full written record of what has been said, heard or seen. (Please see guidance sheet 3).

5.6 Responsibility for Investigation of Suspicions or Allegations

It is not the responsibility of Club / County members or officers whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children / young people in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any action necessary to protect the child.

The Local Authority Children's Services has a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made children's service have a legal responsibility to investigate. This may involve talking to the child / young person and his / her family and gathering information from other people who know the child / young person. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

5.7 Action to be taken in the Event of Concern

The person discovering, or being informed of the abuse, should inform the Local Authority Children's Service or the police; telephone numbers are given below and / or can be found in the telephone directory. In these circumstances, it is not required that a person gives his / her name, but it is helpful to do so.

The County Council's Children's Service, together with the referrer and possible support of the County Organiser / elected representative, where appropriate, will decide how and when parents or guardians should be informed.

In most situations it would be important to talk to parents or guardians to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child / young person seems withdrawn, he /

she may have experienced bereavement in the family.

However there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared, (e.g. where a parent or guardian may be responsible for the abuse or be unable to respond appropriately to the situation).

5.8 Records, Information and Evidence (Refer to guidance sheet 3)

Information passed to Children's Service or to the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. Information should include the following:

- The nature of the allegation;
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries;
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred;
- Any times, dates or other relevant information;
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

Reporting the matter to the police or local County Council's Children's Service should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to County Council's Children's Service should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

A record should be made of the name and designation of the Children's Service member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call in case any follow-up is needed.

5.9 Allegations against YFC Officers / Members etc.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur within other settings, (e.g. sport or other social activities). Recent inquiries indicate that abuse, which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in the YFC movement are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken.

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse, or where he / she is unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and is therefore unclear about what action to take. But those responsible should always consult other colleagues such as the County Organiser / elected representative who can gain advice from the Children's Service or the NSPCC if there is any doubt. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern.

There may be reservations about reporting matters involving other YFC members, officers or volunteers. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare

of the child / young person arising from abuse or harassment by any person, no matter who they might be, should be reported immediately.

YFC will assure all members / staff / officers / volunteers that it would fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

5.10 Possible Actions Following a Report

There are a number of possible actions as a result of a report of child abuse being lodged, including:

- A criminal investigation;
- A child protection investigation;
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

5.11 Action to be taken in the event of concern about YFC Personnel

If, following careful consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Person(s) in Charge will deal with it as a misconduct issue;

- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Person(s) in Charge, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the Federation appointed representative, who should decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings;
- Any suspicion that a child / young person has been abused by either a member / officer / volunteer should be reported to a person(s) in Charge, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child / young person in question and any other child / young person who may be considered to be at risk;
- The Person in Charge will refer the allegation to the County Organiser / elected representative who will refer the matter to the local authority's Children's Service who may then involve the police;
- The parents / guardians of the child / young person will be contacted by the local authority Children's Service as soon as possible;
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned;
- If a Person(s) in Charge is the subject of the suspicion / allegation, the report must be made to the County Organiser / elected representative, who is then responsible for taking the action outlined above;
- The Federation will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and children's services inquiries;

- Irrespective of the findings of the Children’s Service or Police inquiries, the Federation must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct / disciplinary procedure to decide whether a member / officer / volunteer etc. can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively;
- This may be a difficult decision particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Federation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children / young people should always remain paramount.
- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children / young people / parents and guardians / officers / volunteers. **The Federation should not attempt to become involved in any such action except under the guidance, and with the support, of the Children’s Service.**

5.12 Allegations of Abuse Made at a Later Date

Allegation of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child / young person by an officer / volunteer who is still currently working with children / young people). Where such an allegation is made, Club / County should follow the procedures given under the heading “Responding to suspicions or allegations” and report the matter to the Local Authority’s Children’s Service or the Police. This is because other children / young people, either within the organisation or outside it, may be at risk from such a person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children / young people.

6. Relevant stakeholders

Guidance Sheet 6 outlines relevant statutory and voluntary bodies that can support the YFC in the implementation of this policy.

Montgomery YFC Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy approved by
MONTGOMERY YFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Signed:

Roland Davies

Role: Montgomery YFC Chairman 2010 / 2011

Dated:

Signed:

Dated:

Montgomery Federation of YFC
YFC Office
Station Road
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1BE
01686 614 028
lorraine.stokes@powys.gov
www.yfc-montgomery.org.uk

Montgomery YFC Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy - Guidance Sheet 1

Advice for Young Members on How to avoid Misconduct by others in your Club and What to Do About It

1. What is misconduct?

Broadly any improper behaviour towards you - that can be a physical act, remarks, suggestive gestures, or the showing of pictures or other material or some other form of abuse such as physical violence.

2. What can you do to avoid such misconduct?

Follow a few simple rules

- i) LISTEN to the advice of parents / guardians;
- ii) AVOID being left alone with anyone;
- iii) If you have to leave the group or club meeting temporarily, or are called away from it, TELL SOMEONE
 - a) WHERE you are going;
 - b) WHY you are going;
 - c) HOW LONG you are likely to be gone.
- iv) DON'T ALLOW anyone to talk to you about something personal about YOURSELF or about him or her, if it has nothing at all to do with his or her job or work with the YFC. If they still do so, WALK AWAY and complain to someone;
- v) DON'T AGREE to meet someone on your own after club meetings or other activities;
- vi) DON'T AGREE to meet someone on your own at ANYTIME, ANYWHERE;
- vii) DON'T ACCEPT a lift from anyone if you will be the only passenger. Either refuse or insist that someone else goes along too;
- viii) DON'T be over-friendly towards those who work with you, or for you, in the YFC movement.

3. If misconduct happens what should you do?

- i) TELL that person to stop at once and also TELL others who may be present what happened;
- ii) If they actually saw what happened REMEMBER who they are so that they can be your witnesses;
- iii) ***If the misconduct continues, TELL that person, again, to stop at once, then leave if you can or shout 'Help' if you can't, and report the matter to another official or adult;***
- iv) TELL your parents / guardians as soon as possible;
- v) You or your parents / guardians should KEEP A RECORD of the date, time place and what happened and make a LIST of any witnesses;
- vi) If any of your friends suffer the same sort of behaviour from this person, ASK

THEM to keep similar records;

- vii) ASK any witnesses to do the same;
- viii) TALK to your PARENTS / GUARDIANS and report the incident, as soon as possible, to the Club Leader or other responsible officer.

4. What you definitely MUST NOT do:

- i) DON'T wrongly complain if nothing happened;
- ii) DON'T exaggerate what occurred if something did happen;
- iii) DON'T ignore the behaviour and do stop the behaviour;
- iv) DON'T keep to yourself what happened; and DON'T agree to “hush up” or hide what happened;
- v) DON'T delay before complaining;
- vi) DON'T be afraid or embarrassed to tell your parents, a friend, the Club Leader or other senior member.

Montgomery YFC Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy - Guidance Sheet 2**ABUSE OF CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE**

Abuse of Children / Young People is a complex area for most adults. It requires both acceptance and understanding and, where there is any doubt about procedures, willingness to take professional advice before acting. It is possible that individuals may be placed in the position of having to report abuse of a child / young person, see guidance sheet 3.

You may become suspicious of an injury on a child / young person, a child / young person may confide in you, or you may just realise that a child / young person whom you have come to know quite well suddenly starts to act out of character. All of these may be the signs of abuse of a child / young person and it is your responsibility to do something about it.

Recognising signs of abuse or receiving a disclosure of abuse is always stressful and upsetting and in many cases it is much easier to convince yourself that there is really no problem and do nothing about it – this can be very dangerous! What do you do if you suspect abuse of a child / young person? What can you do if you are accused of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour?

The Montgomery YFC Safeguarding of Children and Young People is designed to help anyone working with under 18's to:

- Recognise the signs of abuse of a child / young person, whether physical, emotional or sexual.
- Develop techniques of how to deal with it.
- Understand current legislation in respect of Child Protection and the YFC's responsibility in this context.
- Minimise situations that may lead to accusations of abuse of a child / young person.
- To convince people that the consequences of doing nothing may be very serious, or even fatal.
- To provide guidance and protection for both the child / young person and yourself in carrying out your responsibilities.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

- Physical:** Where children / young people are made to suffer physical hurt or injury, even death.
- Sexual:** Where adults seek sexual gratification from children or young people.
- Emotional:** Where children / young people are harmed by a chronic lack of love and affection or are in receipt of threats, taunts etc.
- Neglect:** Where a child / young persons basic physical and psychological needs are not met.

HOW TO RECOGNISE CHILD ABUSE

Noticeable injuries or changes in behaviour patterns may be the result of a number of things, abuse being only one. The following information is intended to make you stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

It can be very difficult to establish whether an injury has been caused by accident or abuse. Ask the child /young person about the injury and if you are at all unhappy with the explanation given, then report your suspicions in the first instance to the County Organiser / elected representative. He / she will then agree with you if the matter should be reported to the local authority's Children's Service and who is to take responsibility for such action.

It is always worthwhile making contact with the Local Authority Children's Service, in advance, to introduce yourself and ensure that you know the correct procedure for future reference. Keep the telephone number handy so that you do not have to search for it if needed. Where physical injury is identified and the parents / guardians are not implicated, the parents / guardians should be informed and involved in the next steps. Parents / Guardians have main duty and rights of care.

Do ensure, however that medical attention is sought if this is required.

SEXUAL ABUSE

This is much more difficult to identify than physical abuse as there may not be any outwardly visible signs. Indications of sexual abuse may be:

- Emotional or behavioural changes, e.g. a normally quiet child / young person may become loud and aggressive or a boisterous child may suddenly become quiet and passive.
- Sexually explicit talk and behaviour, inappropriate to the child's / young person's age.

- Uncharacteristic eating disorders.
- Depression and suicide attempts.

However, it is much more likely to be discovered by means of disclosure, either accidental, deliberate, or through a third party. As with alleged physical abuse, where the parent / guardian is not implicated, the parent / guardian should be consulted and involved in the next steps.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Probably the most difficult type of abuse to recognise, where some indications may include:

- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence (always thinking their contribution is “rubbish” and needing constant reassurance).
- The child / young person having extreme difficulty forming friendships, thus becoming a “loner”.
- The child / young person frequently being used as a “scapegoat” by other children / young people.
- The child / young person being withdrawn, introverted and depressed.

With all of the above examples, one must make judgements about the maturity of the child / young person and consider his / her wishes at all times.

Do remember that the abuse and neglect can manifest itself in a number of ways – often signs and symptoms will fall into more than one of the areas outlined.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s / young person’s basic physical and psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s / young person’s health or development. It may involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child / young person gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s / young person’s basic emotional needs.

It is recognised that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children / young people are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time.

Recent guidance from agencies working with children and young people draws attention to other sources of stress for children and families such as social exclusion, domestic violence,

poverty, the mental illness of a parent or guardian, or drug or alcohol misuse. All these may have a negative impact on a child's / young person's health and development and may be noticed by other members within YFC. If it is felt that the child or young person's well-being is being adversely affected by any of these areas, then the matter should be reported to the YFC County Organiser / elected representative in the first instance. The YFC County Organiser / elected representative will then agree with the officer / volunteer an appropriate course of action, following the procedure outlined above in the main policy document.

INCIDENT / DISCLOSURE FORM – CONFIDENTIAL

All allegations, complaints or suspicions of abuse should be recorded as close to the time of the incident as possible. Details of incidents should be recorded in as much detail as possible, and as accurately as possible. Any disclosures of abuse being made by children / young people should be a reflection of what was actually said. Do not try and interpret any of they information, just record what was said/witnessed.

Date and time of incident/disclosure:

Name and age of the child(ren) / young person(s) involved:

Name of parent(s) / guardian(s):

Address and telephone number(s) of person(s) involved:

Name(s), age(s), address(es), telephone number(s), of witness(es):

Name, role and contact details of person completing this form:

Details of what happened/disclosure of allegations:

(Do not interpret information-use the same language that was used by the child / young person.)

What action was taken?

(If no action was taken please explain why)

To whom did you report this incident?

Name and contact details of YFC County Organiser / Elected Representative

Informed YES/NO

Name and contact details of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Informed YES/NO

Any other relevant information

Signed: **Date:**

Time:

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE KEPT IN A SECURE AND SAFE PLACE AND TREATED AS STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL.**

Montgomery YFC Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy - Guidance Sheet 4**Relevant Stakeholders**

Local Authority Children's Service	01686 617 520
Out of Hours numbers	0845 757 3818
NSPCC Child line	0800 800 500
County Organiser / Elected Representative	Lorraine Stokes / Andrew Davies