

# British Connemara Pony Society

## CODE OF PRACTICE

### **Recruitment, Employment and Deployment of staff who work with young children.**

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people.

- **Registration/Application** forms should be completed by appropriate persons giving
  - Name, address.
  - A self disclosure question to declare any criminal record,
  - whether they are known to Any Social Services Dept as being an actual or potential risk to young people, or whether they have had any action taken against them with regards to child abuse, sexual offences, or violence.
  - Consent to Police Checks being undertaken (where required)
  - Consent to abide by a code of conduct
- **Training** should be given to all volunteers and staff to clarify their role. The amount of training will depend on the type of activity to be undertaken.
- **Recognising Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying** is the responsibilities of all paid and voluntary staff, and they have a responsibility to act if they have concern about someone's behaviour towards a young person. They should report to the appropriate person in authority.
- **What constitutes abuse**, Neglect, Physical abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse
- **Neglect** in an equine setting could include, not ensuring young persons are safe, exposing them to extreme weather conditions or unnecessary risks, or not ensuring a Childs basic needs.
- **Physical Abuse** in the equine field may occur when the nature and intensity of work or training exceeds the capacity of the child at his or her particular stage of development. Physical abuse may include giving alcohol, or inappropriate drugs
- **Sexual Abuse** can occur whenever children are used by adults to meet their sexual needs. Some aspects of coaching for equestrian sports may require physical support, the reason for this should be explained beforehand to the child and or parent as appropriate.
- **Emotional Abuse** can be carried out in equestrian sports, i.e. a parent who pushes too hard, a trainer who adopts a win-at-all-costs attitude, intimidation or unrealistic pressure to perform to consistently high expectations

### **Responding to Disclosure, Suspicion and Allegations.**

**Responding to Disclosure** is an important aspect of the concern. If a young person says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern, that a young person is being abused, then action

should be immediate. A full record should be made of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible and a copy sent to the appropriate person named.

- **Responding to Suspicion...**

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the horse industry in either paid or voluntary capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However any adult has a responsibility to protect young persons and to report any concern to an authorised person within the organisation, who could if necessary use the Help line of the NSPCC – 0800 800 500.
- Details regarding the nature of the abuse or allegation, any times or dates or other factual information, make a clear distinction between fact and hearsay must be recorded.

- **Responding to Allegations.**

- Although it is a difficult and sensitive issue, child abuse has occurred within sport, and may occur within a public setting. It is important that all those involved in the horse industry, and particularly within equestrian sports, are aware of this possibility, and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

- **Types of investigation.**

- A criminal investigation (by police)
- A child protection investigation (by Social Services)
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation by the employer, organisation or governing body.

- **Disciplinary Advisory Notes.**

- The council should have its own Investigation, Discipline and Appeals Committee comprised of at least 3 members.
- Any complaint should be put in writing to the Secretary who will inform the Chairman.
- Before making a decision the Committee should send to the person under suspicion written notice of the infringement, and given the opportunity to make written representation, or the opportunity to be heard personally, and may be accompanied by a friend who may be a legal representative.
- If the Disciplinary Committee is of the opinion that a case has been proved in whole or in part the person under suspicion should be informed as soon as possible, and the time within which an appeal against the decision must be lodged ( normally fourteen days). All appeals will be in accordance with the BEF regulations.
- The appeal committee will consist of 3-5 independent people with no previous direct knowledge of the incident, and an appeal hearing arranged, with or without the person under suspicion at the hearing.
- The Appeal Committee should consider the evidence, and, if it thinks fit, any fresh evidence, and may affirm, rescind, or amend any penalty previously imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.
- The person should be advised as soon as possible.