



**Child Protection Policy
Issue 3: June 2004**

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Introduction

All instructors should be aware that organisations that work with children must have child protection procedures in place. Geckos has to take its responsibilities regarding child protection seriously and has developed a clear yet common sense set of procedures covering all children under the age of 18 for whom Geckos has responsibility. Fundamental elements to Geckos' procedures are:

- Geckos has a legal responsibility to protect children in its care.
- A child is anyone under the age of 18
- Instructors should not put themselves in positions where they could be accused of any form of abuse.
- If any instructor sees or hears anything which could be perceived as either poor practice or abuse in relation to the care of children, the incident has to be reported to Geckos management.

Forms of Abuse

2. There are four main forms of abuse:

- **Neglect** This includes things like allowing a child to wear inappropriate clothing, providing insufficient attention, lack of supervision, deficient safety provision, unnecessary risk of injury;
- **Physical Abuse** Physically hurting a child in any way, giving a child alcohol, giving medication without permission, intensity of training beyond the capacity of the individual;
- **Sexual Abuse** Any aspect of sexual abuse, whether physical or verbal or inappropriate physical contact;
- **Emotional Abuse** Shouting, threatening or taunting children, constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform.

Effects of Abuse

3. Abuse in all its forms can affect a child of any age. The effects can be so damaging that they may follow an individual into adulthood.
4. A number of studies suggest that children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. This situation may be exacerbated for children from ethnic minorities, who might also be experiencing racial discrimination.

Responding to the Child

5. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:
- React calmly so as not to frighten the child;
 - Tell the child that he or she is not to blame and that it was right to tell;
 - Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language;
 - Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
 - Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments;
 - Make a full record of what has been said, heard, and/or seen as soon as possible.



General Guidance Notes

6. General. The following notes are provided to give general guidance to avoid the possibility of claims of abuse against instructors. If instructors have any uncertainty over whether they are using good practice they should seek guidance from the Geckos Manager.
- Avoid doing anything which is not totally open and make sure that all children are treated the same way;
 - Avoid any favouritism;
 - Avoid being overly tactile;
 - As far as is realistically possible, avoid fitting harnesses or other clothing or equipment; try to get the children to put their own on;
 - If it is necessary to assist a child to put on a harness, get him or her to agree that you will fit it and explain what you are doing while you are assisting him/her;
 - If you have to assist a child to put on a harness, make sure you do so openly and in sight of other participants;
 - Avoid making any contact with the child's genitalia or, in the case of a girl, her chest;
 - If you are required to lift, carry or support a child, avoid making contact with sensitive parts of the body, explain what you are doing while you are doing it and, where practicable, gain their consent;
 - Do not put yourself in a position where you find yourself alone with a child out of public view;
 - Do not make any sexually suggestive comment to any child; •Never leave a child or a group of children unsupervised.

Changing Rooms.

7. Do not enter changing rooms unless there is an emergency, and never put yourself in a position where you are alone with a child.

Being approached by a child.

8. If any child makes approaches to you or is overly familiar, you should extract yourself from the situation and report the matter to the Geckos manager.

Children who are unwell.

9. If an unaccompanied child is unwell while participating in a climbing session, Geckos is responsible for the child's care. If more than a minor nature, that is, needing to see a doctor or be taken to hospital, the child's own parents (or guardians) must be contacted to inform them of the situation. No young person under the age of 18 can be left unattended with either a doctor or at a hospital.

10. A child who is unable to participate in activities through being unwell must be supervised. This may necessitate suspending the session until appropriate arrangements have been made.

11. **Leaving the Centre.** Each instructor is responsible for all children in their care, until collected by an adult, unless permission has been given for the child to leave the Centre unsupervised. Children under the age of 12 years can only leave the Centre unaccompanied if written permission has been given by their parent or guardian.



If You Suspect Abuse or Poor Practice is Taking Place.

12. You have a responsibility to report any concern you may have that a child participating in a climbing session with Geckos is being subjected to any form of abuse or poor practice. If you have a concern, you must take the action identified in the Child Protection Procedures management flow chart overleaf.

Geckos Response to Suspected Abuse, Abuse or Poor Practice

13. Geckos management will follow the procedures identified in the Child Protection Procedures management flow chart overleaf.

Reference and Advice

National Coaching Foundation "Child Protection Procedures".

Childline helpline : 0800 1111

NSPCC helpline : 0800 800 500



Geckos Child Protection Procedures Routing Precautionary Procedures

In-house events

Ensure relevant medical details are entered on group use forms. If child has a medical condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes) ensure that, if needed, the child or accompanying adult possesses necessary medication.

Ensure details of age, addresses and contact phone numbers are completed. Children climbing with the kids' club at The Castle should have completed parental consent forms held behind reception.

Outdoor trips

Prepare and act upon an appropriate risk assessment.

Make sure accompanying parent remains in the locality and preferably within sight of child at all times. Ensure relevant medical details are held at the location by the organiser and are available.

Instructors should advise parents to ensure that children are properly clad for the prevailing weather conditions.

Management Flow Chart If you have a concern

Instructor action	You have concern that a child might be being subjected to abuse or poor practice by an employee, adult assistant or accompanying parent.	
	Record what you saw or heard.	
	Report the incident to the Geckos Manager.	
	<i>Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of these incidents you should not discuss the matter with other staff or members of the public.</i>	
Geckos action – normally initiated by the Geckos Manager.	Take report from whoever reported the matter and complete the child protection report form.	
If it appears to be a case of poor practice:		If it appears to be a case of abuse:
Interview the reported person immediately.		Interview the reported person immediately.
Record details on Child Protection report form.		Record details on Child Protection report form.
If not a Geckos instructor, report to the organisation concerned verbally and in writing.		Contact managing director to discuss incident.
Identify the poor practice.		Deal with internally or refer to external agencies.
Treat as a misconduct issue. Identify areas for improvement.		If not a Geckos instructor, report to the organisation concerned verbally and in writing.
Record details for future reference on Child Protection Report form.		If internal , treat as disciplinary matter. Record details on Child Protection Report form. Identify aspects below required standard. Issue warning and file on personal file.
Monitor the situation.		If referred externally:
		Suspend instructor pending inquiry.
		Inform social services and co- operate with them and/or the police during the inquiry.
		Keep Geckos Manager informed of investigation and outcomes.
		Comply with inquiry findings.



Geckos Child Protection Procedures Report

Attach all relevant information to this form.

1. Date:
2. Person completing this report:
3. Name and address of person reporting poor practice or potential abuse:

4. Name and address of person reported for poor practice or potential abuse:

5. Notes of Incident:



6. Notes of Preliminary Investigation:

7. Is this a case of poor practice or potential abuse?

8. Poor practice – state action taken:



- 9. Is it Potential Abuse?
- 10. Contact Geckos Manager and explain situation.
- 11. Brief notes of this discussion:

- 12. If agreed follow External Investigation procedure.
- 13. Suspend instructor in writing, pending investigation.

Date of suspension:

Time of suspension:

Attach copy of letter

- 14. Inform Social Services, who will carry out investigation or involve police.

Date:

Time of Call:

Contact officer:

Telephone number:

Remarks:



15. Notes of External Investigation:

16. Action taken as result of External Investigation: