

## Somerset Beekeepers' Association Policy and Guidelines For Working with Children and Vulnerable People



### Introduction

This document is based upon the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) document of the same name and replaces it for the purposes of Somerset Beekeepers' Association (SBKA). Some changes that have been made to the original document are designed to aid clarity, others have been made in consultation with local advisers to ensure that the policy is workable and comprehensive for Somerset beekeepers. Some aspects may be altered and developed in response to best practice and in such instances updated versions of this document will be produced.

The BBKA and SBKA want children and vulnerable people (collectively referred to as "children" in the interests of readability of this policy, although the great differences in needs must not be forgotten) to enjoy their involvement with the fascinating life of honeybees. It is important that we inform, educate and enthuse children, giving them a greater understanding of the vital part honeybees play in the environment.

This document is in two sections.

The first deals with the **Policy** of the Somerset Beekeepers' Association and its applicability, the second with 'best practice' **Guidelines** to be followed where children are involved with Somerset Beekeepers' Association beekeeping activities in any form.

Allegations of abuse made by children about adults can prove to be mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help you to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that you do not find yourself in a situation where any allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

The Policy does not contain any complete definition of what constitutes 'an abuse'; to prepare a rigorous 'legal' definition would prove difficult and is unlikely to include all possible circumstances. It does state some obvious types of abuse and how these might be extended in particular conditions. In any event, future legal decisions would soon make any definition obsolete.

### 1. THE POLICY

Through this Policy, Somerset Beekeepers' Association aims to:

- adopt the highest reasonable child protection standards and
- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children with whom we come into contact in relation to our activities within the Somerset Beekeepers' Association and its constituent divisions.

### **You are expected to:**

- Treat everyone with respect. This is the golden rule. Any mis-use of power could be regarded as an abuse.
- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young or vulnerable person. Physical contact with children should be avoided unless absolutely necessary (such as ensuring immediate safety).
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with the Somerset Beekeepers' Association.
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'.
- Ensure that no adult is ever alone with a child. Exceptions may occur where the adult has parental responsibility for that child or extenuating circumstances apply (these circumstances should not normally occur for the duration of contact with the child)
- Prevent any other person from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety.
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child.
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child, to the Local Child Protection Team (Somerset Safeguarding Children Board).

### **The policy applies to:**

Any member of the Somerset Beekeepers' Association whose beekeeping activities brings them into contact with children. This may include:

- organized visits to an apiary
- children attending training courses or talks
- children undertaking correspondence courses. (This counts as 'contact'.)
- children attending shows or events, possibly as part of 'Education Days'.

Somerset Beekeepers' Association expects you to apply this Policy to all of your work with children and vulnerable people.

You have a duty to do everything reasonable in your power to ensure the safety and welfare of children while they are in contact with the Somerset Beekeepers' Association and to act in accordance with the guidelines below.

Remember that all children have a right to protection from harm and you cannot shirk this responsibility.

### **Discussion of Child Protection**

Open discussion of Child Protection should be encouraged since this helps to make

members more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it 'under wraps' for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.

## **2. GUIDELINES**

This section gives general Guidelines, if you have any doubt about best practice in any specific area, contact your Local Authority Social Services Child Protection Team ASAP. Make sure you know the contact point.

### **A. Scope of your Responsibilities**

1. Where children are accompanied by responsible adults, e.g. parent, teacher, or other group leader, primary responsibility for the children should lie with that person. The beekeeper remains responsible for safe beekeeping within the apiary. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at Somerset Beekeepers' Association meetings.
2. If, owing to illness or another unexpected event a Somerset Beekeepers' Association member is left in charge of a child or group then action should be taken in accordance with this Policy and Guidelines.
3. You should refuse to undertake activities where you are the only adult present with children.

In all cases:

- i) plan the activities and make decisions during the event following the principles set out in this Policy and Guidelines,
- ii) assign clear tasks to others involved in the childrens' activities, ensure that there is clear understanding as to which adults have responsibility for each aspect of Child Protection and that procedures are followed,
- iii) maintain appropriate child-to-adult ratios as required by the relevant Local Authority (the guidelines for local schools for the appropriate age group are the best guide) and ensure that your decisions are based on the principles described in the Guidelines in this document.

This must underpin your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for the children.

#### **4. Non-beekeeping Volunteers at an event.**

Offers of help are always welcome and should be encouraged. However, take considerable care if the volunteer is not very well-known to you or you have the slightest reason for concern. When volunteers assist to work with children they must have read the Policy and Guidelines and agree to work in accordance with it.

### **B. Emergency Aid or First Aid**

A vehicle should be available in case of emergency. Permission for attendance at the apiary and advance consent for any first-aid should be sought from whoever has parental responsibility in the event of group visits. A sample form is appended to the BBKA policy and guidelines on the subject.

Hosts of apiary visits are advised to ensure the following:

- a) Check the location is suitable and safe for an apiary visit
- b) Ensure the bees are well-tempered and suitable for group demonstration
- c) Make a note of the address of the apiary, and keep it handy should the need for a detailed location be required
- d) Check mobile phone coverage in the vicinity of the apiary (and ensure a mobile phone is available during the meeting).
- e) Make a note of anyone who is known to have reacted badly to a honeybee sting.

The Demonstrator and host should familiarize themselves with basic management of severe reactions to bee stings and should:

- f) Recognize the importance of prompt removal of stings
- g) Recognize the importance of loosening tight clothing and sitting (or lying) down away from the bees in the event of a severe reaction to a bee sting
- h) Be prepared to summon an ambulance if they have concerns about the health of anyone present.

Individuals attending Somerset Beekeepers' Association meetings should:

- i) Behave quietly calmly and avoid rapid movement.
- j) Walk away to an agreed area if alarmed in any way.
- k) Notify the demonstrator and host if they have previously developed a severe reaction to bee stings or have any other health needs that may require immediate intervention.
- l) Carry any prescribed medication for the immediate treatment of bee stings with them, be familiar with its administration, and ensure that at least one other person at the meeting is familiar with the administration of the medication and where they keep it.
- m) Be aware of the possibility and possible consequences of honeybee stings when attending Somerset Beekeepers' Association meetings.
- n) Seek further advice if they have any questions relating to the above.

Members should follow the advice given in BBKA publications concerning emergency aid. Emergency aid should not be administered by anyone not qualified to do so. In all cases where emergency aid is required (and any case where there is any doubt), emergency medical advice should be sought immediately. Permission to treat the child should be obtained, if possible, from both the responsible adult and the child. Ideally, the responsible adult should previously have obtained explicit permission (or otherwise) to administer First Aid to the child. Failing this, it is best to obtain permission to carry out emergency aid in advance of a problem occurring using a simple permission form. Your Local Authority Education Department has guidance for schools which could be used. Make a written record of all First Aid given, regardless of who administers it, and of any other emergency

assistance provided and record in the apiary/divisional incident logbook.

### **C. Dealing with allegations of abuse**

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse, but it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary. You have a responsibility to report any concerns regarding the welfare of children and vulnerable persons.

There are three likely scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary:

- a) There is suspicion or evidence that a person associated with the event is abusing a child
- b) A child accuses a person associated with an event of abuse
- c) A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

In all cases you must:

- Act in a calm manner and as quickly as you can without causing any further distress to the child..
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on an absolute 'need to know' basis.
- Contact Social Services for ASAP. Make sure you know the contact point.
- Do not question the child further or give any undertaking of confidentiality to the child.
- Make your own verbatim written notes as soon as practicable.

Further guidance is available from the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (<http://www.somersetsafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk/default.asp?home=1>) should this unlikely eventuality occur.

### **D. Use of Information relating to children**

Information about children e.g. names and addresses must be treated in strictest confidence. It must be kept securely by a responsible adult, used only for the purpose required, retained only as long as necessary for that purpose and disposed of in a way which maintains the young persons confidentiality. Contact the office of the UK Data Registrar if further specific advice is needed.

Information about named children under the age of 18 should be omitted from the SBKA yearbook, although a numerical note of the number of Junior members may be included and successes in Examinations may be recorded in the Examination Officer's report. Do not allow such information to be disseminated (or further disseminated) without the consent of the child's parent (or person with parental responsibility). This also applies to the junior members previously listed in the SBKA yearbook, who had been included for reference only.

## **E. Photographs or Filming of Young Members and Children attending Events**

The use of photographs or films of young people for SBKA purposes requires the permission of the copyright holder (usually the photographer) and the child's parent/guardian (and ideally the child as well). This will include episodes where the press is responsible for the generation or use of such materials. Photographs taken using school (or other similar establishment) facilities require the permission of the relevant authority (e.g. the head teacher). Reasonable exceptions occur where a child is unidentifiable (for instance, if they had their back to the camera). Such photographs should be used with caution in relation to the promotional/publicity functions of SBKA and should not normally include personal details about the individuals or be freely available to the public. Periodicals issued by SBKA or its divisions may record the achievements of the younger members, but should be aware of the issues involved (i.e. do not include more information than necessary, particularly addresses of children). Photographs involving children should be used appropriately.

## **F. Suitability for working with children.**

At present, there is no explicit requirement in the circumstances applicable to this Policy for any checks regarding the suitability members or volunteers to work with children under the Protection of Children Act 1999. If you have any concerns regarding suitability of an individual contact your local police, who may give specific information at their discretion and for further general advice. Do not base your decisions on anecdotal information. Alternatively, use the Home Office website for information on how to proceed with checks against lists maintained by the Home Office.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is not required for infrequent or one-off activities involving children and bees. Regular contact may require such clearance and further advice should be sought (e.g. ask the school involved if involving a school). Nevertheless, the school should be aware and agree to allowing those not registered with clearance to undertake working with the children

*Policy and Guidelines Adopted May 2009.*