

Rävala Club's Safeguarding Policy

1. What is the principal aim of having a Safeguarding Young People Policy?

Rävala's safeguarding policy has the aim of setting the parameters that protect both children and adults in all areas surrounding activities run by Rävala where those under 18 are involved.

2. What is the key element of the Safeguarding Policy that protects both children and adults?

The creation of a safe environment for children and adults depends on every leader and helper at all times adhering to the guidelines set out in the policy.

3. Why is this universal approach so vital?

It is only by every leader and helper adhering to the guidelines always and in every situation, that Rävala can be certain of providing a safe environment for children and adults; secondarily, it enables Rävala to be able to stand up in court and declare that the guidelines have in fact been followed by everyone. This is particularly important in the case of historical abuse accusations, if that were to happen at any point of the club's history.

4. Who is included within the term 'children' in the policy?

Every child under the age of sixteen within the premises or on activities fall under the terms of the policy. However, all young people just above this age group and under eighteen are subject to all recommendations covered in the guidelines, excepting a relaxation in supervision due to their maturity.

5. Can those over sixteen become helpers in the clubs?

Those sixteen and over can indeed take part in the leadership as helpers. However, they must then fulfill all the requirements expected of leaders under the policy, while maintaining their right of care as young people under eighteen.

6. What is the position of responsibility undertaken by the leaders and helpers?

While children and young people are engaged in activities the leaders and helpers act in *lo-co parentis*, in the place of parents.

7. What details are required from the parents for leaders and helpers to fulfill this role?

Before any child can partake in activities on a regular basis or join an offsite activity, a parent or guardian must provide general contact details, emergency contact numbers, an agreement that the child will follow instructions, give medical history of the girl. Most importantly, though, they must sign a declaration giving permission for attendance at activities and for necessary urgent medical treatment.

8. Does the parent or guardian have the option of giving permission over the use of photographs?

Within the general declaration, the parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for unidentifiable photographs or video to be used by the club in its literature or on its website.

9. How is the current Data Protection Act adhered to?

We keep only those personal details that fall under the requirements of the latest Data Protection Act. These will be safely preserved offline and will be kept for health and safety reasons while at the club, for maintaining records of membership and future requests for support for the club. This information will be used solely for these purposes.

10. What precisely is meant by 'safeguarding'?

Safeguarding is to provide an environment in which young people can flourish and be safe from any form of harm. When this involves adults, it means that no one in a position of greater power can cause harm to a child in any way whatsoever. Each child is worthy of respect and each will be treated in exactly the same way as any other child.

11. What is commonly associated with the term 'abuse'?

Definitions of abuse are generally accepted as being any physical injury to a child or failure to prevent accidents through adequate health and safety procedures; any physical contact of a sexual nature with a child and any form of exploitation; and any emotional ill-treatment of a child such that he or she feels inadequate or rejected.

12. What is required of any leader or helper taking part in the leadership of Rävåla?

All adults working with young people must maintain the highest professional standards in their work and in their relationships with young people. They will be required to read and agree to the contents of this document on an annual basis. They will be offered a training session annually to keep them up to date with the latest developments in the area of safeguarding young people.

13. What is required at Rävåla before participating in any leadership role young people?

All volunteers for leader and helper roles will need to be interviewed by the person in charge of the club, especially if they are unknown to the club and its leaders. They will need to read and sign this document.

15. What about those who only help in a casual way?

There is no specific indication given on casual help but it is generally accepted that any adult, whether a volunteer or a parent, who commits to having regular contact with children in the club over a period of one month would require to read and sign this document. Any personnel that is involved in activities with young people will be required to present their criminal record from the Estonian Police. No person with previous criminal record in areas such as child abuse, violent crimes or similar can be accepted to such positions.

16. What is considered as good practice in safeguarding young people in the care of leaders and helpers?

All leaders and helpers must take great care at all times over what they say to children and the way they say it. They should think carefully about taking risks, with the safety of children paramount. They should avoid any situation where they are alone with one child. There should be no question of horseplay with children in any situation, and complete avoidance of behavior that could be interpreted as aggression or be wrongly construed as abusive.

17. How specifically is this achieved?

Every leader and helper at all times and on every action acts in public with young people. Should they chat with a minor individually it will always be in a public place or open to public view through an opened or glazed door. On camps and excursions care needs to be taken that no situation can arise where a single young person is away from public view with an adult. Shower and changing facilities for adults, and sleeping quarters, will always be separate from young people. No adult should share a car with an individual child. At least two adults must be present in any activity where only one child is present, perhaps the first to arrive at an activity.

18. What needs to be born in mind when distributing roles?

A key issue in this whole area is that every adult present must have a clearly specified role to play within each activity. This should be understood by the children present as well as by

all the leaders and helpers themselves. In this way no adult will have contact with young people in our care without a reason to be present there in an official capacity.

19. What is involved in the professionalism of all activities undertaken?

Leaders will carry out a risk assessment at the planning stage of any activity or trip, with safety and first aid issues addressed. All activities must be adequately staffed with at least two leaders present at off-site locations. A clear start and end time must be specified and known to the parents for all activities in and away from the club. The leaders and helpers will meet soon after the event to pool ideas on how things went and to evaluate the outcomes. Feedback from attendees and parents should be gathered as well, and experiences noted for future reference.

20. What procedures are in place to deal with any issues arising from accusations of abuse, whether real or unfounded?

At the beginning of each academic year the club leader should inform all leaders and members of the name and contact details of the Safeguarding Young People Coordinator appointed by Rävåla's board. These details are displayed in the club's website. Anyone at all has the option of immediately contacting this independent person should they have concerns of any kind regarding children's safety.

21. What happens if this report of concern is made to a leader or helper in the first instance?

A vital consideration here is that no promise of confidentiality is given in this matter. This might involve stopping the child and telling him about this before he starts speaking at length. The leader or helper will listen in full to what the young person has to say without interruption, but then he will immediately refer the matter to the coordinator. He must additionally comfort and support the reporter of any abuse, assuring him that the matter will be treated with all seriousness. The recipient of this report should also make notes after this conversation and pass them on to the coordinator by hand. These notes should be signed and dated. No accusation will ever be handled internally at the club.

22. Is the matter then out of the hands of the person confided in?

Completely. If there is still an urgent situation where further abuse might be instigated, the police should be called, as any other citizen would do. Otherwise, the matter is left with the independent coordinator. Any further interviewing of the reporter of abuse is a skilled task and needs to be carried out subsequently by a trained professional.

23. What action does the coordinator then take?

The coordinator immediately gathers together all the information he has in his possession, maintaining confidentiality in the matter vigorously. He will contact Rävåla's board, or its equivalent, to bring together the independent management team appointed by Rävåla to advise on the matter in hand. This team will immediately evaluate and clarify the situation, calling in the police and social services if there is any evidence that the alleged abuse has taken place.

24. What then happens when the matter is in the hands of the authorities?

The authorities will decide if criminal proceedings should be initiated based on three factors. These are on whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute, whether it is in the public interest to proceed, and whether it is in the best interest of the child to go forward with a prosecution.

25. Should an arrest be made, what safeguards are in place to protect the adult accused?

The accused is quietly and swiftly removed from all contact with young people while an investigation takes place, but all the while he is naturally assumed innocent unless proven

guilty. Should the accusation prove to be unfounded or the police procedure ends in his favour, he should resume his former role untainted by the experience. All through the process the individual is given full support in these difficult moments.

26. What happens if the evidence has proved inconclusive?

Rävala's board will evaluate the situation in consultation with the statutory agencies and decide how best to proceed. They will make the decision on whether it is best, without prejudice, for the individual to continue in his role or not.

27. What happens in the case of a person being found guilty?

Anyone found to be guilty by the competent authorities would immediately cease to have any involvement in Rävala's activities that would enable him or her to have access to young people.