**DAVID ROSS SPORTS VILLAGE CLIMBING WALL WEARING OF HELMETS POLICY FOR CHILDREN – U18**

There are three main causes of head injury within an indoor climbing wall:

**Impact with the floor**. This is can be due to an uncontrolled decent either due to too much slack in the belay system or poor reactions of the belayer or being lowered too fast. Climbers can hit the ground feet first then fall backwards and strike the back of the head on the floor.

**Mitigation**. All sessions are supervised by a qualified instructor or a volunteer who has received appropriate training. The likelihood of a climber falling and hitting the ground due to an error of belaying has been removed by the use of a specialist belay devise that auto locks in the event of a fall. The lowering of a climber is supervised by the instructor who either controls the descent or holds the brake rope while the climber is being lowered. The floor of the climbing wall is a special impact surface called ‘rubber crumb’ and this significantly reduces the impact.

**Impact with the climbing wall surface and holds**. This can be caused in the same way as above.

**Mitigation**. During ‘top-roping’ any falling is minimal and as such the climber is unlikely to build up any momentum. Impact with the wall is usually prevented by the climber fending off with their hands and feet. It is possible that the face can strike against a climbing hold but a helmet would not prevent this.

**Falling objects**. Any object dropped from height can pose a serious risk. The climbing wall is 12m high. Mobile phones are the most likely reason for an impact from a falling object.

**Mitigation**. All climbers are told to remove objects from pockets before climbing. Most children’s groups are restricted to a specific area of the wall so it is unlikely that other customers would create a risk if something was dropped from their pocket on an adjacent line.

**Other Activities:**

**Bouldering** – Helmets are not generally worn while indoor bouldering.

**Auto Belay** – There is an increased risk of strangulation from helmet straps when descending on an Auto Belay. For this reason the wearing of helmets is not recommended while climbing on the Auto Belay lines.

**Lead Climbing** – The wearing of helmets while lead climbing is mandatory for U18.

**External Groups** – prior to accepting bookings for external groups attention is made to our policy of not enforcing the wearing of helmets. Parents are able to accept this policy or inform us that helmets must be worn.

Parental Supervision – all parents supervising U18’s are made aware of the BMC booklet ‘Young People - A Parent’s Guide’ in order that they can make an informed decision on the wearing of helmets.

Sources of information:

ABC Safety and Management Guidelines (Issue 6) Chapter 2.9 Helmet Policy

BMC Climbing Wall Manual Chapter 6.8 Accidents

BMC ‘Young People - A Parents Guide’