



Safeguarding Policy | Sports Link Group.

Sports Link Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all colleagues to share this commitment. All staff are qualified teachers or work full time in school settings and are therefore DBS checked and kept update with safeguarding training annually.

We aim to recognise and respond appropriately to:

- Significant changes in the children's behaviour
- Deterioration in their general well-being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse
- Signs of neglect
- Comments children make which give cause for concern

Staff

If you recognise one of the above for a child, the severity and circumstance will dictate your actions. The important thing for you is to do something and not ignore it. We will create an environment to make the children be and feel safe. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken very seriously, and they will be acted on quickly and correctly by following the procedure set by the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Dealing with a Disclosure

- Listen and stay calm. Do not condemn the abuser, do not judge, do not make promises you can't keep
- Reassure them. Tell them that you believe them. Tell them that it happens to others and that they are brave to tell you.

- Stay with them. If you can 'ground' them ("grounding" means to draw the child back to a more comfortable state of mind through things like normal conversation e.g. what activities have you done today, what's your favourite TV program)
- Accurately record the child words. Make it clear whether it is a fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Report it to your relevant manager as soon as possible; they will know the right procedure to follow. In some cases, they will speak to the parents first or report to the local safeguarding children's board.
- If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the Club is obliged to, and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Protecting yourself

Part of safeguarding is also to protect yourself from allegations and to ensure your actions are not misinterpreted by anyone. Do this by observing the following:

- Avoid being alone with a child
- Take a register of which children are with you for each session, noting the time of the session.
- If you take a child somewhere e.g. an empty room, do not enter with them, wait outside. If you must enter the room, it's vital you keep all doors open.
- Do not play-fight
- Children should not be encouraged to sit on your lap
- Challenge any child using 'bad' language
- Never let children touch themselves or others inappropriately in any form
- Never let a child's allegation go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted on
- Never do personal things for children that they are capable of doing themselves. Encourage children to help each other.
- Do not build 'special' relationships with individual children
- You must not, before, during or after your employment make or accept any contact with a child or a friend of a child you know through your work with Sports Link Group through social networking websites.
- Any images of children taken on site must only be of those children whose parents allow photos to be taken. Colleagues should not take any photos off site.
- Any images taken must be appropriate.
- It is each individual colleagues' personal responsibility to delete any images from cameras, phones and recording devices.
- Images must not be published elsewhere without the authorisation of a company director.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good Practice Means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

We urge all concerned parties to report any worries directly to the Safeguarding Lead. We take all allegations seriously and will seek advice from the LADO.