

# Safeguarding children/child protection policy

At Galaxy Cheerleading we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the club's other policies and procedures.

## Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Working together to safeguard children, 2018

Information Sharing 2018

Disqualification under the childcare act 2006-2015

Inspecting Safeguarding in early years September 2018

Childcare Act 2006

Children Act 2004

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2013').*

## Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where Coaches are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

The Club is aware that abuse does occur in our society, and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our Coaches have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care, we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed, in the best interests of the child.

The Club aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the local Safeguarding Children Board

- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of Club staff
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the Club and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the local Safeguarding Children Board.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

### Contact telephone numbers

Local authority children's social care team [03001236720r]

Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) [01772536694]

OfstedTelephone: 0300 123 1231

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) [01772536954]

### Types of abuse and particular procedures followed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

## Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure, supported by the Club Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSCO dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the local authority children's social care team and Ofsted, and/or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have regarding a child. The club expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care, police, and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

## Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

## Female genital mutilation

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. For those Clubs caring for older children in an out of school facility this may be an area of abuse you could come across. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, and acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, and incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child in this area, you should contact children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

## Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

### **Procedure:**

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come to training or occur during time at the Club, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity, where felt appropriate
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the local authority children's social care team will be notified in line with procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

## Sexual abuse

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual

behaviour or language. Talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse, they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

#### **Procedure:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the Club Coaches
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team
- A sensitive and confidential discussion will be held with the parents/carers of any other children party to inappropriate play.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or

clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the Coach/Safeguarding Lead
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form may need to be completed
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team.

## Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at the club unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them) or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at the club. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- A CAF form may need to be completed
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the local authority children's social care team will be notified.

## Staffing and volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is a Club Coach to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We do not allow volunteers to be alone with children or any other adult who may be present in the club regardless of whether or not they have a DBS clearance.

We have a named person within the Club who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO). The Club DSCO liaises with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the local authority children's social care team and receives regular updates to developments within this field.

The Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) at the Club is Molly Mae Crook.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within the Club are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We give staff members/volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children.
- We request DBS checks, and encourage our coaching team to use the DBS update service to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children
- All staff have the relevant coaching qualifications and only teach to the level at which they are certified
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and the Childcare Act 2006 in respect of any person who is disqualified from providing childcare, is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the Club and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the club, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use



- All staff have access to and comply with the whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within the Club allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

## Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the LSCB/ local authority children's social care team/Police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

## Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the LSCB.

## Support to families

The Club takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers.

The Club continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with guidance of the LSCB with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

## Employees, students or volunteers of the Club

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who works on the Club training premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the Club premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the person DSCO

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
- The Club will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, LSCB and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- The Club reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The Club will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation
- The Club retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry

Our Club has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the club manager at the earliest opportunity.

<b>Signed on behalf of the Club</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
<i>Molly Mae Crook</i>	<i>17<sup>th</sup> May 2024</i>	<i>July 2025</i>