**Desford Flyers Safeguarding Policy**

**1. Policy Statement**

Desford Flyers Athletics Club fully accept their legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care, to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation.

⚫ The welfare of the child is paramount.

⚫ All children have the right to protection from abuse

⚫ All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

⚫ All individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet this obligation all Athletics bodies will :-

⚫ Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the well being of all participants and protect them from abuse.

⚫ Ensure all children who take part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.

⚫ Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of children.

⚫ Recruit, train and supervise their volunteers to adopt best practise to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.

⚫ Require volunteers to adopt and abide by their Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the relevant grievance, investigatory and disciplinary procedures.

⚫ Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, child protection, disciplinary and appeals procedures.

⚫ Review policies regularly.

**A Child** is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means children and young people throughout. The fact a child has reached 16 years of age, living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his or her status or entitlement to protection under the Children Act 1989.

**Disabled children** may be more vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect. Some of the common factors that can lead to increased vulnerability include social isolation, communication and learning difficulties or disability, lack of understanding of boundaries, need for assistance with personal care and more likely target for bullying and abuse. Children with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other child and clubs working with these children need to be especially alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and have strategies in place to ensure all children are able to raise concerns.

**2. Best Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse**

To provide everybody with the best possible experience and opportunities in athletics it is important that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour.

This section will help you identify what is meant by best and poor practice and some of the indications of possible abuse.

**Best Practice**

Best practice means: -

⚫ Being open and conducting all interactions with children in a public place and with appropriate consent.

⚫ Avoiding situations where you are alone with one child

⚫ If you have to meet or coach one child ensure it is conducted in an open environment, and where full consent and emergency contact details have been provided.

⚫ If you are travelling alone with a child gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one child alone with you in the car and never sharing a room on your own with a child,

⚫ Challenging bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.

⚫ Never ignoring bullying by parents, coaches or children. Listening to and supporting the person being bullied.

⚫ Maintaining an appropriate relationship with children; this means treating people fairly, with respect and avoiding favouritism.

⚫ Being friendly and open and ensuring that relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust.

⚫ Respecting all athletes and helping them to take responsibility for their own development and decision making.

⚫ Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or disturbing to the athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and appropriate parental consent.

⚫ Being qualified and insured for the activities you are coaching and ensuring that your licence remains valid. Ensure that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the individuals welfare, it also protects you from possible wrongful allegations. Children very rarely make false allegations. If they do it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else’s behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

**Poor Practice**

The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:

⚫ Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.

⚫ A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.

⚫ A coach using harassing and discriminatory language such as ‘you run like a girl’

⚫ A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.

⚫ A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.

⚫ A coach taking a group of children away to a weekend event on his/her own.

The list above is not exhaustive and many other examples exist. If any of the following incidents should occur you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident and inform the club Welfare Officer.

⚫ If you accidentally hurt a child athlete

⚫ If a child appears distressed in any manner

⚫ If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions

⚫ If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

**Abuse**

Abuse can occur wherever there are children

There are four main types of abuse:

⚫ Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

⚫ Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her or ‘making fun’ of what he/she say or how he/she communicates. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, which especially applies to when a child shares a protected characteristic e.g. racist, sexual or homophobic bullying or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

⚫ Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

⚫ Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Disabled children are vulnerable to abuse and are at least three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. Those working with them must be aware of this and willing to acknowledge their concerns. There can be a tendency to make allowances for families with sick or disabled children. Practitioners may over identify with the child’s parents/carers and be reluctant to accept that abuse or neglect is taking or has taken place, or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child. When suspecting abuse, practitioners should always ask: "Would this be acceptable if the child were not disabled?"

**3. Recruitment and selection.**

All reasonable steps will be taken at all levels within the sport to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with children

**Recruitment**

Advertising by all those involved in the sport will reflect:

⚫ Safeguarding children and welfare policy

⚫ The responsibility of the role

⚫ The level of experience or qualifications required

⚫ A positive stance on all aspects of welfare and safeguarding children

**Application**

All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a role and responsibility in relation to children (regulated position) in Athletics must complete a criminal record check (enhanced level DBS, Disclosure Scotland or Access Northern Ireland) please refer to the separate advice on criminal record checks. Clubs should remember that these procedures should be applied to people who are already involved in the club and subsequently take on a role which gives them greater access to children( for instance a parent taking on a volunteering role within the club)

**4. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations**

Introduction

While it is not the responsibility of EA, the Home Countries governing bodies, volunteers or club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child .These concerns may arise due to:

⚫ An individual disclosing that they are being abused.

⚫ The behaviour of an adult towards a child.

⚫ A number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time.

**How to respond to a disclosure**

**Don’t**

⚫ Probe for more information than is offered.

⚫ Speculate or make assumptions.

⚫ Show shock or distaste.

⚫ Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.

⚫ Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

⚫ Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported appropriately. It is acknowledged that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases of possible sexual abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

Safeguarding Children Club Welfare Officers

To ensure that appropriate action is taken if there is a disclosure, statutory referral from the police, children’s services, adult services or suspicions,

A job and person specification for the role of Club Welfare Officer is available as a separate document.

**Reporting procedures**

Any person with information of a disclosure, allegation or concern about the welfare of a child must immediately report this tothe club’s designated Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who will refer the matter to EA’s CPLO or Home Country lead welfare officer.

**If the EA CPLO nominated deputy or Home Country CPO is unavailable**, you should take responsibility and seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), the duty officer at local children services department or the local police child protection unit. Telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory and should be in your club welfare policy.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against an employee or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

⚫ Criminal: in which case the police are immediately involved

⚫ Safeguarding children: in which case the social care services (and possibly the police) will be involved

⚫ Disciplinary or misconduct: where it relates to coaches and officials EA will be involved in other matters it will rest with the Home Countries.

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the alleged victim of misconduct or abuse, or his/herfamily, or by persons wrongly accused.

Guidelines on the retention of records relating to possible future investigations may be found from local authority sources; however records should be securely kept in an approved format for up to three years at least.

**Dealing with Concerns and Allegations**

While CWOs will have received training they are not safeguarding children experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. If there is any doubt about whether or not the alleged behaviour constitutes abuse, the concern must be shared with professional agencies that will be responsible for subsequent action.

Any suspicion that an individual has been abused by a volunteer within Desford Flyers should be reported to the EA CPLO who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other individual who may be at risk. This will include the following:

⚫ the EA CPLO will refer the allegation to the appropriate social care services department who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out of hours.

⚫ The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social care services department.

⚫ the EA CPLO will also notify the Chief Executive who will decide who should deal with any media enquires.

⚫ the EA CPLO and/or the Chief Executive can impose an interim suspension based on the risk to the child, an assessment of the seriousness of the allegation and the need to ensure a full investigation can be instituted.

⚫ Accreditation may be withdrawn from any EA event venue if it is considered that the use of the venue continues to offer any form of threat to children

⚫ the EA CPLO will also make a full report to a EA Case Management Panel. Irrespective of the findings of the Children’s Social Care (social services) or the Police, EA will assess all individual cases and determine if the person can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This decision must be made on the available information, which could suggest on the balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child is paramount.

In circumstances where EA does not have jurisdiction to deal with the individual, the EA CPLO will act as the link person between the sport and the social care services and/or the police and pass on all the information to the relevant governing body/organisation with disciplinary jurisdiction.

Where the police or social care services make a statutory referral and invite a club official to a case conference or professional meeting then the EA CPLO must be informed as soon as possible to determine whether to attend and represent the governing body at the meeting and support the individual and club.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences relating to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. These decisions will be dealt with by the Independent Safeguarding Authority for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in Scotland this will be the role of the Central Barring Unit. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act (1999) and set out in Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act. The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act (2003) and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups are applicable in Scotland.

**Poor Practice**

If the allegations are against an employee or volunteer and after consideration are clearly about poor practice, the allegation will be dealt with by the relevant home country under their disciplinary procedures as a misconduct issue.

**Dealing with Bullying**

The same procedures should be adopted when dealing with allegations of bullying.

**Disciplinary and Appeal Procedures**

England Athletics have their own disciplinary policy and separate policies and procedures relating to coaches and officials.

**Records and Confidentiality**

Always follow the reporting procedure set out above. Use of the referral form will assist you to collect and collate the required information. Your reports should be factual and include where possible

⚫ The referrer’s and/or the child’s name, address and date of birth

⚫ The date and time of the incident.

⚫ The facts about the allegation or observation.

⚫ Your factual observations e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the alleged victim, and note any marks, bruising or other injuries.

⚫ The child’s account, if it can be given, of what happened using the exact words if possible.

⚫ Details of any witnesses

⚫ Any times, dates or other relevant information.

⚫ Any action that was taken as a result of the concerns.

⚫ A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

⚫ A copy of this information must be sent to the EA CPLO.

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on *a need to know basis only*.

EA will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague’s practice or concerns about the welfare of a child.

They will take appropriate steps to ensure that the victim (and parents, appropriate adults) is provided with appropriate professional support (e.g. Help lines, support groups and the Counselling Directory. They will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered appropriate support.

Please forward a COPY of all documentation to EA Welfare Officers

|  |
| --- |
| REFERRAL FORM  Your name and contact details: |
| Your position: |
| Your knowledge of and relationship to the child |
| Child’s name: |
| Child’s address: |
| Child’s date of birth: |
| Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): |
| Nature of the concern/allegation: |
| Observations made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, child’s emotional state etc):  NB Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay |
| Exactly what the child said and what you said (Remember, do not lead the child– record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary): |
| **Actions Taken so far:** |
| External agencies contacted: |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Police | Yes | No | If yes, which: |
| Date and time: | | | |
| Name and Contact number: | | | |
| Details of advice received: | | | |
| Children’s Social Care | Yes | No | If yes, which: |
| Or Local Authority Designated Officer | | | |
| Date and time: | | | |
| Name and Contact number: | | | |
| Details of advice received: | | | |
| UKA LCPO | Yes | No | If yes, which department: |
| Date and time: | | | |
| Name Role and Contact number: | | | |
| Details of advice received: | | | |
| Other **(e.g. NSPCC,Children 1st)** | Yes | No | If yes, which: |
| Date and time: | | | |
| Name and Contact number: | | | |
| Details of advice received: | | | |
| Print name: | | | |
| Signed: | | Date: | |

Don't keep it to yourself

Help and advice from the Child Protection in Sport Unit

**If you think you are being abused, or have been in the past, it's really important to tell an adult you trust.**

This isn't easy. You may feel worried about what will happen if you do. Here are some other reasons why you may not want to tell anyone:

 the abuser may have told you to keep quiet and not to talk to anybody

 they may have threatened you about what might happen to you or your place in the team if you tell

 they may have made threats about your friends or family

 they may have said "No one will believe you" or "No one will do anything if you tell"

 you may feel guilty that you didn’t stop the abuse happening

 the person may be someone who everyone in your sport looks up to - perhaps including your parents

 you may not want to let your parents down

 you may even think the problem will go away if you ignore it.

**Don't let any of these things stop you getting help. By telling someone, you can stop the abuse.**

You'll also be helping to protect other children from the abuser.

Getting help

 Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. This could be: a parent or someone else in your family; another member of staff at your athletics club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.

 Your athletics club will have a welfare officer. Find out who they are and tell them about your worries.

 Contact one of the child protection helplines . They will know who can help you in your area.

 Make sure you are not alone again with the person who has tried to harm you.

Remember your rights!

UKA and the NSPCC believe that children have the right to enjoy sporting activities in safety. The work of our Child Protection in Sport Unit is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention spells out how people should treat you. If you would like to know more, see what the Convention says about your rights .

For further help and advice, visit [**www.childline.org.uk**](http://www.childline.org.uk)