



Devon Schools Athletics Association
Child Protection Policy

Devon Schools Athletics Association Child Protection Policy

Introduction

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and children must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer

Policy Statement

Devon Schools Athletic Association (DSAA) has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Devon Schools Athletic Association from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. DSAA will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Devon Schools Athletic Association through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by DSAA.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).



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Policy Aims

The aim of the Devon Schools Athletic Association Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of DSAA
- Allowing all staff / volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with children and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child has been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances DSAA must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.



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Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. 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)
- Treating all children/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with athletes and children
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision- making process
- Making athletics fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms unless for a safeguarding reason, or invite children into their rooms
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children while on duty.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and disabled adults
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment. Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given



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Practices to be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies.

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking a child to an event / session or taking them home afterwards [in which case parental consent must be obtained in advance]

Practices Never to be Sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned.

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

Incidents that Must be Reported/Recorded

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt an athlete
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner



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- If an athlete misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- Copies of all recorded should be forwarded to the Devon Schools Athletic Association Child Welfare Officer. (DSAA CWO).

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All interested parties in Devon Schools Athletic Association (including athletes, parents, teachers, team managers etc) should be vigilant, and any concerns should to be reported to the DSAA CWO

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is happening and give their permission, and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Devon Schools Athletic Association recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Devon School Athletic Association adopts the following safe-recruitment procedure for any adult with supervisory responsibility for its athletes

- Team managers will be practising or retired teachers or other adults working in schools/colleges such as a Teaching Assistant with a current DBS certificate.
- If this not possible in exceptional circumstances, then



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Devon Schools Athletic Association requires:

- Volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection / safeguarding
- All supervising staff and volunteers to have undergone a DBS check
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary)
- Attend update training when necessary.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in DSAA in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. DSAA will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are Concerns



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Concerns about Poor Practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the DSAA CWO will liaise with the ESAA welfare Officer who will liaise with England Athletics whose procedures will define the course of action to address this.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Devon Schools Athletic Association CWO, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the ESAA Welfare officer who will liaise with England Athletics whose procedures will define the course of action to address this.

• Concerns about Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been a victim of abuse by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the DSAA CWO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The official breach of welfare referral form should be used for this purpose.

The DSAA CWO will refer the allegation to the Headteacher/Principal of the child's school, who should work with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LAD)) and / or Social Services department.

The Devon Schools Athletic Association CWO should also notify the ESAA Welfare officer who may need to deal with any media enquiries.

Confidentiality



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Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Devon Schools Athletic Association Child Welfare Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Headteacher/Principal of the school
- Social Services / Police
- The ESAA Welfare Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, DSAA should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.



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Action if Bullying is Suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to Allegations or Suspicions' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- Report any concerns to the DSAA CWO or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring)

Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- Inform the bully's / bullies' parents
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim if appropriate



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- Provide support for the victim's coach
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- Inform all organisation members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken

3. Concerns Outside the Immediate Sporting Environment (e.g. a Parent or Carer):

Report your concerns to the DSAA CWO who should contact the Child's school.

If the DSAA CWO is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services or the police immediately.

Social Services and / or the Police will decide how to involve the parents/carers. The DSAA CWO should also report the incident to the ESAA Welfare Officer.

Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.

Information for Social Services or the Police about Suspected Abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child
- The child's home address and telephone number



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- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural change

Details of witnesses to the incidents

- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Social Services or the Police direct (see below), or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.



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This Policy was formally adopted by the committee of Devon Schools Athletic Association on February 25th 2020. It will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the next review taking place on January 2021

Declaration:

On behalf of Devon Schools Athletic Association, we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Name: Gary Brock

Chairperson and Child Welfare Officer DSAA

Date: February 25th 2020

Signed: *Eileen Mander*

Name: Eileen Mander

Secretary DSAA

Date: February 25th 2020