

# Stafford Sports and Performance Academy



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## 1 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Stafford Sports and Performance Academy is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Stafford Sports and Performance Academy have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to:

- promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Stafford Sports and Performance Academy
- allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

**A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)**

### 1.2 Policy Statement

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in (your sport) in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all Stafford Sports and Performance Academy employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

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## 2 PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

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

When a child enters the club activity having 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 the club activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### 2.1 Good Practice

All personnel must adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of (your sport) fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Involve parents/cares wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc. work in pairs
- request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

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## 2.2 Areas Of Avoidance

The following must be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks must only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the young person involved.

## 2.3 Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you must report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident.

Stephen Glover is the main point of contact on 07793891029.

You must also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a player
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Parents should also be informed of any incident.

## 2.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

All parents and performers must be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid or for press purposes. Each parent either agrees/disagrees to video consent when filling out a Stafford Sports and Performance Academy registration form. If parents tick no to video or picture consent their children will not be involved in any video or photographic activity.

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## 3 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff must complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent must be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

### 3.1 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check must be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures
- Their qualifications must be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities must be clarified
- They must sign up to the organisation's Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

### 3.2 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a DBS check
- All employees, volunteers, coaches, welfare officers and team managers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All coaches should have an up to date first aid qualification

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## 4 RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Stafford Sports and Performance Academy 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 so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicious of abuse occurring within Stafford Sports and Performance Academy and to allegations/suspicious that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

### 4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **Immediately report** the incident to the club/company welfare officer

### 4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes. Do not ask the child to undress and show you.

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- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

## 4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately immediately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

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

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Stafford Sports and Performance Academy will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document the Stafford Sports and Performance Academy staff members are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

The person who received information or witnessed the abuse would report to social services with the support of the child protection lead.

## 4.5 Contacting Social Services

Any staff, along with the Child Protection Officer, need to contact social services immediately if there is a serious concern about the safety of a child or young person up to the age of 18, or if a young person is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Additionally if worried that a child is living in circumstances where they are treated badly and not cared for properly.

First Response Service Contact Details:

**Telephone:** 0800 1313 126

**Emergency out of hours:** 0345 604 2886

## 5 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 Club Welfare Officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The Stafford Sports and Performance Academy Manager and your Sport Governing Body Club welfare officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

## **5.1 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

- The Stafford Sports and Performance Academy Club welfare officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, Stafford Sports and Performance Academy Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases Stafford Sports and Performance Academy Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Date updated. 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

Renewal Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Stafford Sports and Performance Academy Staff member signed to acknowledge reading of document.

Name:

Signed:

Date: