



# Safeguarding

Creating a great experience for every child.



North Somerset Basketball Club

PO Box 129  
Bristol  
BS20 6WJ

n.s.stars@hotmail.com  
07845 641424

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## Safeguarding policy

Our intention in setting up and running the North Somerset Stars Basketball Club is to provide a positive benefit in the lives of the children involved. The thought that harm could come to any of these children as a result of participation in the club is therefore an appalling thought and so child protection is of the highest priority to us.

We recognise 'harm' as a very broad category extending far beyond physical or sexual abuse. We view any behaviour that diminishes a child's sense of their own worth or causes them to experience undue anxiety as a form of harm and are committed to guard against this as well as the more obvious harms normally associated with child protection.

The following guidelines are designed to form a framework outlining our approach and practices in dealing with the children involved in the club. They are designed primarily for the protection of children involved in the organisation but they also serve to reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse or poor practice being brought against the adults participating in the club. In this regard we recognise that 'the appearance of evil' can have destructive effect upon an individual or organisation even if no crime or malpractice took place.

By participating in the club, all adults will be deemed to have read and agreed to abide by these guidelines and to understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken within the club or, where appropriate, referral to the police or to Basketball England as the national governing body for the sport.

The club has appointed a Child Welfare Officer who is to be the first point of contact regarding any concerns involving child protection or child safety. Contact details of the current C.W.O. can be found in the appendix to this document.

## Governing principles

1. The child's welfare is paramount.
1. All young people, regardless of any personal characteristic including their age, gender, ability, any disability they may have, culture, racial sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
2. A child is recognised as being under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 1989 Definition).
3. An adult has a moral and statutory duty for the care, custody and control of any person under the age of 18 under their supervision.
4. All incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.



5. All young people have a right to play the game of basketball in an enjoyable and safe Environment.
6. Young people have a right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development with regard to their involvement in the game of basketball.
7. It is the responsibility of the child protection experts and agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.

## General Guidelines

1. Adults involved in the club should make every effort to ensure that their interaction with the children is wholly positive.

As role models and mentors, coaches, in particular can have a profound effect on how a child feels about themselves and this should be recognised as an opportunity to build children up and spur them on.

Negative criticism, the appearance of favouritism or dislike towards any child or expressions of disappointment can likewise have a very damaging effect on the individual's self esteem and all adults, whether coaches, volunteers or parents should be aware of this and guard against it at all times.

2. It should be recognised that children come to the club with different levels of need. Some children may be experiencing significant hardship or abuse in other aspects of their life and, as significant adults in that child's life, coaches and other participants have a role to play in helping to alleviate or counteract that harm. It is not uncommon for allegations of abuse to be shared with coaches and other adults involved in sporting clubs as they are seen as positive and caring individuals, and the context of the club is often perceived as being less formal and threatening than the school environment. All adults involved should be aware of this possibility and be prepared to take the appropriate action if such issues come to light.

3. A game of basketball never ends in a draw. The point, as in any sport, is to win. Coaches, parents and volunteers all want to promote success in the game, not least because this brings a sense of reward to the children involved. It should be recognised, however, that winning is a secondary to participation as a goal in sport and that the explicit or implicit statement that it is all important will have a negative effect on the individuals, no matter whether they win or lose.

Adults should, instead, promote the values of teamwork, practice and progression, participation, fellowship and above all fun and children should be shown how to gain benefit and enjoyment from their sport whether they win or lose.

Coaches should also be aware of the tendency of ambitious parents to want to push their children too hard or to provide negative criticism, and should be able to intervene to counteract the possible harm that this can cause.

4. Adults involved in the club should be aware of the dangers of excessive physical or emotional proximity to individual children. It is not appropriate for an adult to form or to allow a child to form a close, exclusive emotional bond with a child and it should be recognised that, for some vulnerable children, this is exactly what they are desperate to achieve.

Adults should avoid being alone in a room or car with a single individual and should take care to remain open and caring whilst maintaining appropriate boundaries and not allowing exclusive relationships to form.



5. Adults involved in the club should recognise themselves as role models and act, at all time, in a manner worthy of emulation. This includes the way that they interact with other adults, respect for authorities including referees and opposing coaches, treating all individuals with respect and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Smoking and the consumption of alcohol should not be indulged in during any club activities that involve children.
6. Parental consent should be obtained wherever appropriate, allowing any adults involved in the club to act in loco parentis and, where necessary, to administer appropriate help and First Aid to children.

## **Specific practices:**

### **Reporting:**

The club shall appoint a welfare officer who's job it is to handle all incidents and complaints related to child protection and welfare. Should that individual be involved in such an incident personally then the matter should be reported to Basketball England's Lead Child Protection Officer.

### **Participants:**

#### **CRB Staus**

All coaches or adults involved in club activities must have CRB approved status.

Exceptions may be made under certain circumstances where a parent or volunteer is asked to help with a specific task under the supervision of a CRB checked member of staff. Any ongoing participation in the work of the club will necessitate a CRB application.

For any individual not already known to the staff, proof of identity will also be required.

### **Qualifications:**

Leading coaches should have at least a level 2 basketball coaching certificate.

Assistant coaches should have at least a level 1 basketball coaching certificate.

Volunteers and parent need not be qualified but should be overseen by a level 2 coach.

### **Ratios:**

To avoid risk of injury, at least two adults should be present at every game or training event and at least one of these should be a qualified coach. This allows for all children to be supervised should one coach be required to leave in the case of an injury or some other problem arising.

The ratio of coaches to children should not exceed 1 - 10

Volunteers under 17 should not be accounted for in the coach/child ratio calculations.

## **Avoiding Physical harm:**

1. A risk assessment should be conducted at any venue used for training or games and the session should not proceed if there is any doubt as to the safety of the children. This assessment should include considerations of entrances and exits to ensure that no child can escape unnoticed and no adult enter without authorisation.



2. A qualified First Aider should be present on site at all events. This need not be a member of the coaching staff but can be provided by the organisation providing the venue.
3. All accidents and injuries will be recorded using the appropriate accident report form. Parents and carers should be informed promptly and the incident followed up within 7 days.
4. A list detailing any specific medical conditions or medications needed by any individual in the club shall be available at all games and training events.

### **Avoiding other kinds of harm:**

Children can come to harm both physically and emotionally by neglect, ignorance or poor practice. It is the responsibility of every adult involved to be aware of the standards of good practice and to make sure that they are observed. If any of the following departures from good practice are witnessed then the individual has a responsibility to report them using the reporting procedures outlined later in this document.

- Use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments.
- Failure to act when you witness possible abuse or bullying.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- Inviting or allowing young people into your home where they will be alone with you.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative activity, including horseplay.
- Allowing or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments even in fun.
- Reducing a person to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves.
- Sharing a bedroom with a young person you are not related to, even with parental permission.

If any individual causes physical hurt or emotional distress to any child then it should be reported to the appointed Welfare Officer and a written record of the event should be taken. Parents should also be informed at the earliest opportunity.

### **Inappropriate relationships:**

It should be noted that all adults involved in the club are in a position of trust in relation to the children under their care. Although the legal age of consent is 16, the relationship of trust overrides this consideration, meaning that it is completely inappropriate for an adult involved in the club to foster a romantic or sexual relationship with a younger participant. This is the case even if the relationship is unlooked for and is initiated by the child or young person concerned. To indulge in such a relationship is a gross breach of trust and will lead to the adult being suspended as a participant in the club.

Relationships of an exclusive or dependant nature should also be discouraged and, if such a situation seems to be in danger of arising, the child should be gently reminded of the appropriate boundaries to be observed.

In each of these scenarios, it is the duty of the adult to take responsibility to ensure that these boundaries are enforced.



## **Harm caused by other children:**

Anyone who has been a child will remember that they often have a capacity for cruelty that has not yet been curbed by adult self control and social responsibility. It is therefore the responsibility of those involved in coaching and leading children to protect them, not just from dangerous adults but also from each other.

These harms are often subtle and go unnoticed by adults whilst severely undermining a child's self esteem and social standing.

Adults involved in coaching and supervising should be alert to the following behaviours and should take action to prevent them:

- Name calling, even if dressed up as fun or affection.
- Comments about a child's body, whether height, weight, build or appearance.
- Comments relating to a child's ethnicity or gender.
- Derogatory comments relating to a child's perceived sexual orientation.
- Comments relating to a child's abilities on court.
- Comments relating to any real or imaginary disability.
- Any comment that causes a child to feel excluded from the group or unworthy as a team mate.
- Physical violence dressed up as legitimate contact during games or training.

Coaches and supervisors should make every effort to foster a team mentality whereby every child is seen as having something vital to contribute whatever their current level of ability.

## **Dealing with bullying:**

Incidents of any of the above behaviours should be dealt with first by speaking to the group as a whole and emphasising that this sort of behaviour will not be tolerated.

If it persists then the individual should be spoken to directly. The consequences of his or her continuing in this behaviour should be explained. This would include suspension for a given number of weeks in the first instance. If the problem then persists on the the child's return, he or she will be banned from participating indefinitely.

## **Contact and communication:**

All coaches and volunteer's contact details should be made available to the parents and carers of all children participating in the club. It should be recognised that they will not always be able to take a call during a game or training session but that there should be a facility for a message to be left.

At least two contacts should be obtained for every child participating in the club. This should include at least a phone number and a home address for each contact.

## **Late pick-ups:**

It should be stressed that the coaches and volunteers involved in the club are not responsible for the transport and safety of children coming and going to club events. Parents must make provision to either pick up their children or to authorise them to travel independently to and from the venue.



Parents and carers should be encouraged to call a specific number if it is likely that a child is not going to be picked up on time.

If a child is not picked up on time and there is no contact from the parents or carers then the coaches should attempt to contact them using the details provided.

If no contact can be made then no adult should:

- Take the child home or to any other location without speaking to their parents;
- Send the child home with another person without permission from a parent;
- Leave the child on their own;
- Ask the child to wait in a vehicle or sport facility with you alone.

## **Photography:**

Written permission of parents and carers should be obtained before any child is photographed or videoed. For games and training events involving other teams, it should be checked that consent has been given by the parents of the visiting children.

Parents and carers should be informed as to how images and videos are being used within the club, e.g., for training purposes only or for use on web sites and publicity materials. Parents and carers should be given the option to have photographs of their child excluded from any or all of these uses.

Images and videos should be stored on one computer only and not made available by any means to individuals outside of the club. This includes unsecured wireless networks and removable media.

## **Abuse:**

Current estimates are that 1 in 20 children in the UK have been sexually abused. (Source: NSPPC ) Others suffer physical abuse; some endure both. It is highly likely, therefore that coaches involved in youth sports clubs will come into contact with children who are undergoing abuse. As caring adults, outside of the family and school context, it is not uncommon for children to turn to coaches when they are experiencing harm or hardship in other areas of their lives and so coaches should be equipped to handle these situations with sensitivity and the correct procedures.

Accepted definitions of abuse are given in the appendix to this document.

### **Detecting possible abuse.**

It is possible that a child may approach a coach or volunteer directly with a disclosure of abuse. In this case, the course of action is clear and the allegation should be reported. Many children, however, find that they are unable to confide in an adult directly, fearing the consequences of their doing so. In these cases the possibility of abuse may become apparent through outward signs and changes in the child's behaviour.

Coaches and volunteers should be aware of and alert to the following signs which may, be an indication that a child is suffering abuse. It should be noted that any or all of these signs could relate to other difficulties that the child is experiencing and it is important not to jump to conclusion or act hastily; they should be seen as clues and not as evidence.

It should also be noted that building good relationships with parents and carers will allow coaches to



identify other situations such as divorce or family bereavement which could equally well account for any of the signs listed below.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other young people.
- Displays variations in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Sudden weight change.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

### **Disabled children.**

Sad to say disabled children sometimes present as an easy target to abusers. This is sometimes because they are more physically vulnerable but also, at times, because they are less able or less likely to report abusive behaviour, especially if their disability involves difficulties in communication. Adults involved in the care of children should be especially aware of these issues.

### **Acting on suspicions.**

Whether it springs from a disclosure or suspicion, it is not the role of a coach or volunteer to determine whether abuse has taken place or to deal with the situation if it is clear that it has. It is the responsibility of the coach or volunteer to report suspicions of abuse to the relevant parties.

In the first instance it should be reported to the club's Welfare Officer who will take the appropriate action based on the recommendations of Basketball England as outlined in their Safeguarding Policy. This document is available on the Basketball England website and includes a comprehensive section dealing with suspicions and allegations of abuse. We would recommend reference to this document if any coach or volunteer should feel concerns in this area.

If there is a sense that the child is in immediate danger or that the situation constitutes an emergency then the police should be contacted.



## Appendix

### Definitions:

#### **Child Abuse:**

Child abuse is harm of a person under 18 years of age gender, race or ability. Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other young people, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family. There are four main types of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

The definitions below are adapted from Department of Health (1999)

*Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

**Neglect** - where adults fail to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the young person's health or development (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.) It may also include refusal to give young people love, affection and attention.

Neglect in sport could include a teacher not ensuring young people we safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

**Physical Abuse** - where adults physically hurt or injure young people for example by hitting.

Examples of physical abuse in basketball may be where the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the young person's immature and growing body or where drugs are used to enhance performance.

**Sexual Abuse** - where young people are used by adults (both male and female) to meet their own sexual needs. Showing young people pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) or talking to young people in a sexually explicit manner is also a form of sexual abuse. In sport, coaching techniques, which involve physical contact could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

**Emotional Abuse** - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person such a was as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on young people. It may involve causing young people to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a young person. Emotional abuse in basketball may occur if young people are subjected to constant criticism, name or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

## Contacts

NSSBC Child Welfare Officer: Lynne Davis: 07778 994218 [lynne@davieshome.co.uk](mailto:lynne@davieshome.co.uk)

Basketball England Lead Child Protection Officer: 0114 2841060 [childprotection@englandbasketball.co.uk](mailto:childprotection@englandbasketball.co.uk)

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) 0116 234 7278