



London Warriors American Football Club

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Contents

1. Policy statement
2. Definitions and terminology
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Recognising abuse and types of abuse
5. Promoting best practice guidance
6. Reporting a safeguarding concern
7. Responding to a safeguarding or child protection concern, allegation or disclosure
8. Duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding
9. Monitoring and review
10. Key contacts and useful numbers

Appendices

- A. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Role Description
- B. Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form



1. Policy statement

This policy uses the term "Programme" to refer to all operations.

The Programme acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. The Programme is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and BAFA requirements and other statutory agencies (eg Social Services, Police and Health Services).

The Programme's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and adults at risk are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience of American Football in a safe and inclusive environment
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in any activities facilitated by the Programme, or outside of the Programme

The Programme acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy the Programme will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults at risk
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Prevent the employment of and engagement with unsuitable individuals
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are always in operation
- Work in partnership with other organisations, children and young people, their parents or carers, and adults at risk

The Programme's policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in activities arranged by the Programme. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed and may result in dismissal/exclusion from the Programme. Specific procedures and code-of-practice for the implementation of the policy shall be developed by the Executive Board, and overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), on behalf of the Trustee Board.



The Programme's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed at least once a year, or sooner in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership – CSCP), BAFA, or any other affiliated organisations
- As a result of any other significant change or event

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

Name	Marvin Allen	Kieron Smith	Faye Eastwood
Position	Trustee Chief Executive Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion	Company Secretary Designated Safeguarding Lead	Director of Operations Designated Safeguarding Lead
Date	31 st January 2025	31 st January 2025	31 st January 2025

Note: This policy shall also be approved by the Trustee Board.



2. Definitions and terminology

- **Abuse:** abuse can be caused by a person deliberately intending to harm or neglect, by a person failing to take the right action or through a person's ignorance. It can involve one or several people. Adult abuse can happen to anyone who is over 18
- **Adult at risk of abuse or neglect:** a person aged eighteen years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is, or may be, unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself against abuse or neglect
- **BAFA:** British American Football Association
- **Child:** a person under the age of 18 years
- **CPSU:** Child Protection in Sport Unit (part of the NSPCC)
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>
- **CSCP:** Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership. The statutory body that brings together local agencies that work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people up to the age of 18 within the borough of Croydon. The main role of the CSCP is to coordinate what is done locally to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people in Croydon and to monitor the effectiveness of those arrangements to ensure better outcomes for children and young people
<https://www.croydonlcsb.org.uk/>
- **DBS:** Disclosure and Barring Service
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- **DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead. Also known as Club Welfare Officer (CWO) within BAFA
- **NSPCC:** National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- **The Programme:** London Warriors American Football Club
- **Safeguarding children:** protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances
- **Safeguarding adults at risk:** protecting adults from abuse and/or neglect; enabling adults to maintain control over their lives and make informed choices without coercion; empowering adults at risk, consulting them before taking action, unless someone lacks the capacity to make a decision, or their mental health poses a risk to their own or someone else's safety, in which case, always acting in his or her best interests



3. Roles and responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be a member of the Programme's Executive Board with the necessary status and authority to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters.

They have responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children, young people and adults at risk, and for putting into place procedures to safeguard everyone across the Programme.

This responsibility cannot be delegated. The DSL must ensure that there is always cover for their role and that arrangements for cover are communicated within the Programme. They can be supported by Deputy DSL's and Team Managers.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will:

- Act as the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about anybody's welfare, poor practice or abuse are identified
- Enable the Programme to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities and implement the safeguarding plan
- Be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are dealt with, reported and recorded appropriately
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership and/or the Police in accordance with local safeguarding partner procedures, and work with other agencies in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- Ensure that he/she/they is/are aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Trustees, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate
- Receive appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection matters, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years, and in addition to formal training, update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals to keep up with developments relevant to the role
- Ensure that all Programme staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to Coaches, Trainers, Team Managers and other Programme support staff and volunteers, and promote best practice and training support
- Act as a source of advice and support within the Programme and coordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children, adults at risk and allegations against staff and volunteers, ensuring appropriate confidentiality is maintained
- Receive Prevent awareness training; provide advice and support, and make appropriate referrals through the Channel programme



All Programme Staff and Volunteers

- Must work to create a safe, friendly and welcoming environment, treating everyone with respect
- Is aware that safeguarding children and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility
- Understands and complies with the Programme's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and follows all guidance in this document when working with children and adults at risk
- Completes any training considered appropriate for their role
- Staff and volunteers working in Regulated Activity are subject to an enhanced DBS check

Trustee Board

- Has overall responsibility for Safeguarding across the Programme
- Must approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Must appoint one of the Trustees as the 'Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion'
- Will delegate day-to-day management to the Executive Board, and the Programme's Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
within the Programme**



4. Recognising abuse and types of abuse

What is child abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.¹

An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child. Bullying is also abusive behaviour which generally incorporates more than one of the four types of abusive behaviour. Those involved with children should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label and in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

The four main forms of abuse include²:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness
 - *Indicators can include: children with frequent injuries; unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; untreated injuries; and unexplained bruises/cuts, burns/scalds, or bite marks*
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult at risk such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child/adult at risk that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; not giving them opportunities to express their views; deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, including interactions that are beyond a child or adult at risk's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them 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 a child or adult at risk to feel frightened in danger, or exploited. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone
 - *Indicators can include: children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong or making mistakes; parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'; parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons*

¹ Taken from 'Working together to Safeguard Children' 2018: [Click here to access](#).

² Definitions for the four main types of abuse are taken from 'Working together to Safeguard Children' 2018.



- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide education, adequate food, clothing or shelter; protect a child/adult at risk from physical or emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or adult at risk's basic emotional needs. Neglect may occur during pregnancy due to maternal substance abuse
 - *Indicators can include: children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe; children who are left hungry or dirty; children who are left without adequate clothing, eg not having a winter coat; children who are living in dangerous conditions, eg around drugs, alcohol or violence; children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm; children who fail to receive basic health care; and parents or carers who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured*
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in abusive sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, 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 or 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
 - *Indicators can include: children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age; children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you would not expect them to have; children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy*

Other forms of abuse (usually involving one or more of the above types) include:

- **Child sexual exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point
 - *Indicators can include: children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions; children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation; children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant; children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being; children who misuse drugs and alcohol; children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education*



- **Bullying** may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (eg hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (eg racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (eg isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- **Cyber bullying** is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. It can include sending threatening or abusive text messages, creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos, trolling (the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games), excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups, shaming someone online, setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child, encouraging young people to self-harm, voting for or against someone in an abusive poll, creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name, sending explicit messages, also known as sexting, pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations
- **Domestic abuse** includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also covers so-called 'honour' based violence
- **Online abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including through social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming and live-streaming sites. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.
- **Self-neglect** is behaviour which threatens an adult's personal health or safety (but not that of others). Includes an adult's decision to not provide themselves with adequate food, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, or medication (when indicated), or take appropriate safety precautions
- **Radicalisation** (extremism and terrorist behaviour) is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and/or forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. There is no single way to identify an individual who is likely to be susceptible to extremist ideology. The internet and the use of social media can be a major factor in the radicalisation of people
- **Financial or material abuse** includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse or stealing of property, possessions or benefits
- **Discriminatory abuse** is where someone is treated in a less favourable way and causing them harm, because of their age, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, ethnic origin, religion and any other visible or non-visible difference
- **Psychological abuse** includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks



- **Organisational abuse** includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. Organisational abuse can range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation
- **Modern slavery** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, criminal and sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Who are the abusers?

Abusers might be parents or carers, siblings or members of the extended family, friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches or strangers. In short, an abuser could be anyone.

Contextual safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the Programme and can occur between children outside the Programme. All staff and volunteers should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. It is important to provide as much information as possible as part of any referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

Signs of abuse

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and radicalisation so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection. Possible signs of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- The child says he/she has been abused or asks a question or makes a comment which gives rise to that inference
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child's injury, the injury is unusual in kind or location, or there have been several injuries and there is a pattern to the injuries
- The child's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour, or there is a sudden or significant change in the child's behaviour
- The child's development is delayed; the child loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the child's general wellbeing
- The child appears neglected, eg dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed
- The child is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers



- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of the Programme or any other person working with children, for example inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role or responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

However, such lists are not exhaustive – if staff and volunteers are unsure, they should always seek advice and report concerns even where signs/indicators are not present. Staff and volunteers should also be alert to behaviours or circumstances that put children in danger such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, self-harm, truancy, cyber bullying and sexting.

The Department for Education advice ["What to do if you're worried a child is being abused"](#) provides advice in identifying child abuse.

The **NSPCC** website is also a good source of information and advice:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/>

The **Ann Craft Trust** is also a leading UK authority on safeguarding adults and young people at risk:

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/types-of-harm/>



5. Promoting best practice guidance

Providing a safe environment

A safe environment is one where:

- The possibility of abuse is openly acknowledged
- Volunteers and employees are appropriately recruited and trained
- Those who report suspicions and concerns know they will be treated seriously and confidentially

Communication is central to maintaining a safe environment; this includes information given to parents or carers at the start of the season (such as the DSL's name and contact details), choosing the correct and appropriate method of providing information to children (email/phone to parents or carers), listening to children's views on matters which affect them, as well as considering how to communicate in an emergency (mobile/landline).

Messages relating to children, sent via telephone, emails and texts, should be through their parents or carers. Where appropriate, older players may be copied in, but this should always be done by blind copying in order to protect their data. Direct personal communication with children should be avoided at all times, unless there are exceptional circumstances, eg risk of harm.

Safer recruitment

Anyone undertaking a role that involves contact with or responsibility for children (or any other vulnerable groups) must be taken through the Programme's safer recruitment process.

Most people who want to work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children within sport are well motivated. Without them, sports clubs and organisations could not operate. But regardless of whether the role is paid or not, it is important that the individual has the right skills, knowledge and attitude for the role. Some individuals may not be suitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk due to gaps in these or due to previous concerns about conduct.

An effective recruitment and selection procedures will be in place for both paid staff and volunteers to help to screen out and discourage those who are not suitable.

Our safer recruitment procedure includes:

- Clear role descriptions, identifying responsibilities and what tasks will be involved
- A person specification of what experience and attributes a successful candidate needs for the role
- Advertising for the post where appropriate
- Completing an application form to gather relevant information about each applicant
- Requiring specific written references
- Interviewing any shortlisted applicants



- For eligible posts, undertaking a DBS check
- Creating a risk assessment of any concerning information
- Verifying relevant qualifications and experience
- Recording of the recruitment decision
- Induction to the role (including safeguarding policies and procedures, safeguarding training and signing up to a Code of Conduct)
- Probationary period

Supervision, support and training

Once recruited, all staff and volunteers should be well informed, trained, supervised and supported to ensure that they effectively safeguard children and know how to respond to any concerns.

The Programme will make training and resources available to encourage the development of staff and volunteers. This will include:

- An initial induction to the work and the Programme
- A trial period in which to develop the required skills whilst under supervision, to ensure they are following best practice
- Ongoing support, training and monitoring as required

Any staff or volunteers undertaking any coaching roles are expected to have or be working towards the relevant BAFCA qualifications for their role.

Staff and volunteers must avoid working in isolation out-of-sight of parents or other volunteers. Anyone awaiting DBS disclosure must always be supervised by someone who has a DBS clearance, and a risk assessment completed to determine whether it is appropriate for a person to commence working with children prior to receipt of the DBS disclosure and what level of supervision is appropriate.

Staff and volunteers must never work unsupervised at any time until DBS has been cleared by the DSL.

Contingency planning should ensure that if a player's injury requires significant attention, or coaches are absent or away, that levels of supervision can be maintained by suitably DBS checked adults. However, in an emergency, the first attention must be paid to an injured player and if there are insufficient suitably DBS checked adults available to supervise the remaining players, clearly, other responsible adults will need to be asked to step in. If this is not possible, all activity with remaining players must be stopped.

Parents and carers for our younger age groups should also be advised that it is not acceptable to simply drop children off without any adult supervision.



Inappropriate Relationships with Children

An adult in a position of trust must never enter into a sexual relationship with a child in their care.

All adults must clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with children and young people. Intimate or sexual relationships between those working with children and a child will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and will be treated very seriously and will result in disciplinary action from both the Programme and BAFA.

All adults must ensure relationships with children are appropriate to the age and gender of the children, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when adults are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

From time-to-time adults may encounter young people who display attention-seeking behaviour, or profess to be attracted to them. All adults should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the adult should also ensure that the DSL is aware of the situation.

Breach of Position of Trust

The sexual offences legislation in the UK already provides that any sexual activity between adults and children under 16 is illegal and constitutes abuse.

The primary motivation for legislation which addresses the abuse of positions of trust is the need to protect young people aged 16 and 17 who, despite reaching the age of consent for sexual activity, are considered to be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in defined circumstances. This includes sexual activity and relationships with adults who hold a position of trust, responsibility or authority in relation to them and, as a result, have a considerable amount of power and influence in their lives.

The law defines specific roles and settings where sexual activity between 16 and 17 year olds and those in positions of trust, responsibility or authority constitutes a criminal offence. Currently being a coach/official in a sports club is not considered under the law as a specified role. While it may not be a criminal offence, within the Programme it will be treated very seriously and may result in disciplinary action, including barring individuals and removing them from their role.

On being notified that an adult in a position of trust is involved or suspected to be involved in a sexual relationship with a child, the matter will be reported to the police. An adult removed from Regulated Activity for engaging in a sexual relationship with a child will also be referred by the Safeguarding Team to the DBS who will consider whether to bar that person from working with children in other environments.

No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child in their care: this is often referred to as grooming. Adults must never send children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.



Safeguarding Children with Additional Needs

Children with additional needs and their families may need more information, help and support. Staff and volunteers may require additional training and advice to ensure they include and safeguard them appropriately.

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of children with a disability or additional needs creating additional safeguarding challenges for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of this group of children. The Programme is mindful that:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability or additional need without further exploration
- Children with a disability or additional needs can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- There may be communication barriers which are difficult to overcome to identify whether action under this policy is required

Children may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- Lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- Require higher degrees of physical care and support
- Have limited communication skills
- Find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- Have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser
- Have a history of having limited or no choice
- Have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns

It is also important to be aware of the additional needs some children experience because of a wide spectrum of issues such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a variety of other disorders.

Staff and volunteers as good role models

All staff and volunteers should consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance and refrain from pursuits considered unhealthy in front of their players. They must not make sexually explicit comments to children and any language which causes them to feel uncomfortable or lose confidence or self-esteem is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language.



Coaching ratios

Coaches working with young people should not work in isolation. It is important to have the correct level of supervision from a health and safety point of view so that coaches reduce the risk of injury to players and ensure adequate cover remains in case of an emergency.

Good practice means at least one other adult in addition to the Head Coach should be present at every session to supervise. The additional adults do not need to be qualified coaches as long as the ratio of coaches-to-players are met. Participants aged under 17 should not be included in staffing ratios even if they have coaching qualifications.

There are no statutory requirements that must be met regarding staffing ratios – it is up to the Club to determine safe staffing levels. Typical staffing levels for clubs range from around 1:10 up to 1:15, but you should consider the age-range and maturity of the children attending, the nature of the activity you will be providing, and the layout of the facilities when deciding on numbers of staff³.

The level of supervision needs to take account of:

- Ability, experience and maturity of the players
- The age and any disabilities or special requirements of any of the young people
- The activity being undertaken
- The geography of the facilities being used (eg restricted access to indoor or outdoor areas)
- A risk assessment of the activity and facility

If there is an accident or an incident which may mean a member of staff or volunteer must leave, there must be enough people remaining to supervise the group. If it is not possible to maintain the required coaching ratios, all activity with remaining players must be stopped.

Parents or carers as supervisors

Parents or carers should be encouraged to accompany their children to activities, but they should not be included in supervision calculations unless they are part of the Programme acting in a volunteering role or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, they should meet all appropriate requirements in terms of:

- Appropriate background checks
- Clarity about their role and responsibilities
- Who has overall responsibility for the group
- What is acceptable practice

³ <https://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/activity-clubs>



Minimum requirements for medical cover

For the following Programme activities, a First Aider must be present as a minimum:

- Regular week Practice
- Black & White game

For the following Programme activities, a Programme Trainer must be present as a minimum:

- Scrimmage with another Team
- Two-a-day Practices
- One-day Football Camp
- Residential Football Camp (more than one day)
- Pre, Regular and Post-Season games
- Season Tournaments: A first aider will be accepted if the tournament organiser/s are providing a Paramedic for all teams competing in said tournament
- Coaching Clinics with competitive group(s), with an on-field element to the event

Failure to have the correct medical cover to our members based on these guidelines and criteria, will force the London Warrior Executive Board to cancel the proposed practice/event.

A Programme Trainer must have one of the following qualifications: Physiotherapist, Sports Therapist, Paramedic, Nurse (must hold appropriate trauma qualifications), Doctor (must hold appropriate trauma qualifications).

For consideration to medical cover outside of the above guidelines: A letter from the opposing team's medical person stating that they will take on the responsibility of our medical cover during the competitive event. This may be accepted providing the opposing medical person meets all the above criteria requirements and the acceptance of that responsibility is notified ahead of the event to the DSL.

Contact American Football

The wellbeing and safety of children must always be placed above the development of performance. Contact skills must be taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physical development of the players involved. Adults and children must never play contact versions of the sport together including training games or contact drills.

All equipment borrowed from the Programme must be fitted by a minimum Level 1 qualified coach.



Coaching techniques

Any inappropriate contact between adults and children is unacceptable and a number of principles should be followed when teaching contact American Football:

- Physical handling by a coach must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique
- The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practical so that children and their parents are comfortable with this approach
- Do not proceed with the action or consider alternatives if the child appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if there are other concerns about the child's likely reaction
- The activity should always be conducted in an open environment and in the presence of another adult

Physical intervention

Discipline on the field of play is the responsibility of the players. Coaches, team managers and parents or carers must always promote good discipline among the players, both on and off the field. Penalising play which contravenes the laws of the game is the responsibility of the referee. Coaches, managers and spectators should not intervene or enter the field of play.

Physical intervention should only take place when it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child being hurt.

In these situations, it is imperative to:

- Consider your own safety
- Give verbal instructions first
- Use the minimum reasonable force to resolve the incident
- Not strike blows, act with unnecessary force or retaliate
- Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body, the head and neck
- Always stay in control of your actions

The DSL must be notified at the earliest opportunity of an incident of physical intervention which involves any possible dispute, as a complaint might be lodged with BAFA, or with the Police by a parent or carer whose child has been physically restrained.

The incident should be recorded on a 'Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form' and sent to the DSL.

Physical intervention, often referred to in education as 'Positive Handling', should only be used to achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of children, such as to prevent children from hurting themselves or others. **It must never be used as a form of punishment.**



Changing rooms and showers

Adults and children must never use the same changing or toilet facilities at a venue to shower or change at the same time. Adults must only enter children's changing rooms by themselves when absolutely necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness, or in an emergency and when waiting for another adult could result in harm to a child.

If children need supervising in changing rooms, or coaches or managers need to carry out a range of tasks in that environment this should involve at least two individuals cleared to work in Regulated Activity of the same gender as the children. For mixed gender activities separate changing and toilet facilities should be available.

If the same changing and toilet facilities must be used by adults and children on the same day a clear timetable should be established. No pressure should be placed on children who feel uncomfortable changing or showering with others; if this is the case they should be allowed to shower and change at home.

All players, staff and volunteers should be aware that no photographic equipment (including cameras, video cameras and mobile phones) are to be used in a changing room environment.

Transportation

It should be made clear that in most instances it is the responsibility of parents or carers, not the Programme, to transport their child to and from the Programme facilities, or another nominated meeting point. If parents or carers make arrangements between themselves this is a private arrangement and at the parents' or carers' discretion.

If the Programme hires a coach from a reputable commercial coach company it is entitled to assume that the company provides properly maintained and insured vehicles and properly licensed drivers. However, children must never travel unaccompanied – a member of staff or volunteer must travel with the children and that adult's contact details must be readily available to parents and carers.

If the programme formally arranges transport (eg using minibuses or people carriers, as opposed to facilitating travel arrangements between parents or carers) then the Programme should ensure that:

- Drivers have a valid driving licence and recruitment procedures, including vetting and DBS criteria, have been followed and appropriate insurance has been arranged for the vehicle
- The vehicle is suitable for the number of passengers and has operational safety belts and appropriate child car seats (if required)
- Parents or carers give their consent and have the driver's contact details, with the driver having easy access to parents' or carers' contact details including mobile phone numbers
- No child is left alone in the car with the driver, unless it is the adult's own child. If, in extenuating circumstances, this situation arises the child should sit in the back of the car if possible
- The children involved are happy with the arrangement and adults are alert to any signs of disquiet



Late collection of children

In the event of a late collection of children, coaches and volunteers should:

- Attempt to contact the parents/carers
- Wait with the child, preferably in the company of others
- Notify the DSL if they are unable to contact parents
- Remind parents or carers of their responsibility to collect their child promptly

Guidelines for use of video/photographic images

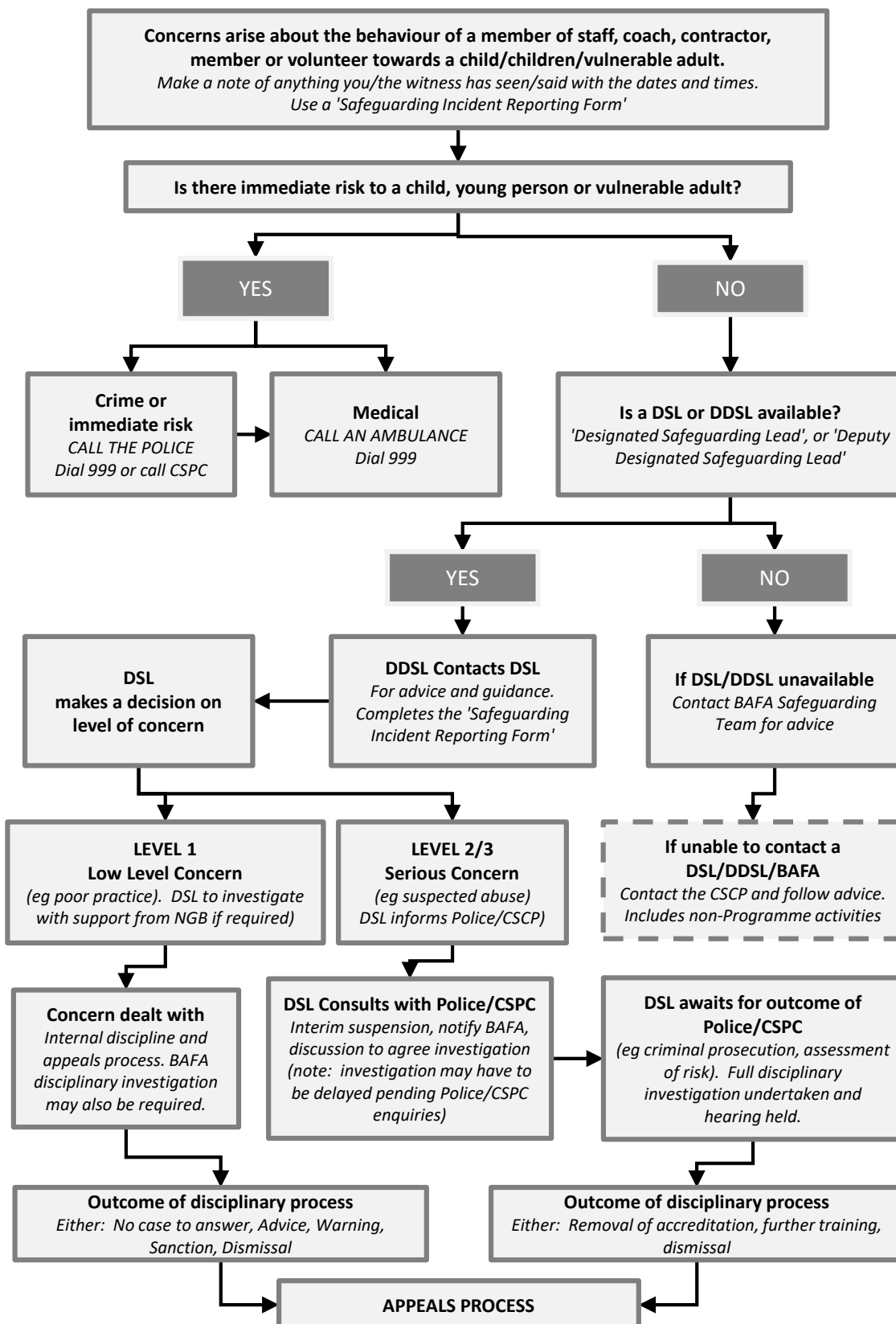
The Programme welcomes the taking of appropriate images and videos to be taken celebrating the core values of American Football, as well as for player and team development.

Guidance for staff and volunteers across the Programme is available in the Photography and Filming Policy. All staff and volunteers must ensure the policy is always complied with.

There are risks associated with the use of photographic images, and some people are known to have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children, young people and adults at risk.



6. Reporting a safeguarding concern





7. Responding to a safeguarding or child protection concern, allegation or disclosure

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for the Programme in any capacity to decide whether 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 or adult at risk.

This applies BOTH to allegations/suspensions of abuse occurring during Programme activities and to allegations/suspensions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

All concerns should be made to the DSL, who is overseen by the Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion' and Trustee Board, and who will lead the investigation. This will be undertaken in accordance with the Code of Practice regarding Responding to Allegations.

8. Duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding

The Programme recognises that children, young people and adults at risk cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff and volunteers fail to do so. Staff and volunteers must feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Programme's safeguarding regime, and feel confident that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Trustee Board and the Executive Board. The duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding is part of the Code of Conduct, and will also be reflected in staff training.

Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise these concerns.

The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the DSL, or in a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the DSL, to the Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion.

However, where someone reasonably believes these reporting routes to be inappropriate, or has reported concerns and no action has been taken, they should contact the Company Secretary or refer their concerns to children's social care directly, the CSCP, or use the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.



9. Monitoring and review

The working of this policy will be monitored by the DSL, who will report as required to the Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion and the Trustee Board.

The Programme undertakes regular audit reviews and periodic checks to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of these policies and procedures across the Programme, together with a review of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen and how they have been and are being managed.

These reviews and checks will be reported back to the Trustee Board, which will monitor compliance. A member of the Trustee Board is nominated by the Board as 'Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion', to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding at organisation level, delegating where appropriate to members of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will also consider the processes in place for promoting the welfare of all the Programme's players, staff and volunteers.

The Programme acknowledges its overall responsibility in ensuring that this policy is effective in its implementation and meets all current regulatory requirements. An annual review of this policy and associated procedures, and the efficiency with which associated duties are discharged, will be undertaken so that any deficiencies or weaknesses can be remedied without delay.

This policy was last reviewed and updated on 31st January 2025 and will be reviewed again by 31st January 2026 at the latest, or in the event of any significant changes.



10. Key contacts and useful numbers

London Warriors Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Kieron Smith

07920 527 218

kieron@londonwarriors.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Faye Eastwood

07877 359388

faye@londonwarriors.org.uk

Trustee Safeguarding and Child Protection Champion

Marvin Allen

07915 409 721

marvin@londonwarriors.org.uk

Company Secretary

Kieron Smith

07920 527 218

kieron@londonwarriors.org.uk

Other useful contacts

Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)

020 8255 2888 / 020 8726 6400 |

<https://croydonlcsb.org.uk/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-about-a-child/>

Emergency Services

Dial 999

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

Text 88858

Children Protection in Sport Unit

0116 234 7278

www.thecpsu.org.uk

Childline UK Helpline

0800 11111

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

BAFA Safeguarding Contact

Richard Watson (Safeguarding Lead)

safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org



Appendices

A. Designated Safeguarding Lead Role Description

[Please see Role Description on Page 26/27](#)

B. Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

[Please see form on Page 28/29](#)

[A copy of the form can also be downloaded here.](#)

Or scan the QR code below...





Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Role Description

About the role

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be a member of the Programme's Executive Board with the necessary status and authority to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters.

They have responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children, young people and adults at risk, and for putting into place procedures to safeguard everyone across the Programme.

This responsibility cannot be delegated. The DSL must ensure that there is always cover for their role and that arrangements for cover are communicated within the Programme. They are supported by Deputy DSL's.

Duties and responsibilities

- Act as the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about anybody's welfare, poor practice or abuse are identified
- Enable the Programme to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities and implement a safeguarding plan
- Be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are dealt with, reported and recorded appropriately
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership and/or the Police in accordance with local safeguarding partner procedures, and work with other agencies in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- Ensure that he/she/they is/are aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Trustees, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate
- Receive appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection matters, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years, and in addition to formal training, update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals to keep up with developments relevant to the role
- Ensure that all Programme staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to coaches, Trainers, Team Managers and other Programme support staff and volunteers, and promote best practice and training support
- Act as a source of advice and support within the Programme and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children, adults at risk and allegations against staff, ensuring appropriate confidentiality is maintained
- Receive Prevent awareness training; provide advice and support, and make appropriate referrals through the Channel programme



Skills and abilities

- Child-focused approach
- Basic administration and computer skills
- Basic advice and support-provision skills
- Communication skills, including use of social media
- Ability to maintain records
- Ability to provide information about local resources
- Ability to promote organisation's policy, procedures and resources

Knowledge

- The programme's policy and procedures relating to safeguarding children and young people, and the roles and responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of children and young people
- Boundaries of the role of DSL
- A basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (children's social care, the police and the NSPCC) and Local Safeguarding Children Board (the CSCP)
- Local arrangements for managing safeguarding children and reporting procedures
- Poor practice and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children
- Core values and principles underpinning practice
- Awareness of equality issues and protecting children from abuse
- Basic knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and national framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- An understanding of how adults groom children for abuse



Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

Your name:	
Your role:	
Your contact information: <i>Address:</i> <i>Postcode:</i> <i>Mob:</i> <i>Email:</i>	
Child's name:	Child's date of birth:
Child's gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Please state:</i>	
Parent's/carer's name(s):	
Contact information (parents/carers): <i>Address:</i> <i>Postcode:</i> <i>Mob:</i> <i>Email:</i>	
Have parents/carers been notified of this incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If YES provide details of what was said/action agreed:</i>	
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else? <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	
If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide further information of that person below: <i>Name:</i> <i>Position within the sport or relationship to the child:</i> <i>Mob:</i> <i>Email:</i>	
Date and times of incident:	
Details of the incident or concerns: <i>Include all relevant information, eg description of any injuries, or if this incident is recorded as fact, opinion or hearsay.</i>	
Child's account of the incident:	



Provide any witness accounts of the incident:

Provide details of any witnesses to the incident:

Name:

Position within the Programme or relationship to the child:

Date of birth (if child):

Address:

Postcode:

Mob:

Email:

Provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury:

Name:

Date of birth (if child):

Position within the Programme or relationship to the child:

Address:

Postcode:

Mob:

Email:

Provide details of action taken to date:

Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If YES provide further details:

Name of organisation:

Contact:

Position within the Programme or relationship to the child:

Mob:

Email:

Agreed action or advice given:

Your Signature:

Print name:

Date:

You must Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the Programme's reporting procedures