

Garioch Gymnastics Child Protection Policy Statement

Garioch Gymnastics Club SCIO has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in gymnastics from physical and emotional harm. All children have a right to protection, including all vulnerable individuals. Garioch Gymnastics Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in gymnastics through adherence to the Child Protection/Safeguarding guidelines as published by the Scottish Gymnastics Association (SGA).

Garioch Gymnastics Club Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

The aim of the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and vulnerable people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Garioch Gymnastics Club
- Allowing all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting Good Practice

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Not only can sport provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also help those who participate to develop valuable qualities and skills such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands, i.e., under the control of those who place the welfare of all children, young people, vulnerable adults first and adopt practices that support, protect, and empower them.

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

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with 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 should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

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

Code of Practice for Coaches and Officials

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. All Club Coaches and volunteers must adhere to the Scottish Gymnastics "Code of Practice for Coaches and Officials"

Incidents That Must Be Reported/Recorded

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident.

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

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

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer.

Parental consent should be sought before using photographs or videos of gymnasts either in the press or on the Club website.

Video as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme, and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Garioch Gymnastics Club 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 should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should 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 should be provided (e.g., passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and Induction

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

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should sign up to Garioch Gymnastics Club's Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- Child protection procedures are explained, and training needs are identified.

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 established 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 or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Garioch Gymnastics Club Requires:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attendance of update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from sports coach UK, the NSPCC, and Scottish Gymnastics

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Garioch Gymnastics Club, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Garioch Gymnastics Club will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Any concerns against a member or volunteer of the Club should be raised using the **Club's Complaints Procedure**.

Any concerns against an individual who is not a member or volunteer of the Club member should be referred to the Police. The Club should be informed also but the Club will not in this situation be able to carry out any formal complaint procedure. The matter is a potential criminal investigation. However, the Club's Safeguarding Officer is available for advice, if necessary.

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

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

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

Action

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Club Trustees will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, the Trustees will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer will be investigated by the Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Safeguarding Officer may refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The Safeguarding Officer will inform the **Scottish Gymnastics** Child Protection Officer.
- If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the Board Trustees in his/her absence will inform the **Scottish Gymnastics'** Child Protection Officer.

Confidentiality

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.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The SGA, on advice from the Trustees and CPO, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services enquiries.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g., by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

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

Action to prevent bullying in sport:

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

Action towards those displaying bullying behaviour:

- Talk with those displaying bullying behaviour - explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to those they are bullying.
- Inform the parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that those displaying bullying behaviour compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the coaches involved/observing.
- Impose sanctions, as necessary.
- Encourage and support those displaying bullying behaviour to change their behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g., a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
- See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need.
- If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- Social services and the Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Safeguarding Officer should also report the incident to Scottish Gymnastics/British Gymnastics. The governing body should ascertain whether the person/(s) involved in the incident play a role Garioch Gymnastics Club and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.
- See 4. below regarding information needed for social services.

Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

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

- The child's name, age, and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors, and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?

- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Before you make a formal report, you may feel you cannot share your concerns with a colleague, or you may just need advice. Contact social services or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** on **0800 800 5000**, or **Childline** on **0800 1111** or **Scottish Gymnastics, Head of Child Protection, 0131 271 9733**.

Scottish Gymnastics Policy and Procedures

We follow the policy, advice, and guidance of Scottish Gymnastics. Further information can be found on the Scottish Gymnastics Website: <https://www.scottishgymnastics.org/clubs/safeguarding-clubs-polices-procedures>

DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE:

SIGNATURE:

 (NB. One of the signatories should be the **Garioch Gymnastics Club** Child Protection Officer)

Name:

Name:

Position within Garioch Gymnastics Club:

Position within Garioch Gymnastics Club:

Date:

Date:

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