

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

<i>Created by</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Sabrina Holland</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>19/04/2022</i>

<i>Approved by</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Rachel Wharton</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>27/04/2022</i>

<i>Reviewed by</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Sabrina Holland</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>05/03/2025</i>

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

At Catalyst Allstars CIC, we acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We are committed to ensuring that our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance, and that it complies with best practice and requirements of SportCheer England.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are of paramount importance in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, all children:

- ★ have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport at Catalyst Allstars CIC, in a safe and child centred environment; and
- ★ are protected from abuse, both whilst participating in cheerleading, and elsewhere.

The key aims of our safeguarding policy are to:

1. Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
2. Ensure that coaches and parents understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
3. Ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and that appropriate support is provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern;
4. Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
5. Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals; and

6. Ensure that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy and its accompanying procedures will be widely promoted and compliance is mandatory for coaches, parents or carers, and athletes, involved with Catalyst Allstars CIC.

## RISKS TO CHILDREN

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We recognise that child abuse can come in many forms, but can be broadly separated into five main categories, all of which may give rise to safeguarding concerns, in respect of this policy.

### ***Physical abuse***

Physical abuse occurs when someone causes physical harm or injury to a child, or young person. Examples include:

- ★ Hitting, shaking, or throwing
- ★ Poisoning, burning, or scalding
- ★ Biting, suffocating or drowning
- ★ Giving a child alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- ★ Otherwise causing them deliberate physical harm

An example specific to sport could be when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's developmental stage, and could, for example, include instances where prohibited substances are used to delay puberty, control diet or enhance performance. Another example would be a coach physically punishing a child for their performance.

### ***Emotional abuse***

Emotional abuse refers to the emotional ill treatment of a child that results in severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. As a result of emotional abuse, children may feel nervous, lack confidence and self-worth, and learn to dislike any form of activity. Children of all ages can be emotionally abused in a number of ways, such as through:

- ★ Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations of them
- ★ Making them feel worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
- ★ Making their positive self-image entirely dependent on sporting achievement and success
- ★ Making them feel frightened or in danger
- ★ Shouting at, threatening or taunting them
- ★ Overprotecting them, or conversely, failing to give them the love and affection they need

An example specific to sport would be subjecting a child to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure to perform to a high expectation; this may come from parents or coaches. Another example would be inappropriate use of personal information or images in the media, internet, photographs or noticeboard, as this could be distressing for a child, especially if they do not want their image to be shared in this way.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult (male or female), or other young person uses children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include:

- ★ Full sexual intercourse
- ★ Masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling
- ★ Involving a child in producing pornographic material (e.g. photos, videos)
- ★ Showing a child pornographic material (e.g. magazines, videos, pictures)

An example specific to sport would be the deliberate taking of photographs of children in vulnerable positions during a performance, or touching an athlete excessively, or inappropriately, in the context of the activities being carried out.

## **Neglect**

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which could have an impact on the child's health or development. Examples include:

- ★ Failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing
- ★ Regularly leaving a child alone or unsupervised
- ★ Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- ★ Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- ★ Refusing to give a child affection and attention

An example specific to sport could include a football coach failing to ensure that a pitch is suitable to train on or exposure of children to extreme temperatures during a coaching season.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying is not just limited to in person, it can occur over the internet, social networking sites, by phone and through text messages. Bullying can be verbal, written or physical and can include actions such as:

- ★ Physical assaults
- ★ Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, and persistent teasing
- ★ Threats and gestures
- ★ Racist behaviour - including racially aggravated remarks, name-calling, racial exclusion
- ★ Homophobic or transphobic comments
- ★ Unwanted physical contact
- ★ Graffiti
- ★ Stealing or hiding personal items
- ★ Ostracising or ignoring the individual

The competitive nature of sport makes it an ideal environment for bullies. A possible bully could be a parent who pushes their child too hard, a coach who shouts or humiliates children, a child who seems to make sport an unhappy experience for others.

## INDICATORS OF ABUSE

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Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following.

### ***Signs of abuse***

- ★ 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 an explanation seems inconsistent
- ★ The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- ★ Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- ★ Unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper or aggression
- ★ Inappropriate sexual awareness
- ★ Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- ★ Distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- ★ Difficulty in making friends
- ★ Being prevented from socialising with others
- ★ Displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- ★ Losing weight for no apparent reason
- ★ Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- ★ Cutting or self-harm

### ***Signs of bullying***

- ★ Behavioural changes, e.g. reduced concentration or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, or reluctance to attend training or competitions
- ★ An unexplained drop off in performance
- ★ Physical signs, e.g. stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- ★ A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

## WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE CONTACT?

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We have minimised the use of physical contact in the development of tumbling skills, through drills and equipment. However, it will always be necessary to physically spot or correct certain skills, at certain stages in their development, to ensure the technique, safety or confidence of the athlete. Where physical spotting is required, this will be explained to the athlete prior to initiation of the skill, and for most skills, this could typically involve contact with the upper or lower back, arms, legs, or the waist. Spotting will be applied firmly, for the minimum length of time required for the athlete to perform the skill safely, and will be directed (as far as is reasonably practicable) to areas least likely to cause discomfort, i.e. supporting under the lower thigh or knee, rather than the upper thigh or bottom. If any other areas are to be spotted, the reasons for doing so will be explained to the athlete prior to initiation of the skill, and they will be

asked to confirm that they are comfortable with this. This could include placing hands on the back and stomach of the athlete to pause a walkover in handstand position without interfering with the motion of the legs, or placing hands on the back and chest of the athlete to begin drilling the transition from a round off or back handspring, into a somersault. Where spotting such as this is required, it will typically be for corrective or demonstrative purposes, and will not be applied over a prolonged period of time. However, wherever possible, “hands-off” drills will be used for all tumble skills, as an alternative to physical spotting.

**The physical safety of, and prevention of injury to, an athlete will take precedence over the acceptable contact described herein. In the event of an athlete falling (from a stunt, out of a tumble, or otherwise), this policy should not prevent coaches and athletes from taking appropriate action to provide a safe landing. Physical contact that could otherwise be considered inappropriate, will be considered an appropriate measure to prevent harm, provided it is:**

- ★ **Acknowledged by those involved as unintentional;**
- ★ **Judged by those present (uninvolved) as having been necessary to prevent harm;**
- ★ **Recorded according to the relevant safeguarding procedure;**
- ★ **An isolated, or rare, occurrence; and**
- ★ **Not consistent with any other related safeguarding concern.**

## REPORTING CONCERNS

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We will accept and act on any safeguarding concerns including direct disclosures of abuse, conversations with others, incidents witnessed directly, observation of signs consistent with abuse or neglect, or anonymous reports received by email or other means. It is not the responsibility of us to investigate these concerns, but to record basic information, and then report upwards to the appropriate authorities.

Our designated safeguarding lead, Danni Cook, takes responsibility for the recording and onwards referral of safeguarding concerns. Any concerns will be recorded in full, on a “Safeguarding Incident Report Form” by the person receiving or witnessing the concern, if this is not our designated safeguarding lead, this will be shared with them at the earliest convenience.

If the concern relates to a member of staff at Catalyst Allstars CIC, this can also be reported to our designated safeguarding lead. If the designated safeguarding lead is the subject of the safeguarding concern, then this should be reported to one of our three Directors. Any concern raised about a member of staff will be taken seriously, and will not be discussed with that person until the necessary point in the proceedings. We may refer the concern to the police, Local Authority Designated Officer or Children’s Services, as appropriate, and will fully support any investigations. We also have a duty to report concerns to SportCheer England for their records. If an individual is unable to disclose their concerns to our designated safeguarding lead, or a Director of Catalyst Allstars CIC, they should contact the NSPCC helpline or SportCheer England for further advice. Although SportCheer England cannot personally investigate concerns at this time, they can advise on referring to other bodies, such as police, Local Authority Designated Officer or Children’s Services.

Where a safeguarding concern relates to an individual not within the cheer community, this will be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer ([www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk)), Children's Services, or Police, as appropriate. Note that any individual may also contact the NSPCC 24-hour helpline for advice, at any time. This is particularly relevant to concerns arising outside of office hours, if it is reasonably believed that an individual is in imminent danger of serious harm.

## MONITORING

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This policy will be reviewed annually, or in the following circumstances:

- ★ Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- ★ As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and/or Home Country Sports Councils and SportCheer England
- ★ As a result of any other significant change or event.

## RESOURCES

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SportCheer England ([scsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:scsafeguarding@gmail.com))

ChildLine (0800 1111, [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk))

Child Protection in Sport Unit (0116 366 5590, [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk))

NSPCC (0800 028 0285, [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk))

Safeguarding in Sport (0141 418 5674, [www.safeguardinginsport.org.uk](http://www.safeguardinginsport.org.uk))

Sport England (020 7273 1551, [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org))