



# WOKING BLACKHAWKS BASKETBALL CLUB

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

Everyone who participates at Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club (the “**Club**”) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Club is committed to enabling a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for anyone seeking to play basketball with the Club.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing young and vulnerable people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of the Club and to allow coaches and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Welfare Officer(s) will monitor compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and make recommendations to the Executive Committee where changes may be required. The policy should in any case be reviewed on a regular basis.

Where a separate Welfare Officer is appointed to the Youth Section, the Senior Section and the Wheelchair Section of the Club, each Welfare Officer will have responsibility for monitoring compliance within their individual section.

A **child** or **young person** refers to anyone under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). A **vulnerable person** refers to any person over 18 years of age who because of mental or other disability, age or illness; may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

As an affiliate of Basketball England and British Wheelchair Basketball (the “**Governing Bodies**”), and all individuals including players, match officials, coaches, administrators, club officials and spectators should be aware of, and abide by, the safeguarding policies adopted by the respective Governing Bodies when responsible for young and vulnerable people.

### SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

The Club’s Welfare Officer(s) can be contacted at: [welfare@wokingblackhawks.co.uk](mailto:welfare@wokingblackhawks.co.uk)

Please indicate which Section (Youth, Senior or Wheelchair) you are involved in, or the query relates to, when contacting the Welfare Officer(s).

The Governing Bodies’ safeguarding officers can be contacted at:

- Basketball England: [safeguardingbasketball@basketballengland.co.uk](mailto:safeguardingbasketball@basketballengland.co.uk)
- British Wheelchair Basketball: [safeguarding@britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@britishwheelchairbasketball.co.uk)

## PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

### INTRODUCTION

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 young or vulnerable person enters the Club, having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the individual's self-esteem. In such instances the Club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the individual receives the required support.

### DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The definitions below are taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (Department of Health, 2018).

**Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional Abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child 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 on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child 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 children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in 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 and 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. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment),
- protect a child from physical and 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 basic emotional needs.

**Financial Abuse (Wales)** - in relation to children and young people could include:

- child workers without pay
- child's belongings sold or missing
- benefit claims for the child, which are not real and fabricated illness
- misusing allowance/grants for children's care inappropriate cars that have been supported by allowances and Motability.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young and vulnerable people equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for coaches or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a young or vulnerable person or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering young or vulnerable people to share in decision making.
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a young or vulnerable person is constantly moving, the person should always be consulted, and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their young person in the changing rooms. If groups must be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of the coaching or volunteer team. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter a young or vulnerable person's rooms or invite a young or vulnerable person into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young or vulnerable people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

- Requesting written parental consent if Club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

## **POOR PRACTICE**

### ***Practices to be avoided***

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. a young or vulnerable person sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a young person up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club or the individual's parents/guardians.

#### **Otherwise, avoid:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young or vulnerable people away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a young or vulnerable person to an event.

### ***Practices never to be sanctioned***

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a young or vulnerable person.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow young or vulnerable people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young or vulnerable person, even in fun.
- Reduce a young or vulnerable person to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a young or vulnerable person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for young or vulnerable people that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow a young or vulnerable person to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**NB** It may sometimes be necessary for coaches or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young or vulnerable people. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/guardians and the players involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a young or vulnerable person to carry out particular activities.

Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

### ***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/guardians of the young or vulnerable person are informed:

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

## **CLUB PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES**

### **REQUIREMENTS OF CLUB COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS**

Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club requires:

- All members of any coaching team to hold a valid DBS check, of the appropriate level for their role (in accordance with the Governing Bodies' guidelines).
- All members of any coaching team to complete safeguarding training every two years (in accordance with the Governing Bodies' guidelines), to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and safeguarding.
- Non-coaching volunteers to understand the Club's Safeguarding Policy and reporting procedures.
- 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 or vulnerable person.
- Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attendance of update training when necessary and as required by the Governing Bodies.

### **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS**

Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse a young or vulnerable person in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young or vulnerable people.

#### ***Pre-selection checks must include the following:***

- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- 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:
  - Their qualifications should be substantiated.
  - The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
  - They should sign up to Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club's Code of Conduct.
  - Safeguarding procedures are explained.

#### ***Training***

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help coaches 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 young or vulnerable person.
- Work safely and effectively with young or vulnerable people.

#### ***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 or vulnerable people in vulnerable positions. All

individuals within the Club should be vigilant and any concerns should to be reported to the Club Welfare Officer(s).

- 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 or deleted immediately.

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

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

The Club will assure all coaches and 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 young or vulnerable person.

If there is a complaint against an individual within the Club, in particular a coach or volunteer, 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 Welfare Officer(s) will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Welfare Officer(s), or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Club's Executive Committee who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

#### **2. Concerns about suspected abuse:**

- Any suspicion that a young or vulnerable person has been abused by either a coach or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer(s), who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the young or vulnerable person in question and any other young or vulnerable person who may be at risk.
- The Club Welfare Officer(s) will refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents/guardians or carers of the young or vulnerable person will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Club Welfare Officer(s) will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Club Welfare Officer(s) is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Club's Head of Youth, Head of Senior or Head of Wheelchair Section, as appropriate, who will refer the allegation to social services.

#### **3. 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.

## **This includes the following people:**

- the Club Welfare Officer(s)
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Basketball England Regional Development Manager
- the alleged abuser (and parents/guardians if the alleged abuser is a child). Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## **4. Internal enquiries and suspension**

- The **Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club Welfare Officer(s)**, together with the Head of the relevant section (or the Chair of the Club if the concern relates to the Head of Section), will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended temporarily pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the **Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club Executive Committee** will assess all individual cases to decide whether a coach or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the **Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club Executive Committee** must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the young or vulnerable person should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## **5. Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that young or vulnerable people, parents/guardians or carers, coaches or volunteers may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.
- The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

## **6. 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 young or vulnerable person or by a coach or volunteer who is still currently working with young or vulnerable people).

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 young or vulnerable people, 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*.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:**

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all young or vulnerable people to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim 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 Club Welfare Officer(s) or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

## **9. Action towards the bully(ies):**

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

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

- Report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer(s), 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 Club Welfare Officer(s) is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- Social services and the Club Welfare Officer(s) will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Club Welfare Officer(s) should also report the incident to the Governing Bodies. The Governing Bodies should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident, play a role in Junior Basketball outside of Woking Blackhawks Basketball Club and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- See 4. below regarding information needed for social services.

## **11. 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 young or vulnerable person's name, age and date of birth.
- The young or vulnerable person'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 young or vulnerable person'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 young or vulnerable person was not the person who reported the incident, has the young or vulnerable person 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. If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** on **0808 800 5000**, or **Childline** on **0800 1111**.

**September 2023**