

Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy

Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Owner: Play Sports Leagues Ltd / Play Sports Juniors

Applies To: All Academy participants, coaches, Lead Coaches, volunteers, staff and parents/carers

Effective From: 1st September 2026

Review Date: 1st August 2027

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

Play Sports Juniors is committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable environment in which all children can develop their netball skills and enjoy taking part.

This policy sets out the behaviour expected from children, coaches, parents and carers and explains how inappropriate behaviour, bullying and more serious incidents will be managed.

The approach will be proportionate and age-appropriate, with the safety and wellbeing of all children remaining the priority.

2. Expected Behaviour

All children attending the Academy are expected to:

- Listen to and follow reasonable instructions from coaches.
- Treat coaches, other children and visitors with respect.
- Use appropriate language.
- Behave safely during sessions.
- Use Academy equipment correctly.
- Respect the venue and its facilities.
- Allow other children to participate without disruption.
- Take turns and cooperate with others.
- Respect differences between people.
- Avoid physical aggression, intimidation, bullying or threatening behaviour.
- Report concerns or incidents to a coach.

Children will be supported to understand these expectations in an age-appropriate way.

3. Positive Behaviour

The Academy aims to promote positive behaviour rather than focusing solely on consequences for poor behaviour.

Coaches should, where appropriate:

- Set clear expectations at the start of sessions.
- Give clear and consistent instructions.
- Recognise and praise positive behaviour.
- Encourage teamwork and respect.
- Use age-appropriate reminders.
- Give children opportunities to correct their behaviour.
- Consider individual needs that may affect behaviour.

Coaches should remain calm and professional when managing behaviour.

4. Managing Poor Behaviour

Where a child behaves inappropriately, coaches should normally use a staged approach.

Stage 1 – Reminder

The coach should calmly explain what behaviour is inappropriate and remind the child of the expected behaviour.

The child should be given an opportunity to correct their behaviour.

Stage 2 – Warning

If the behaviour continues, the coach may give a clear warning and explain what may happen if the behaviour continues.

Where appropriate, the child may be temporarily removed from an activity or given time to calm down.

Stage 3 – Removal from Activity

If behaviour continues or presents a safety concern, the child may be removed from the activity for an appropriate period.

The coach should continue to supervise the child appropriately.

Stage 4 – Escalation

Serious or persistent behaviour should be reported to the Lead Coach.

The Lead Coach may contact the parent/carer and, where appropriate, Head Office.

A record should be made where the behaviour is serious, persistent or involves a safeguarding concern.

5. Serious Behaviour

Some behaviour may require immediate intervention rather than the staged approach.

This may include:

- Serious physical violence or assault.
- Deliberately causing injury.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Serious verbal abuse.
- Possession or use of dangerous items.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Behaviour that places another child, coach or member of the public at significant risk.
- Serious discriminatory or hateful behaviour.
- Any behaviour that raises a safeguarding concern.

In these circumstances, the coach should prioritise everyone's safety and immediately involve the Lead Coach.

Head Office and the parent/carer should be informed where appropriate.

Emergency services may be contacted where there is an immediate risk of serious harm.

6. Physical Intervention

Coaches should not use physical intervention as a punishment or routinely to manage behaviour.

Physical intervention should only be used where necessary and proportionate to prevent immediate harm to the child or another person, or to prevent serious damage to property.

Any physical intervention must be reported to the Lead Coach and Head Office and recorded appropriately.

Any incident involving physical intervention should be reviewed to identify whether further action or support is required.

7. Bullying

Play Sports Juniors does not tolerate bullying.

Bullying may include repeated behaviour intended to hurt, intimidate, humiliate, isolate or otherwise negatively affect another child.

Bullying can be:

- Physical.
- Verbal.

- Emotional.
- Social.
- Online or through digital communication.
- Discriminatory or based on a protected characteristic.

A single serious incident may not meet the definition of bullying but may still require action under this policy.

8. Responding to Alleged Bullying

Any allegation of bullying should be taken seriously.

Coaches should:

1. Listen calmly to the child.
2. Avoid making assumptions or immediately taking sides.
3. Establish the basic facts.
4. Inform the Lead Coach.
5. Consider the immediate safety and wellbeing of all children involved.
6. Speak to the children involved separately where appropriate.
7. Inform parents/carers where appropriate.
8. Record the incident and action taken where necessary.
9. Escalate safeguarding concerns in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Coaches should not conduct an extensive investigation themselves.

9. Supporting Children Experiencing Bullying

Where a child is believed to be experiencing bullying, Play Sports Juniors will take reasonable steps to support their safety and wellbeing.

This may include:

- Increased supervision.
- Changes to activities or group arrangements.
- Speaking with the children involved.
- Working with parents/carers.
- Monitoring the situation.
- Providing reassurance and support.
- Escalating safeguarding concerns where necessary.

The response will be proportionate to the circumstances and the age of the children involved.

10. Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Where a child is found to have bullied another child, Play Sports Juniors will seek to address the behaviour appropriately.

This may include:

- Speaking with the child.
- Explaining the impact of their behaviour.
- Agreeing clear expectations for future behaviour.
- Contacting parents/carers.
- Increased supervision or support.
- Temporary removal from an activity.
- Suspension from Academy sessions.
- Ending the child's place at the Academy in serious or persistent cases.

The Academy will consider the circumstances and any relevant additional needs when deciding on an appropriate response.

11. Child-on-Child Incidents

Not every incident between children is bullying.

Children may have disagreements, arguments or isolated incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

These should still be dealt with appropriately, particularly where:

- There is a significant difference in age, ability or power.
- The behaviour is repeated.
- There is intimidation or coercion.
- There is physical violence.
- There is sexualised behaviour.
- There is discriminatory behaviour.
- A child appears particularly vulnerable or distressed.

Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, it must be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

12. Discriminatory Behaviour

Play Sports Juniors does not tolerate discriminatory or hateful behaviour.

This includes inappropriate behaviour or language relating to characteristics such as:

- Race or ethnicity.
- Disability.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Religion or belief.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Age.
- Other personal characteristics.

Any discriminatory behaviour should be addressed promptly.

Serious or repeated discriminatory behaviour may result in suspension or removal from the Academy.

13. Online Behaviour

Although the Academy does not control children's personal online activity, online behaviour may be relevant where it directly affects the safety or wellbeing of children participating in the Academy.

Examples may include:

- Bullying another Academy participant through social media.
- Sharing harmful or humiliating content involving another child.
- Threatening another child online.
- Creating or sharing inappropriate content about Academy participants.

Such concerns should be reported to the Lead Coach or Head Office and may be managed under this policy and, where appropriate, the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

14. Additional Needs and Behaviour

Play Sports Juniors recognises that behaviour may sometimes be influenced by a child's age, developmental stage, communication needs, disability, additional needs or other circumstances.

Coaches should consider whether reasonable adjustments or additional support may help the child participate successfully.

This does not mean that unsafe or seriously harmful behaviour will be ignored.

The Academy will seek to balance the individual child's needs with the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

15. Parent and Carer Behaviour

Parents and carers are expected to behave respectfully towards:

- Children.
- Coaches.
- Academy staff.
- Other parents and carers.
- Venue staff.

Parents/carers must not:

- Shout aggressively at coaches or children.
- Threaten or intimidate staff or participants.

- Use abusive or discriminatory language.
- Attempt to discipline another parent's child.
- Interfere with a coaching session.
- Enter restricted areas without permission.

Serious or repeated inappropriate behaviour by a parent/carers may result in restrictions being placed on their attendance at Academy sessions or other appropriate action being taken.

16. Coach Behaviour

Coaches are expected to act as positive role models.

Coaches must:

- Remain calm and professional.
- Use age-appropriate language.
- Treat children fairly and respectfully.
- Never humiliate, threaten or intimidate a child.
- Never use physical punishment.
- Follow safeguarding and professional-boundary requirements.
- Report serious incidents appropriately.

Concerns about a coach's behaviour should be reported to the Lead Coach, Play Sports Juniors Head Office or Safeguarding Contact.

Where the concern relates to the Lead Coach, it should be reported directly to Head Office.

17. Suspension or Removal from the Academy

Play Sports Juniors may suspend or end a child's place where necessary to protect the safety or wellbeing of the child or others.

This may be considered where there is:

- Serious violence or aggression.
- Repeated dangerous behaviour.
- Serious bullying.
- Serious discriminatory behaviour.
- Persistent refusal to follow reasonable safety instructions.
- Behaviour that significantly disrupts the Academy.
- Serious or repeated breaches of Academy rules.

Where possible, parents/carers will be informed before a suspension or removal takes place.

Immediate action may be taken where necessary to protect a child or another person.

18. Recording Incidents

Significant behaviour incidents should be recorded.

Records may include:

- Date and time.
- Session and venue.
- Children or adults involved.
- Description of the incident.
- Action taken.
- Any witnesses.
- Parent/carer communication.
- Head Office involvement.
- Any follow-up action.

Records should be factual and objective and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

19. Safeguarding Concerns

Behaviour may sometimes indicate an underlying safeguarding concern.

Examples may include:

- A sudden significant change in behaviour.
- Repeated aggression.
- Extreme distress.
- Bullying or victimisation.
- Sexualised behaviour.
- Disclosure of harm or abuse.
- Behaviour suggesting a child may be experiencing difficulties outside the Academy.

Where behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, coaches must follow the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Behaviour should not automatically be treated as simply a disciplinary issue where there may be an underlying safeguarding concern.

20. Parent Communication

Parents/carers will be informed where appropriate about significant or repeated behaviour concerns involving their child.

The Academy will aim to:

- Explain what happened.
- Explain what action has been taken.

- Discuss expectations for future sessions.
- Work with parents/carers to support the child where appropriate.

Information about other children involved will remain confidential.

21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where required due to:

- Changes in legislation or guidance.
 - Significant incidents or learning points.
 - Changes to Academy arrangements.
 - Changes to safeguarding procedures.
 - Feedback from children, parents, coaches or staff.
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22. Key Contacts

Play Sports Juniors Head Office / Safeguarding Contact

Luke Impett

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Email: luke.impett@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Company Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Rob Fulker

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Emergency Services: 999

Policy Approval

Approved by: Luke Impett

Position: Schools & Community Sport Lead

Date: 28/8/26

Signature: 

Review Date: 1st August 2027