

Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy Owner: Play Sports Leagues Ltd / Play Sports Juniors

Applies To: All Academy coaches, Lead Coaches, volunteers, staff, participants 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 an inclusive Netball Academy where all children and young people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

Every participant should have the opportunity to enjoy netball, develop their skills and feel that they belong within the Academy.

Play Sports Juniors will not tolerate unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or exclusion.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Academy participants.
- Academy coaches and Lead Coaches.
- Volunteers and other adults working with the Academy.
- Play Sports Juniors staff.
- Parents and carers.
- Anyone involved in Academy activities.

It applies to behaviour and decisions relating to participation, coaching, communication, selection, grouping and access to Academy activities.

3. Our Commitment

Play Sports Juniors will aim to:

- Provide fair and equal opportunities to participate.
- Treat children and families with dignity and respect.
- Prevent unlawful discrimination.
- Promote an inclusive and welcoming environment.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Consider individual needs when planning and delivering sessions.

- Challenge discriminatory or exclusionary behaviour.
 - Ensure that safeguarding and inclusion are considered together.
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4. Equality and Protected Characteristics

Play Sports Juniors will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of characteristics protected by law, including:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Race or ethnicity.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Marriage or civil partnership, where applicable.

Children and families should be treated fairly regardless of their background or circumstances.

5. Inclusive Coaching

Coaches should create sessions that allow children with different abilities, experiences and needs to participate successfully.

Coaches should:

- Use clear, age-appropriate instructions.
 - Adapt activities where reasonably possible.
 - Provide different levels of challenge where appropriate.
 - Encourage participation rather than focusing solely on ability.
 - Avoid favouritism.
 - Give children opportunities to develop at their own pace.
 - Recognise effort, progress and teamwork.
 - Consider communication and learning needs.
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6. Reasonable Adjustments

Where a participant has a disability or additional need, Play Sports Juniors will consider reasonable adjustments that may enable them to participate safely and meaningfully.

Adjustments may include:

- Modifying activities.
- Changing equipment.
- Providing additional explanations or demonstrations.

- Allowing additional time.
- Changing positioning within an activity.
- Providing additional rest breaks.
- Adjusting communication methods.
- Making appropriate changes to the session environment.

Any adjustment must balance the participant's needs with the safety and wellbeing of the child and the wider group.

7. Additional Needs and Individual Circumstances

Children may have different communication, physical, sensory, emotional or learning needs.

Coaches should avoid making assumptions about a child's abilities or behaviour.

Where relevant information is provided by parents/carers, coaches should consider how the session can be adapted appropriately.

Where a child's needs require arrangements beyond what can reasonably be provided within a standard Academy session, Play Sports Juniors may discuss alternative arrangements with the parent/carer.

8. Participation and Ability

The Academy may organise participants into age-appropriate groups.

Grouping may take account of:

- Age.
- Ability.
- Experience.
- Developmental stage.
- Participant numbers.
- Safety.
- The structure of the Academy programme.

Grouping decisions should be made fairly and should not be used to unfairly exclude a child.

Where appropriate, groups may be adjusted to ensure that children are participating in a suitable and supportive environment.

9. Discrimination and Harassment

Discriminatory behaviour, harassment or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.

This includes behaviour based on a person's:

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

Examples may include:

- Insults or derogatory language.
- Mocking or humiliating another person.
- Deliberate exclusion.
- Offensive jokes or comments.
- Threats or intimidation.
- Discriminatory gestures.
- Online abuse connected to Academy participation.

Concerns will be addressed in accordance with the Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy and, where appropriate, the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

10. Bullying

Play Sports Juniors does not tolerate bullying.

Bullying may include repeated:

- Physical behaviour.
- Verbal abuse.
- Intimidation.
- Humiliation.
- Social exclusion.
- Online behaviour.
- Discriminatory behaviour.

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

All concerns should be reported to the Lead Coach or Play Sports Juniors Head Office.

11. Inclusive Language and Communication

Coaches and staff should use language that is:

- Respectful.
- Age-appropriate.

- Inclusive.
- Professional.
- Appropriate to the circumstances.

Coaches should avoid language that stereotypes, humiliates or unfairly labels children.

Children should be encouraged to treat one another respectfully.

12. Faith, Culture and Personal Circumstances

Play Sports Juniors will seek to be respectful of participants' cultural, religious and personal circumstances.

Where reasonably possible, coaches should consider matters that may affect participation, such as:

- Religious observance.
- Appropriate clothing.
- Dietary requirements for Academy events.
- Cultural considerations.
- Family circumstances.

Any arrangements must remain consistent with safety, venue requirements and the practical operation of the Academy.

13. Access to the Academy

Play Sports Juniors will seek to ensure that Academy activities are accessible and that children are not unfairly prevented from participating.

Where a participant has a disability or additional need, Play Sports Juniors will consider whether reasonable adjustments can be made.

A child should only be prevented from participating where there is a legitimate and proportionate reason, such as:

- A significant safety risk that cannot reasonably be managed.
- The Academy is unable to provide an essential requirement despite reasonable adjustments.
- A serious or repeated breach of Academy rules.
- Another lawful reason.

Any decision to restrict or end participation should be considered carefully and, where appropriate, discussed with the parent/carer and Play Sports Juniors Head Office.

14. Behaviour of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to support an inclusive environment.

Parents/carers must not:

- Use discriminatory or offensive language.
- Bully or intimidate children, parents or coaches.
- Treat another child unfairly because of their characteristics.
- Interfere with coaching activities.
- Challenge or discipline another child themselves.

Concerns about parent/carer behaviour may be managed under the Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy.

15. Behaviour of Coaches and Volunteers

Coaches and volunteers must:

- Treat all participants fairly and respectfully.
- Avoid favouritism or unfair treatment.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Use inclusive language.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Report concerns about discrimination or exclusion.

Any concern about the conduct of a coach or volunteer should be reported to the Play Sports Juniors Head Office / Safeguarding Contact.

16. Safeguarding and Inclusion

Some equality or inclusion concerns may also be safeguarding concerns.

Examples may include:

- A child being targeted because of a protected characteristic.
- Repeated discriminatory bullying.
- A child being deliberately excluded or isolated.
- A child experiencing significant distress as a result of treatment by others.
- Concerns about an adult's behaviour towards a particular child.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy must also be followed.

17. Complaints and Concerns

Parents/carers or participants who have concerns about equality, discrimination or inclusion should raise them with the Lead Coach or Play Sports Juniors Head Office.

Concerns will be considered fairly and handled in accordance with the Complaints Policy where appropriate.

Information about other children or families will remain confidential.

18. Recording Incidents

Significant incidents involving discrimination, bullying or exclusion should be recorded.

Records should include, where appropriate:

- Date and time.
- Session and venue.
- People involved.
- What happened.
- Action taken.
- Whether parents/carers were informed.
- Whether Head Office was contacted.
- Any safeguarding concerns.
- Any follow-up required.

Records must be factual, objective and stored securely.

19. Coach Responsibilities

All Academy coaches must:

- Understand and follow this policy.
 - Treat participants fairly and respectfully.
 - Deliver inclusive sessions.
 - Consider reasonable adjustments.
 - Challenge inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour.
 - Report concerns promptly.
 - Follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.
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20. Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Treat Academy staff, coaches, children and other families respectfully.
 - Provide relevant information about their child's needs.
 - Support reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
 - Follow Academy rules and venue requirements.
 - Report concerns appropriately rather than attempting to resolve them through confrontation.
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21. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
 - Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy.
 - Coach Code of Conduct / Professional Boundaries Policy.
 - Parent Terms & Conditions.
 - Data Protection & Privacy Policy.
 - Complaints Policy & Procedure.
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22. Policy Review

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

- Changes in legislation or guidance.
 - Changes to Academy arrangements.
 - Equality or inclusion incidents.
 - Feedback from participants, parents or coaches.
 - Lessons identified through reviews.
 - Changes to Play Sports Juniors policies or procedures.
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23. Key Contacts

Play Sports Juniors Head Office / Safeguarding Contact

Luke Impett

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: luke.impett@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Company Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Rob Fulker

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: rob.fulker@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Emergency Services: 999

Policy Approval

Approved by: Luke Impett

Position: Schools & Community Sport Lead

Date: 28/8/26

Signature:  _____

Review Date: 1st August 2027