

Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy

Risk Assessment Policy

Policy Owner: Play Sports Leagues Ltd / Play Sports Juniors

Applies To: All Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy coaches, Lead Coaches, volunteers and staff

Effective From: 1st September 2026

Review Date: 1st August 2027

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that risks associated with Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy activities are identified, assessed and appropriately controlled.

Risk assessments are used to help Play Sports Juniors provide a safe environment for children, coaches and other people involved in Academy activities.

The purpose of a risk assessment is not to eliminate every possible risk, but to identify significant risks and ensure that reasonable and proportionate control measures are in place.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Academy activities, including:

- Regular netball sessions.
 - Academy events and competitions.
 - Indoor and outdoor venues.
 - Academy equipment and netball posts.
 - Participant arrival and collection.
 - Coach and participant movement around venues.
 - Emergency arrangements.
 - Activities involving additional or specific participant needs.
 - Changes to activities, venues or facilities.
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3. Responsibility

Risk management is a shared responsibility.

Play Sports Juniors Head Office is responsible for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are completed and maintained.

Lead Coaches are responsible for familiarising themselves with relevant risk assessments and identifying any additional risks during sessions.

All coaches are responsible for reporting hazards and taking reasonable action to prevent avoidable harm.

Venue operators remain responsible for the safety, maintenance and operation of their own facilities and for their own venue risk assessments.

Play Sports Juniors risk assessments do not replace or override the venue's own safety responsibilities.

4. Academy Venue Risk Assessments

A separate risk assessment must be completed for **every venue used by the Netball Academy before the Academy begins operating at that venue.**

The assessment should consider the specific characteristics of that venue rather than relying solely on a generic Academy risk assessment.

Where the same venue is used for multiple Academy sessions, the venue risk assessment may cover those sessions provided the activities and circumstances are substantially the same.

The assessment should be reviewed whenever there is a significant change to the venue, activity or circumstances.

5. What a Risk Assessment Should Consider

Risk assessments should identify:

1. The hazard.
2. Who could be harmed.
3. How harm could occur.
4. The existing control measures.
5. The level of risk.
6. Any additional control measures required.
7. Who is responsible for implementing those measures.
8. When the assessment should be reviewed.

Assessments should be practical and proportionate to the risks involved.

6. Hazards to Consider

Depending on the venue and activity, risk assessments should consider hazards including:

Venue and facilities

- Condition of floors and playing surfaces.
- Wet or slippery areas.
- Uneven surfaces.
- Walls, doors and other fixed structures.

- Lighting.
- Heating and ventilation.
- Access routes.
- Entrances and exits.
- Stairs.
- Car parks and pedestrian areas.
- Other users of the venue.

Netball equipment

- Netball posts.
- Post stability and positioning.
- Balls and other equipment.
- Storage of equipment.
- Damaged or unsuitable equipment.
- Equipment creating trip or collision hazards.

Participant safety

- Collisions.
- Slips and falls.
- Overexertion.
- Inappropriate use of equipment.
- Behavioural risks.
- Participants leaving supervised areas.
- Age and ability differences.

Medical and additional needs

- Known medical conditions.
- Allergies.
- Emergency medication.
- Disabilities.
- Mobility needs.
- Communication needs.
- Sensory needs.
- Other relevant individual circumstances.

Safeguarding

- Participant arrival and collection.
- Supervision.
- Toilets and changing areas.
- One-to-one situations.
- Unauthorised access to children.
- Public access to the venue.
- Missing children.

Emergency situations

- Fire.
- Evacuation.

- Lockdown.
 - Serious injury.
 - Medical emergencies.
 - Severe weather.
 - Utility failure.
 - Emergency vehicle access.
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7. Risk Rating

Play Sports Juniors should use a consistent approach when determining the level of risk.

Risk may be assessed by considering:

Likelihood — how likely is the hazard to cause harm?

Severity — how serious could the resulting harm be?

A combination of likelihood and severity can be used to determine whether a risk is considered low, medium or high.

Where a high or unacceptable risk is identified, appropriate action must be taken before the activity continues.

The risk rating should take account of the control measures already in place.

8. Control Measures

Where a significant risk is identified, reasonable control measures should be considered.

These may include:

- Removing the hazard.
- Preventing access to an unsafe area.
- Repairing or replacing equipment.
- Changing the activity.
- Increasing supervision.
- Providing additional instructions.
- Changing the layout of equipment.
- Using appropriate protective equipment.
- Adjusting the session for individual needs.
- Seeking assistance from venue staff.
- Cancelling or postponing an activity where the risk cannot be adequately controlled.

Control measures should be proportionate to the level of risk.

9. Venue Responsibilities

Where a risk relates primarily to the venue or its facilities, the issue should normally be raised with the venue operator.

Examples include:

- Damaged flooring.
- Unsafe building structures.
- Faulty lighting.
- Unsafe entrances or exits.
- Heating or ventilation failures.
- Fire safety arrangements.
- Venue equipment.
- Structural damage.

Play Sports Juniors coaches must not attempt to repair venue facilities unless appropriately authorised and competent to do so.

Where the venue determines that a facility is unsafe or unsuitable for use, Play Sports Juniors will follow that decision.

10. Equipment Risk

All Academy equipment must be suitable for its intended use and kept in a safe condition.

Coaches should check equipment before use and report damaged or unsafe equipment.

Netball posts must be:

- Appropriate for the activity.
- Properly positioned.
- Stable and secure.
- Used in accordance with relevant instructions.

Participants should not be permitted to climb on, hang from or deliberately misuse netball posts or other equipment.

Only appropriately authorised adults should move heavy or potentially hazardous equipment.

11. Dynamic Risk Assessment

A written risk assessment cannot account for every situation that may arise during a session.

Coaches must therefore carry out a **dynamic risk assessment** before and during each session.

This means considering whether conditions have changed and whether an activity remains safe.

Coaches should consider:

- Current venue conditions.
- Number of participants.
- Participant behaviour.
- Equipment condition.
- Staffing levels.
- Weather conditions.
- Any new hazards.
- Individual participant needs.
- Changes to the planned activity.

Where a new or immediate risk is identified, the coach should take appropriate action.

This may include stopping, modifying or relocating an activity.

12. Pre-Session Checks

Before each session, coaches should check the areas being used for obvious hazards.

This should include, where relevant:

- Playing surface.
- Equipment.
- Netball posts.
- Trip hazards.
- Wet or slippery areas.
- Access and exits.
- Lighting.
- Temperature and ventilation.
- General condition of the activity area.

Any significant concern should be addressed before participants begin the activity.

Where the concern relates to the venue, it should be raised with venue staff.

13. Session-Specific Risks

In addition to the venue risk assessment, coaches should consider risks associated with the specific session.

For example:

- A larger-than-usual group.
- A new activity.
- Increased intensity.
- Participants with particular support requirements.
- Unusual equipment.
- Changes to court layout.

- A competition or special event.

Where the session differs significantly from normal Academy activities, the existing risk assessment should be reviewed and amended where necessary.

14. Changes to Venue or Activities

A risk assessment must be reviewed where there is a significant change to:

- Venue.
- Court layout.
- Equipment.
- Session structure.
- Activities.
- Staffing arrangements.
- Participant numbers.
- Emergency arrangements.

A new venue must not be treated as automatically covered by a risk assessment completed for another location.

15. Staffing and Supervision

Each Academy session will normally have a minimum of two coaches.

Risk assessments should consider whether staffing levels are appropriate for:

- The number of participants.
- The age and ability of the group.
- Individual participant needs.
- The activities being undertaken.
- The venue layout.
- Any identified risks.

If the required minimum staffing cannot be maintained, the Lead Coach should contact Play Sports Juniors Head Office and consider whether the session can safely continue.

16. Inclusion and Individual Needs

Risk assessments should consider the needs of individual participants without unfairly excluding them from Academy activities.

Where a participant has an additional need, disability, medical requirement or other relevant circumstance, reasonable adjustments should be considered.

These may include:

- Additional supervision.

- Changes to activities.
- Changes to equipment.
- Changes to positioning.
- Additional instructions.
- Additional rest periods.
- Alternative methods of participation.

The **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy** should be followed.

17. Emergency Arrangements

Risk assessments should take account of the venue's emergency arrangements.

Where relevant, coaches should know:

- Emergency exits.
- Assembly points.
- Fire arrangements.
- First aid arrangements.
- AED location.
- Emergency contact arrangements.
- Lockdown procedures.
- Venue-specific emergency instructions.

Venue emergency procedures must be followed where applicable.

The **Emergency & Evacuation Procedures** should be read alongside this policy.

18. Weather and Environmental Risks

Weather and environmental conditions should be considered where they may affect Academy activities.

This may include:

- Rain.
- Snow.
- Ice.
- High winds.
- Lightning.
- Extreme heat.
- Extreme cold.
- Flooding.
- Poor visibility.

Where an outdoor venue determines that its facilities are unsafe or unsuitable, Play Sports Juniors will follow the venue's decision.

Play Sports Juniors may also cancel or modify an Academy session where it considers that it cannot safely deliver the session, even where the venue remains open.

The **Severe Weather / Session Cancellation Policy** should be followed.

19. Actioning Identified Risks

Where a risk is identified, appropriate action must be taken.

Depending on the risk, this may involve:

- Removing the hazard.
- Restricting access.
- Informing venue staff.
- Changing the activity.
- Increasing supervision.
- Isolating equipment.
- Updating the risk assessment.
- Contacting Head Office.
- Cancelling the activity or session.

Risks must not simply be recorded without consideration of whether further action is required.

20. Recording and Storage

Risk assessments should be documented and stored securely by Play Sports Juniors.

The current risk assessment should be accessible to relevant staff and coaches.

Where an assessment is updated, the previous version may be retained where appropriate for record-keeping purposes.

Information must be handled in accordance with the **Data Protection & Privacy Policy**.

21. Review of Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be reviewed:

- Before opening a new Academy venue.
- At least annually.
- Following a significant accident or incident.
- Following a significant near miss.
- Following a significant change to the venue.
- Following a significant change to activities.
- Following a significant change to staffing or participant needs.
- When new hazards are identified.
- When relevant legislation or guidance changes.

A risk assessment should also be reviewed if coaches identify that existing control measures are no longer effective.

22. Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Learning

Accidents, incidents and near misses should be considered when reviewing risk assessments.

Where an incident identifies a previously unrecognised hazard or shows that existing controls are insufficient, Play Sports Juniors should consider whether:

- The risk assessment needs updating.
- Additional controls are required.
- Coaches require additional guidance or training.
- Equipment needs replacing.
- An activity needs modifying.
- Venue arrangements need to change.

The **Accident, Incident & Near-Miss Reporting Procedure** should be followed.

23. Coach Responsibilities

All Academy coaches are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with relevant risk assessments.
 - Completing appropriate pre-session checks.
 - Carrying out dynamic risk assessments.
 - Reporting hazards promptly.
 - Following control measures.
 - Stopping or modifying activities where necessary.
 - Reporting accidents, incidents and near misses.
 - Raising venue-related concerns with venue staff.
 - Contacting Play Sports Juniors Head Office where further support or a decision is required.
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24. Play Sports Juniors Head Office Responsibilities

Play Sports Juniors Head Office is responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate venue risk assessments are completed.
 - Maintaining risk assessment records.
 - Reviewing significant risks.
 - Supporting coaches with risk management.
 - Reviewing incidents and near misses.
 - Ensuring appropriate action is taken where significant risks are identified.
 - Reviewing risk assessments when circumstances change.
 - Liaising with venues regarding significant safety concerns.
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25. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers should:

- Follow venue and Academy safety instructions.
 - Inform Play Sports Juniors of relevant medical or accessibility information.
 - Ensure children follow reasonable safety instructions.
 - Raise significant safety concerns with the Lead Coach or Play Sports Juniors Head Office.
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26. Relationship With Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health & Safety Policy.
 - Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
 - First Aid & Medical Policy.
 - Emergency & Evacuation Procedures.
 - Accident, Incident & Near-Miss Reporting Procedure.
 - Severe Weather / Session Cancellation Policy.
 - Arrival, Collection & Handover Policy.
 - Late / Uncollected Child Procedure.
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
 - Coach Code of Conduct / Professional Boundaries Policy.
 - Data Protection & Privacy Policy.
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27. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner where:

- A significant incident occurs.
 - A significant change is made to Academy operations.
 - A new venue is introduced.
 - Relevant legislation or guidance changes.
 - Risk management arrangements are found to be ineffective.
 - Lessons from accidents, incidents or near misses indicate that changes are required.
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28. Key Contacts

Play Sports Juniors Academy Safeguarding Contact / Head Office

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Emergency Services
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Policy Approval

Approved by: Luke Impett
Position: Schools & Community Sport Lead
Date: 28th August 2026

Signature: 

Next Review Date: 1st August 2027