

Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Policy Owner: Play Sports Leagues Ltd / Play Sports Juniors

Applies To: All Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy coaches, Lead Coaches, staff, volunteers and any other adults working with Academy participants

Effective From: 1st September 2026

Review Date: 1st August 2027

Version: 1.0

1. Policy Statement

Play Sports Juniors, as part of Play Sports Leagues Ltd, is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment for every child participating in the Netball Academy.

The welfare of children and young people is paramount. Every child has the right to participate in sport in an environment where they are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, inappropriate behaviour and avoidable harm.

Play Sports Leagues Ltd has an overarching safeguarding responsibility across its activities. This Academy policy provides the specific safeguarding arrangements and procedures that apply to children participating in Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy sessions.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All coaches, Lead Coaches, staff, volunteers and other adults working within the Academy must remain alert to concerns about children's welfare and must report concerns promptly through the appropriate reporting route.

The Academy will maintain a child-centred approach, ensuring that the welfare and best interests of the child remain the primary consideration when responding to safeguarding concerns.

This policy should be read alongside the wider Play Sports Leagues Ltd safeguarding arrangements and the other Play Sports Juniors Academy policies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy coaches.
- Academy Lead Coaches.
- Academy staff and management.
- Volunteers or assistants working within Academy sessions.
- Any other person acting on behalf of Play Sports Juniors within the Academy.
- Children participating in Academy sessions.

It applies before, during and immediately after Academy sessions where Play Sports Juniors has responsibility for the child.

Academy sessions will normally be **45–60 minutes in duration** and will be organised into **age-based groups**.

A minimum of **two coaches** will be present at every Academy session, with a designated **Lead Coach** responsible for coordinating the session. Where more coaches are present, the Lead Coach will continue to have overall responsibility for the session.

3. Safeguarding Structure and Responsibilities

3.1 Play Sports Leagues Ltd – Company DSL

Play Sports Leagues Ltd maintains overall organisational responsibility for safeguarding across its activities.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Rob Fulker

The Company DSL has overarching responsibility for safeguarding arrangements within Play Sports Leagues Ltd and provides organisational oversight of safeguarding concerns, training and safeguarding procedures.

The Company DSL may become involved where a concern requires escalation beyond Play Sports Juniors Head Office or where the concern relates to senior management or Academy safeguarding personnel.

3.2 Play Sports Juniors Head Office – Academy Safeguarding Contact

Academy Safeguarding Contact:
Luke Impett

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: luke.impett@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Luke Impett is the central safeguarding escalation point for the Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy.

The Academy Safeguarding Contact is responsible for:

- Providing safeguarding advice and support to Session DSLs.
- Receiving escalated safeguarding concerns.
- Maintaining appropriate central Academy safeguarding records.
- Coordinating the Academy's response to safeguarding concerns.

- Managing concerns or allegations involving Academy coaches, subject to escalation to the Company DSL or external agencies where required.
- Ensuring appropriate external agencies are contacted where necessary.
- Supporting Session DSLs with safeguarding decisions.
- Reviewing safeguarding practice across the Academy.
- Ensuring Academy safeguarding policies and procedures remain appropriate and up to date.
- Escalating significant or complex safeguarding matters to the Company DSL.

Where a concern relates to Luke Impett, the concern must be reported directly to the **Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL, Rob Fulker**, and must not be managed by Luke.

3.3 Session Lead Coach / Session DSL

Each Academy session will have a designated **Lead Coach**.

The Lead Coach will act as the **Session Designated Safeguarding Lead (Session DSL)** for that individual session.

The Session DSL is the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns arising during their session and must:

- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously.
- Respond appropriately to concerns or disclosures.
- Ensure the immediate safety of a child where necessary.
- Listen to children appropriately without investigating or interrogating them.
- Report safeguarding concerns to the Academy Safeguarding Contact where required.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded accurately and promptly.
- Ensure other coaches understand and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Escalate urgent concerns immediately.
- Take appropriate action where a child may be at immediate risk of harm.
- Follow the Academy's professional boundaries and safer working practices.

The Session DSL must not attempt to conduct their own investigation into an allegation or suspected abuse.

Where the concern relates to the Session DSL / Lead Coach, the concern must bypass the Session DSL and be reported directly to **Luke Impett / Head Office**.

3.4 All Coaches

Every coach has a responsibility for safeguarding.

Coaches must:

- Put children's welfare first.
- Remain alert to signs that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or another safeguarding concern.
- Report concerns promptly.

- Pass disclosures to the Session DSL as soon as possible, unless the concern relates to the Session DSL.
- Follow the Academy's safeguarding and professional boundaries procedures.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children.
- Never promise a child that information will be kept secret.
- Never investigate a safeguarding concern themselves.
- Record relevant information accurately when required.
- Challenge or report unsafe practice.

A coach must never assume that somebody else will report a concern.

4. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise in many different ways. A concern does not need to involve an obvious injury or direct disclosure of abuse.

Coaches should remain alert to:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour or mood.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Fear, anxiety or distress.
- A child appearing unusually withdrawn or upset.
- Changes in a child's presentation or behaviour.
- Comments suggesting that a child feels unsafe.
- Signs of neglect.
- Concerns regarding another adult's behaviour towards a child.
- Concerns regarding another child's behaviour towards a child.
- Bullying or harmful behaviour.
- Sexualised behaviour or language that is inappropriate for the child's age.
- Online safety concerns disclosed by a child.
- A child expressing fear of going home or being collected.
- A child making an allegation or disclosure.
- Any other behaviour or information that causes a coach to believe a child may be at risk of harm.

A safeguarding concern should be reported even where the coach is **not certain that abuse has occurred**.

The responsibility of the coach is to report the concern, not to establish whether abuse has occurred.

5. Responding to a Child Disclosure

If a child tells a coach that they have been harmed, abused, neglected or are worried about their own or another person's safety, the coach should:

1. **Stay calm.**
2. **Listen carefully.**
3. Allow the child to speak without unnecessary interruption.

4. Take what the child says seriously.
5. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling an adult.
6. Explain that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
7. Avoid promising confidentiality.
8. Avoid asking leading or investigative questions.
9. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
10. Report the disclosure to the Session DSL as soon as possible.
11. If the disclosure concerns the Session DSL, report it directly to Luke Impett / Head Office.
12. Make an accurate written record of what was said and the actions taken, where required.

Where possible, coaches should use the child's own words when recording a disclosure.

A coach must not attempt to investigate the allegation.

6. Immediate Danger or Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger, or there is an immediate threat to the child's safety, the priority is to protect the child.

Where necessary:

- Call **999**.
- Request the appropriate emergency service.
- Ensure the child remains appropriately supervised and safe.
- Inform the Session DSL and Academy Safeguarding Contact as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Inform the Company DSL where appropriate.
- Record the incident and actions taken.

Safeguarding procedures must not delay contacting emergency services where immediate intervention is required.

7. Reporting and Escalation

The normal Academy reporting route is:

Coach → Lead Coach / Session DSL → Luke Impett / Head Office → Company DSL / External Agencies where required

Concerns should be reported without delay.

The Session DSL should escalate concerns to Luke Impett / Head Office where:

- A child may be at risk of harm.
- A disclosure has been made.
- There is an allegation of abuse.
- There is a concern about a coach or other adult.
- There is a serious concern about another child's behaviour.

- The concern requires external agency involvement.
- The Session DSL is unsure how to proceed.
- The concern cannot safely or appropriately be managed at session level.

Where a concern is urgent or involves immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted without waiting for Head Office approval.

Where appropriate, Play Sports Juniors may contact relevant safeguarding partners, children's social care, the police or other statutory agencies.

Where a concern is particularly serious, complex or involves Academy senior management, the matter may be escalated to the Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL.

8. Allegations or Concerns About Coaches

Play Sports Juniors will take all allegations and concerns about coaches seriously.

A concern may relate to:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Inappropriate communication with children.
- Inappropriate online or social-media contact.
- Failure to maintain professional boundaries.
- Unsafe or inappropriate behaviour.
- Any behaviour that may indicate that a coach is unsuitable to work with children.

Where a concern or allegation relates to a coach:

- The concern must be reported to Luke Impett / Head Office immediately.
- The coach concerned must not investigate the allegation themselves.
- The coach concerned must not attempt to influence witnesses or children.
- Relevant records and evidence must be preserved.
- Play Sports Juniors will consider whether external safeguarding agencies need to be contacted.
- The Company DSL will be involved where appropriate.
- Appropriate action will be taken to protect children while the concern is considered.

Where the allegation concerns the Session DSL / Lead Coach, the concern must be reported **directly to Luke Impett / Head Office**.

Where the allegation concerns Luke Impett, the matter must be reported directly to **Rob Fulker / Company DSL**.

Play Sports Juniors will follow the appropriate local safeguarding arrangements and seek advice from the relevant safeguarding authority where necessary.

9. Safer Working Practices

All coaches must maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries with children.

Coaches must:

- Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Use appropriate language.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Ensure any physical contact during coaching is appropriate, necessary and proportionate.
- Avoid being alone with an individual child wherever reasonably possible.
- Never engage in inappropriate conversations with children.
- Never communicate privately with children through personal social-media accounts or messaging services.
- Never meet a child privately outside Academy activities without appropriate authorisation.
- Never use photographs or videos of children on personal devices or personal social-media accounts unless specifically authorised under the Academy's Photography, Video & Social Media Policy.
- Follow the Academy's rules regarding phones and electronic devices.
- Follow appropriate procedures when dealing with changing areas and toilets.
- Report any concern about their own conduct or another coach's conduct.

The Academy's minimum staffing arrangement of two coaches per session is intended to support safe supervision and reduce unnecessary one-to-one situations.

Further requirements relating to coach conduct and professional boundaries will be set out in the **Coach Code of Conduct / Professional Boundaries Policy**.

10. Whistleblowing

Play Sports Juniors encourages coaches and staff to raise concerns about safeguarding practice.

A coach should raise a concern where they believe:

- A child is not being adequately protected.
- A safeguarding concern has not been acted upon.
- A coach or member of staff is behaving inappropriately.
- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed.
- There is unsafe practice.
- A person in a position of responsibility is failing to respond appropriately to a safeguarding concern.

Concerns should normally be raised with Luke Impett / Head Office.

Where the concern relates to Luke Impett, it should be raised directly with **Rob Fulker / Company DSL**.

If a coach believes they cannot safely raise the concern internally, they should seek appropriate external safeguarding advice.

No coach should be penalised for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information must be handled sensitively and appropriately.

Information about a safeguarding concern should only be shared with people who need the information to protect the child or manage the concern.

Coaches must not:

- Discuss safeguarding concerns with other parents.
- Discuss concerns with other children.
- Discuss allegations on social media.
- Share confidential safeguarding information unnecessarily.
- Attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

Confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where doing so is necessary to protect a child.

Parents or carers will be informed of safeguarding incidents where appropriate and where doing so is consistent with the child's safety and relevant safeguarding procedures.

12. Safeguarding Records

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded appropriately.

Records should include, where relevant:

- The child's name.
- Date and time of the concern.
- Date and time of the disclosure or incident.
- Factual details of what was observed or reported.
- The child's own words where appropriate.
- Names of people involved.
- Actions taken.
- Who the concern was reported to.
- Any decisions made.
- Any further action required.

Records must be factual, objective and free from speculation or personal opinion.

Safeguarding records must be stored securely and only accessed by authorised individuals.

Play Sports Juniors will retain safeguarding records in accordance with its Data Protection & Privacy Policy, the wider Play Sports Leagues safeguarding arrangements and applicable legal requirements.

13. Child-on-Child Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns can arise between children as well as between adults and children.

The Academy will take seriously concerns involving:

- Bullying.
- Physical violence.
- Threats or intimidation.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Harmful or inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Discriminatory or abusive behaviour.
- Online abuse or harmful communication.
- Any other behaviour that places another child at risk.

Such concerns must be reported to the Session DSL and managed in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding and Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policies.

Serious concerns will be escalated to Head Office and, where necessary, relevant external agencies.

14. Supporting Children

Play Sports Juniors recognises that children may require different levels of support.

Coaches should:

- Listen to children.
- Treat concerns seriously.
- Encourage children to speak to a trusted adult where they are worried.
- Consider individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Avoid making assumptions about a child's circumstances.
- Escalate concerns where additional support or protection may be required.

The Academy will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals where appropriate and where doing so is consistent with safeguarding requirements.

15. Safeguarding Training

All coaches must complete the safeguarding training required by Play Sports Juniors before working with children.

Coaches are expected to:

- Understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Know how to recognise safeguarding concerns.
- Understand how to respond to a disclosure.
- Know who the Session DSL is.
- Know how to escalate concerns to Head Office.
- Understand the Academy's professional boundaries.
- Keep their required safeguarding training up to date.

Additional training may be required depending on the coach's role and responsibilities.

Safeguarding training arrangements will be consistent with the wider Play Sports Leagues Ltd safeguarding requirements.

16. Safeguarding During Academy Sessions

Before each session, the Lead Coach / Session DSL should ensure:

- The coaching team is aware of safeguarding responsibilities.
- Any relevant information required to keep children safe is known to the appropriate coaches.
- The venue is suitable and safe for the session.
- Children are appropriately supervised.
- Any safeguarding concerns from previous sessions are appropriately communicated through the correct channels.
- The required staffing level is maintained.

During the session, coaches must maintain appropriate supervision and remain alert to the welfare of all participants.

The minimum staffing arrangement of **two coaches per session** will be maintained wherever possible.

If circumstances result in the required staffing level not being available, the Lead Coach must contact Head Office and appropriate action must be taken to ensure children remain safe.

Following the session, coaches must follow the Academy's Arrival, Collection & Handover Policy.

17. Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any safeguarding concern with Play Sports Juniors.

Concerns can be raised with:

Play Sports Juniors Head Office

Safeguarding Contact: Luke Impett

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: luke.impett@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Where the concern relates to Luke Impett, parents/carers should contact:

Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL: Rob Fulker

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: rob.fulker@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Where a parent/carer believes that a child is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted.

Parents/carers should not attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

18. External Safeguarding Agencies

Play Sports Juniors will cooperate with relevant safeguarding agencies where required.

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the concern, this may include:

- Local Children's Social Care.
- The Police.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where an allegation concerns an adult working with children.
- Health services.
- Other relevant safeguarding partners.

Play Sports Juniors will seek appropriate professional advice where it is unclear which agency should be contacted.

The Company DSL may also be consulted where a matter requires escalation beyond Academy level.

19. Safer Recruitment and DBS

All adults working directly with children within the Netball Academy must meet the relevant safer recruitment requirements established by Play Sports Leagues Ltd and Play Sports Juniors.

This includes, where applicable:

- An **Enhanced DBS check**.
- Appropriate safeguarding training.
- Appropriate references.
- Identity verification.
- Relevant qualifications and/or experience.
- Appropriate first aid arrangements.
- Right-to-work checks where applicable.

An Enhanced DBS check is an important part of the safeguarding process but does not, on its own, determine an individual's suitability to work with children.

Full recruitment and suitability requirements are set out within the Academy's **Safer Recruitment & Coach Suitability Policy**.

20. Relationship With Wider Play Sports Leagues Policies

This policy forms part of the wider safeguarding framework operated by Play Sports Leagues Ltd.

Where there is any conflict between this Academy policy and a legal requirement or overarching company safeguarding requirement, the relevant legal or company requirement will take precedence.

The Academy policy should be read alongside:

- Play Sports Leagues Ltd Safeguarding Policy.
 - Safer Recruitment & Coach Suitability Policy.
 - Coach Code of Conduct / Professional Boundaries Policy.
 - Arrival, Collection & Handover Policy.
 - Late/Uncollected Child Procedure.
 - Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy.
 - First Aid & Medical Policy.
 - Health & Safety Policy.
 - Data Protection & Privacy Policy.
 - Emergency & Evacuation Procedures.
 - Accident, Incident & Near-Miss Reporting Procedure.
 - Complaints Policy & Procedure.
-

21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever there is:

- A significant change in safeguarding guidance or legislation.
- A serious safeguarding incident.
- A significant change to Academy operations.
- A change to safeguarding personnel or reporting arrangements.
- A lesson identified from an incident or concern.
- A change to the wider Play Sports Leagues safeguarding framework.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually.

Next Review Date: 1st August 2027

22. Key Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name	Contact
Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL	Rob Fulker	01256 644049
Play Sports Juniors Academy Safeguarding Contact	Luke Impett	01256 644049
Session DSL	Lead Coach for each session	[SESSION-SPECIFIC]
Emergency Services	Police / Ambulance / Fire	999

Policy Approval

Approved by: Luke Impett

Position: Schools & Community Sport Lead

Date: 20/8/26

Signature: 

Review Date: 1st August 2027