

Play Sports Juniors Netball Academy

Safer Recruitment & Coach Suitability Policy

Policy Owner: Play Sports Leagues Ltd / Play Sports Juniors

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

Effective From: 1st September 2026

Review Date: 1st August 2027

Version: 1.0

1. Policy Statement

Play Sports Juniors is committed to ensuring that all adults working with children at the Netball Academy are suitable, appropriately trained and able to carry out their responsibilities safely and professionally.

Safer recruitment is an important part of safeguarding. Play Sports Juniors will take appropriate steps to assess the suitability of individuals before they are permitted to work independently with Academy participants.

The Academy will not rely on a single recruitment check to determine suitability. Decisions will consider the individual's experience, qualifications, references, safeguarding knowledge, conduct and any relevant information identified during the recruitment process.

Safer recruitment is an ongoing responsibility. A coach's suitability will continue to be considered throughout their involvement with the Academy.

The welfare and safety of children will always take priority over the need to recruit or retain a coach.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Academy Lead Coaches.
- Academy Coaches.
- Assistant Coaches.
- Volunteers working directly with children.
- Temporary or casual coaching staff.
- Any other adult who has regular or direct contact with Academy participants as part of their role.

The policy applies to both new applicants and existing coaches.

3. Safer Recruitment Principles

Play Sports Juniors will take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals appointed to work with Academy participants:

- Are suitable to work with children.
- Understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Have the appropriate checks completed.
- Have appropriate qualifications, experience or training for their role.
- Understand the professional standards expected by Play Sports Juniors.
- Are able to provide a safe and positive environment for children.
- Continue to meet the expected standards once appointed.

Recruitment decisions will be made fairly and consistently while ensuring that safeguarding requirements are maintained.

4. Recruitment Process

The recruitment process may include:

1. Initial application or expression of interest.
2. Review of relevant experience and qualifications.
3. Interview or suitability discussion where appropriate.
4. Identity verification.
5. Reference checks where required.
6. Enhanced DBS check.
7. Safeguarding training.
8. First aid requirements.
9. Right-to-work checks where applicable.
10. Academy induction.
11. Confirmation that the individual is suitable to begin coaching.

Play Sports Juniors may request additional information or checks where the circumstances of an individual or role require them.

No individual will be permitted to work independently with children until the required pre-coaching checks have been completed.

5. Enhanced DBS Checks

All coaches working directly with children at the Netball Academy must have an **Enhanced DBS check**.

The Enhanced DBS check is an essential part of the Academy's safer recruitment process.

Play Sports Juniors will:

- Require an Enhanced DBS check for eligible Academy coaching roles.
- Verify the applicant's identity as part of the DBS process.
- Ensure the required DBS check is completed before the coach works independently with children.
- Keep an appropriate record of the DBS check and its status.
- Handle DBS information securely and confidentially.
- Consider any relevant information disclosed through the DBS process as part of the individual's overall suitability assessment.

An Enhanced DBS check does not, by itself, determine whether an individual is suitable to work with children. It forms one part of the wider safer recruitment process.

Where information is disclosed through a DBS check, Play Sports Juniors will consider the information fairly and proportionately and may seek appropriate advice before deciding whether the individual is suitable.

A DBS check obtained through another organisation will not automatically be accepted as sufficient. Play Sports Juniors will determine whether it meets the Academy's requirements and whether any additional checks are necessary.

6. Identity Verification

Play Sports Juniors will verify the identity of prospective coaches before they begin working with Academy participants.

Appropriate identification documents will be requested and verified as part of the recruitment and DBS process.

Information obtained for identity verification will be handled securely and in accordance with the Academy's Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

7. Right to Work

Where applicable, Play Sports Juniors will complete the required right-to-work checks before an individual begins paid employment or coaching work.

The required documentation will be checked and recorded appropriately.

Right-to-work information will be stored securely and handled in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

8. References

Play Sports Juniors may obtain references from previous employers, coaching organisations or other appropriate referees as part of the recruitment process.

References may be used to verify:

- Previous employment.
- Previous coaching experience.
- Experience working with children.
- Reliability.
- Professional conduct.
- Suitability for the proposed role.

Where a reference raises a safeguarding or suitability concern, Play Sports Juniors will consider the concern before allowing the individual to work with children.

Any significant discrepancy between information provided by an applicant and information received through references or other checks may be investigated before an appointment is confirmed.

9. Qualifications and Coaching Experience

Play Sports Juniors will consider the qualifications, skills and experience required for each coaching role.

Relevant experience may include:

- Netball coaching.
- Sports coaching.
- Working with children.
- Delivering group activities.
- Working within schools or other youth settings.
- Knowledge of age-appropriate sports development.

Relevant qualifications may include:

- Netball coaching qualifications.
- Sports coaching qualifications.
- Safeguarding qualifications.
- First aid qualifications.
- Other relevant training.

A formal netball coaching qualification may not always be required where an individual has suitable alternative coaching experience. Play Sports Juniors will assess the individual's overall suitability and may provide additional training or supervision where appropriate.

10. Safeguarding Training

All Academy coaches must complete the safeguarding training required by Play Sports Juniors.

Training must ensure that coaches understand:

- Their safeguarding responsibilities.
- How to recognise safeguarding concerns.
- How to respond to a child disclosure.
- How and when to report concerns.
- Who the Session DSL is.
- How to escalate concerns to Head Office.
- Professional boundaries.
- Appropriate behaviour when working with children.
- The importance of accurate safeguarding records.

Coaches must complete any required refresher training within the timescales set by Play Sports Juniors.

A coach who has not completed required safeguarding training may not be permitted to coach independently until the requirement has been fulfilled.

11. First Aid Requirements

Play Sports Juniors will provide first aid training to all Academy coaches.

Coaches must complete the first aid training provided by Play Sports Juniors before undertaking coaching duties independently, unless otherwise agreed by Play Sports Juniors.

Coaches must understand the Academy's procedures for dealing with:

- Injuries.
- Medical emergencies.
- Allergies.
- Emergency medication.
- Head injuries.
- Contacting emergency services.

Detailed arrangements are set out within the Academy's **First Aid & Medical Policy**.

12. Interview and Suitability Assessment

Where an interview or suitability assessment is undertaken, Play Sports Juniors may consider:

- Motivation for coaching.
- Experience working with children.
- Coaching ability.

- Safeguarding awareness.
- Professional boundaries.
- Behaviour management.
- Communication skills.
- Reliability.
- Understanding of equality and inclusion.
- Ability to work as part of a coaching team.
- Ability to respond appropriately to challenging situations.

The Academy will consider the individual's overall suitability rather than relying on a single qualification or interview response.

13. Gaps, Discrepancies and Concerns During Recruitment

Any concerns identified during recruitment must be considered before an individual begins working with children.

Examples may include:

- Unexplained gaps in employment or coaching history.
- Significant discrepancies in an application.
- Concerns raised through references.
- Relevant information identified through an Enhanced DBS check.
- Failure to provide required information.
- Concerns about an individual's attitude towards safeguarding.
- Concerns regarding behaviour or professional conduct.
- Failure to complete required training or checks.

Where necessary, Play Sports Juniors may:

- Request additional information.
 - Seek further references.
 - Delay an appointment.
 - Require additional training or supervision.
 - Withdraw an appointment.
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14. Coach Induction

Before independently delivering Academy sessions, coaches will receive an appropriate induction.

The induction will cover, as relevant:

- Safeguarding procedures.
- The Session DSL structure.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns.

- Professional boundaries.
- Coach conduct.
- Arrival and collection procedures.
- Behaviour expectations.
- First aid and medical arrangements.
- Emergency procedures.
- Photography and social-media requirements.
- Venue-specific requirements.
- Responsibilities during Academy sessions.

Coaches must understand who they should contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

15. Supervision of New or Less Experienced Coaches

Where appropriate, new or less experienced coaches may initially work under additional supervision.

This may include:

- Working alongside an experienced Lead Coach.
- Additional observation.
- Feedback from the Lead Coach.
- Additional training.
- Temporary restrictions on particular responsibilities.

Additional supervision may be appropriate where:

- A coach is new to working with children.
- A coach has limited coaching experience.
- The Academy identifies a development need.
- A concern has been raised.
- A coach is completing an induction period.

The Academy's minimum staffing arrangement of **two coaches per session** also supports appropriate supervision and safe working practices.

16. Ongoing Coach Suitability

Safer recruitment does not end when a coach is appointed.

Play Sports Juniors expects coaches to maintain the standards required throughout their involvement with the Academy.

The Academy may review a coach's suitability where concerns arise regarding:

- Conduct.

- Safeguarding.
- Professional boundaries.
- Reliability.
- Behaviour towards children.
- Behaviour towards parents or other coaches.
- Compliance with Academy policies.
- Qualifications or training.
- Any information that may affect their suitability to work with children.

Coaches must inform Play Sports Juniors if they become aware of any matter that may affect their ability or suitability to work with children.

17. Reporting Concerns About a Coach

Any coach, parent, child or member of staff can raise a concern about a coach.

Concerns should be reported to:

Play Sports Juniors Head Office

Safeguarding Contact: Luke Impett

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: luke.impett@playsportsleagues.co.uk

Concerns may relate to:

- Inappropriate behaviour.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Inappropriate communication.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Unsafe coaching practices.
- Failure to follow Academy procedures.
- Inappropriate use of social media.
- Breaches of professional boundaries.
- Any behaviour that causes concern about the individual's suitability.

Concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Where a concern relates to Luke Impett, it must be reported to:

Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL: Rob Fulker

Telephone: 01256 644049

Email: rob.fulker@playsportsleagues.co.uk

18. Suspension or Removal From Coaching

Where there is a serious concern regarding a coach's suitability, Play Sports Juniors may temporarily remove the coach from coaching duties while the matter is considered.

This may be appropriate where:

- There is an allegation of abuse.
- A safeguarding concern has been raised.
- A coach's conduct may place children at risk.
- Required checks are incomplete or no longer sufficient.
- A coach has failed to comply with safeguarding procedures.
- The Academy considers the coach unsuitable to continue working with children.

Any decision to suspend or remove a coach will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Where appropriate, Play Sports Juniors will seek advice from relevant safeguarding authorities, the Company DSL or other appropriate professional bodies.

19. Allegations Against Coaches

Where an allegation is made that a coach has:

- Harmed a child.
- Behaved inappropriately towards a child.
- Breached professional boundaries.
- Engaged in potentially abusive behaviour.
- Acted in a way that may make them unsuitable to work with children.

the matter must be reported immediately to Luke Impett / Head Office.

The coach must not investigate the allegation themselves.

The coach must not attempt to influence witnesses, children or other individuals involved in the matter.

Play Sports Juniors will determine whether the concern needs to be escalated to:

- The Play Sports Leagues Ltd Company DSL.
- Children's Social Care.
- The Police.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Another relevant safeguarding agency.

The Academy will prioritise the safety and welfare of children throughout the process.

20. Professional Standards

All coaches are expected to comply with the Academy's **Coach Code of Conduct / Professional Boundaries Policy**.

This includes maintaining appropriate standards relating to:

- Language and communication.
- Physical contact.
- One-to-one situations.
- Mobile phones.
- Messaging children.
- Social media.
- Parent communication.
- Changing areas.
- Behaviour management.
- Appropriate use of authority.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in a review of the coach's suitability and, where appropriate, removal from coaching duties.

21. Equality and Fair Recruitment

Play Sports Juniors is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment.

Applicants will be assessed on their suitability for the role and the requirements necessary to safeguard and support children.

The Academy will not unfairly discriminate against applicants on the basis of protected characteristics.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered during the recruitment process where appropriate.

Safeguarding requirements will apply consistently to all individuals working with Academy participants.

22. Recruitment and Suitability Records

Play Sports Juniors will maintain appropriate records relating to recruitment and coach suitability.

Records may include:

- Application information.
- Interview or suitability assessment records.
- Identity verification.
- Enhanced DBS check status.
- References.
- Qualifications.
- Safeguarding training.
- First aid qualifications.
- Right-to-work checks where applicable.
- Induction records.
- Relevant ongoing training.

- Suitability decisions.
- Records of concerns where appropriate.

Recruitment and suitability information will be stored securely.

Information will only be accessed by individuals with a legitimate reason to access it and will be handled in accordance with the Academy's **Data Protection & Privacy Policy**.

23. Responsibilities

Play Sports Juniors Head Office

Head Office is responsible for:

- Establishing recruitment requirements.
- Ensuring required checks are completed.
- Maintaining appropriate recruitment records.
- Assessing coach suitability.
- Managing concerns about coaches.
- Ensuring safeguarding requirements are met.
- Providing appropriate induction and training.
- Escalating concerns to the Company DSL or external agencies where required.
- Reviewing this policy.

Lead Coaches

Lead Coaches are responsible for:

- Supporting the safe induction of coaches within their session.
- Maintaining appropriate professional standards.
- Raising concerns about other coaches.
- Supporting appropriate supervision.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring coaches follow Academy procedures.

Coaches

Coaches are responsible for:

- Providing accurate information during recruitment.
 - Completing required checks and training.
 - Maintaining professional standards.
 - Informing Head Office of relevant changes that may affect their suitability.
 - Following all Academy policies.
 - Reporting concerns about themselves or others where appropriate.
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24. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- Following significant changes to safeguarding requirements.
- Following a serious incident or safeguarding concern.
- Following changes to Academy recruitment arrangements.
- Where lessons are identified through recruitment or ongoing suitability monitoring.
- Following changes to the wider Play Sports Leagues safeguarding framework.

Next Review Date: 1st August 2027

Policy Approval

Approved by: Luke Impett

Position: Schools & Community Sport Lead

Date: 28/8/26

Signature:  _____

Review Date: 1st August 2027