

# Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

## 1. Introduction

At the Alliance of Sport (AoS), we do not work directly with beneficiaries. However, by working across the welfare and criminal justice systems, we recognise that we may engage with children and vulnerable adults.

This policy has been developed in accordance and under the guidance of the:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Education Act (2002)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
- What to do if You're Worried a Child is being Abused (March 2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and college (March 2015)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Bristol Safeguarding Children Board
- Bristol CCG Adult Safeguarding information
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Cornwall Council
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Care Act 2014: safeguarding adults
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Health and Social Care Act (2012)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

AoS will review its policy bi-annually to account for new Government legislation, regulations or best practice to ensure that staff are kept fully up to date with their responsibilities and duties with regards to the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

Within the AoS, any client (child or adult) in danger of radicalisation or demonstrating extremist tendencies is deemed to be vulnerable and appropriate support under the PREVENT strategy or through the local CHANNEL will be sought.

- 1.1** Children are those under the age of 18 years of age and involved in our

programmes, or in the care of our mentors and volunteers.

**1.2** Vulnerable adults are those aged 18 years of age or over and are taking part in our programmes, or in the care of our mentors and volunteers. The conditions for a vulnerable adult include:

- Learning difficulties
- Physical or mental illness including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Reduction in physical or mental capacity

Under the Police Act 1997, all Alliance of Sport employees and volunteers will be required to have an enhanced [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) check before coming into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

## **2.0 Safeguarding Strategy**

**2.1** AoS will:

- Take a preventive approach to protecting children and vulnerable adults from potential harm, damage, radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism (violent and non - violent extremism).
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- Work to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.
- Plan, implement, monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure that the maximum is done to provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults.
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children and vulnerable adult's welfare is minimised by appropriate:
  - Risk assessment and management
  - Health and Safety procedures
  - Staff selection, recruitment, induction supervision and training
  - Open work culture and "Whistleblowing" policy
  - Reacting to and reporting abuse

### 3.0 Policy Statement

AoS holds as one of its highest priorities the health, safety and welfare of all children and vulnerable adults.

As a result, the AoS will:

1. Ensure staff and trustees fulfil their responsibilities to prevent the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
2. Make this policy available to all parent/carers who will be advised that cases may be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the children or vulnerable adult.
3. Advise children and vulnerable adults about the standards of behaviour and conduct they can expect from staff and volunteers, and what to do if they experience or suspect abuse.
4. Work with appropriate agencies to ensure children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded appropriately.
5. Adopt in totality the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) commissioned document ["Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings"](#) as good practice guidance.
6. Recognise that any child or vulnerable adult can be subject to abuse or radicalisation and all allegations of abuse or concerns about radicalisation will be taken seriously, no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
7. Commit to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with or come in to contact with children and vulnerable adults and to providing appropriate supervision.
8. Ensure all staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults undertake training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults effectively including the PREVENT strategy.
9. Appoint a member of the Executive Management Team to act as the Senior Designated Officer who is responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with other agencies.

**All referred cases will be reported to the Senior Designated Officer for information and/or advice. They will record all cases for monitoring**

**purposes.**

10. Operate safer recruitment procedures and ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers.
11. Raise any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adult arrangements with the Board and remedied without delay.

## 4.0 Definition of Abuse

### Children

1. **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, female genital mutilation or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
2. **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
3. **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (fondling). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
4. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- 5. Significant Harm** Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

### **Vulnerable Adults**

- 6. Physical Abuse** This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, rough handling or unnecessary physical force either deliberate or unintentional, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- 7. Sexual Abuse** This includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent to, or was pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse can occur between people of the same sex and it can also occur within a marriage or any long-term relationship. A relationship of trust should exist between a member of staff or a volunteer and the person for whom they are caring; it would be seen as a betrayal of that trust, and therefore abusive, for that member of staff or volunteer to have a sexual relationship with the person they are caring for.
- 8. Psychological Abuse** This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- 9. Financial or Material Abuse** This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, enduring power of attorney, or inheritance or financial transactions, or the inappropriate use, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- 10. Neglect and Acts of Omission** This includes ignoring or withholding medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing and heating.

- 11. Discriminatory Abuse** This includes racist, sexist, or other forms that are based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, or similar treatment.
- 12. Self-Neglect** This is not a direct form of abuse, but staff need to be aware of it in the general context of risk assessment/risk management and to be aware that they may owe a duty of care to a vulnerable individual who places him/herself at risk in this way.

## **5.0 Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedure**

1. The purpose of these guidelines are to ensure that the rights of children or vulnerable adults are protected through staff awareness of the issues and the following of the statutory and local guidelines in the reporting of concerns.
2. AoS will take steps to identify vulnerable children and adults on taking part in projects and services. Staff will be informed, as part of the enrolment procedures, if vulnerable children or adults have been engaged on their projects where these are not specifically designed for vulnerable learners.

## **6.0 Advice to staff on when to take action**

Advice to staff on when to take action and how children and vulnerable adults can be potentially abused within the family, community, organisations by employees (including those employed to promote their welfare and protection from abuse), visitors, volunteers and fellow students.

1. It is the responsibility of all staff to record and refer concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, even if they are just suspicions or overheard rumours, but not to discuss it with anyone other than a Designated Officer /Manager.

Out of hour's referrals should be made to the Designated Senior Officer and COO Justin Coleman: 07771 626 594. If he is not available then contact the CEO: James Mapstone: 07876 653 768.

2. If a child or vulnerable adult comes to you with a report of apparent abuse or a concern over radicalisation or extremism, you should listen carefully to him/her, using the following guidelines. When listening staff must:
  - allow the young person or vulnerable adult to speak without interruption
  - never trivialise or exaggerate the issue
  - never make suggestions
  - never coach or lead them in any way

- reassure them, let them know you are glad they have spoken up and that they are right to do so
  - always ask enough questions to clarify your understanding, do not probe or interrogate – no matter how well you know the young person or vulnerable adult – spare them having to repeat themselves over and over.
  - be honest – let the young person or vulnerable adult know that you cannot keep this a secret; you will need to tell someone else.
  - try to remain calm – remember this is not an easy thing for them to do.
  - do not show your emotions – if you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your negative feelings are directed towards them
  - let the young person or vulnerable adult know that you are taking the matter very seriously
  - make the young person or vulnerable adult feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.
3. Once you suspect any abuse or extremism / radicalisation you should immediately (within a maximum of two hours) contact a Designated Officer/Manager either in person or by telephone outlining what has been disclosed, what you have overheard or your suspicions. You should also contact them if you know or suspect that a member of staff or student has a previous history of abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
  4. If a Designated Officer/Manager cannot be contacted within two hours of the initial concern, the person making the report should refer the matter to a member of the Board who will either act as the Designated Officer.
  5. With regard to children, the Designated Officer/ Manager must discuss the matter with the Children’s Social Care Team at their local Council who will determine if it is a safeguarding matter.

The Designated Senior Officer is responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of the relevant contact details for their local area.

6. With regard to vulnerable adults, if it is decided by the Designated Officer/ Manager that further action should be taken, they may;
  - *Seek further advice from Social Services*
  - *Make a referral to Social Services*
  - *Report the incident to a designated Social Worker*
  - *Report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected*
7. Where an allegation is made regarding a school pupil, members of staff should follow the same procedures as outlined above. The Designated Officer/ Manager will liaise with the Child Protection Officer from the learner’s school or sponsor, ensuring that the learner is informed of this process.

8. The AoS Senior Designated Officer/ Manager will ask the referring member of staff for both children and adults to produce a full written record within 24 hours, which should include:
  - Name and position of the person who reported the matter
  - Whether the matter is a direct disclosure from a child, young person or vulnerable adult, a suspicion or an overheard conversation
  - A factual account of what has been overheard or what has been disclosed, including any questions they needed to ask to clarify understanding
  - The Report should contain as much detail as possible including observations (including physical signs of apparent abuse). It **must not** include opinions or personal interpretation of the facts
  - Signed, dated and forwarded to the Designated/First Response Officer who will store it in a secure place.
9. Detailed information about a case will be confined to the Senior Designated Officer/ Manager's, the CEO, the relevant Board members and (if not implicated) the parents/carers.
10. The reporting member of staff will be kept informed on the progress of the case on a 'need to know' basis only.
11. If the Children's Social Care Team or Social Care Services deem it a safeguarding issue, the CEO will advise the Chair of the Board without disclosing any detail.

## 7.0 Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality and trust should be maintained as far as possible. The degree of confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the child or vulnerable adult who is always the primary concern. The child or vulnerable adult must at the earliest opportunity in the disclosure be informed of the need to pass information on.
2. All conversations regarding a vulnerable adult should always be held in private.
3. AoS complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, and Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 which allows for disclosure of personal data where this is necessary to protect the vital interests of a vulnerable adult.

In all cases the main restrictions on disclosure of information are:

- Common Law duty of confidence



- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003

Each of these has to be considered separately. Other statutory provisions may also be relevant, but in general, legislation does not prevent sharing of information if:

- those likely to be affected consent; or
- the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep the information confidential; or
- disclosure is required under court order or other legal obligation.

Whatever happens, you should always be open and honest with the child or vulnerable adult if you intend to take the case further.

4. The member of staff reporting a disclosure, suspicion of abuse/ neglect or overheard rumours of abuse/neglect must not discuss the case with anyone other than a Designated Officer/ Manager.

## **8.0 Allegations against a member of staff**

The primary concern for AoS is the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a member staff that action is taken quickly and professionally whatever the validity.

The AoS Designated Officer/ Manager will work in conjunction with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), in order to ensure that even apparently less serious

1. The term 'member of staff' applies to all contracted personnel within the Alliance of Sport, volunteers and people employed by other agencies that are providing services for the organisation.
2. In the event that any member of staff suspects any other member of staff of abusing a student, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to the CEO and the Designated Officer/ Manager except where the suspect is either of the aforementioned.
3. If the allegation concerns the CEO, the matter should be discussed with the Senior Designated Officer who will discuss it with the Chair of the Board, in addition to following the normal procedures for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. If the allegation concerns both the Designated Officer/ Manager the matter should be discussed with the CEO (or a member of the Board) who will discuss it with the Chair of the Board, in addition to following the normal procedure for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection as outlined in Section 6.

4. Where there is suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult may suffer significant harm a 'strategy discussion' will take place where the Designated Officer will be asked to represent AoS. If it is determined that there is no cause to suspect significant harm but a criminal offence might have been committed they will immediately inform the police and a similar discussion will take place with the Designated Officer being asked to represent the organisation.

### **Type of Investigators**

**Criminal Investigators** - If a crime is suspected, an investigation will not be carried out by AoS, other than to establish the facts. All the information obtained will be handed over to the Police who will carry out any investigation necessary, with the support of AoS.

**Disciplinary Investigations** - If a decision is made to pursue an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, this will be dealt with under the AoS Disciplinary Policy.

AoS may be unable to carry out any disciplinary proceedings until the Police investigation is complete, but depending on the seriousness of the allegation, the member of staff may be suspended from work with pay until the investigation is completed.

## **9. AoS responsibilities to the member of staff following an allegation**

1. Staff who are accused of a breach of the code set out in **Appendix A** may be subject to disciplinary procedure.
2. Where an allegation from a child or vulnerable adult occurs, an investigation will be carried out. The Investigating Officer will be required to liaise with the Designated Officer/ Manager to clarify whether there are any relevant records or relevant information in relation the individual.
3. AoS should inform the accused member of staff as soon as possible after initial consultation has taken place. However, this should not be before the 'strategy discussion' or police discussion, if needed, has taken place and agreement has been reached as to what information can be disclosed to the member of staff.
4. The member of staff should be advised to:
  - Contact union representative
  - Keep records of all conversations, meetings attended, letters received and telephone calls relating to the allegation.

5. Whilst the case is ongoing, AoS must arrange to provide appropriate support to the member of staff.
6. Where it is subsequently found that an allegation has been made maliciously, the AoS may refer the matter to be dealt with under disciplinary procedures.
7. AoS may also take the decision to pursue an allegation of abuse through the businesses Disciplinary Procedure. Discussion should be held with the relevant Social Care Team to ensure that their investigation is not compromised by doing so. Employees should not automatically be suspended and should not be suspended without careful thought.
8. If the accused member of staff tenders their resignation or ceases to provide their services, the allegation must continue to be investigated in accordance with the procedures. Compromise agreements by which a person agrees to resign or the Alliance of Sport agrees not to pursue the disciplinary action must not be used in these cases.
9. Every effort must be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity whilst the allegation is being investigated.

## **10. Record Keeping and Timekeeping**

1. AoS will keep clear and comprehensive records of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, as well as details of any actions taken and decisions reached. These will be placed indefinitely on a staff members' confidential personnel file.
2. In the interests of all parties it is important to resolve cases as quickly as possible whilst ensuring a consistent, fair and thorough investigation.
3. This policy will be reviewed annually by the organisation.

**Created:** ..... January 2019.....

**Last review date:** .....Sep 2023.....

**Next review date:** .....Oct 2025.....

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Code of Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

AoS recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to all situations at all times whereby staff come into contact with children and vulnerable adults. However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff in order to fulfil their roles within AoS.

This code should assist in the protection of children and vulnerable adults and members of staff. These guidelines also apply to volunteers who work in an unpaid capacity.

#### **Staff must:**

- Implement the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures at all times.

#### **Staff must never:**

- Engage in inappropriate rough, physical games including horseplay with beneficiaries.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind. The main principles of touch are:
  - touch should always be in response to the persons need
  - touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the person
  - touch should always be with permission of the person
- Do things of a personal nature for beneficiaries that they can do for themselves or that their parent can do for them.
- Physically restrain a person unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of the person/other person/visitors or staff/yourself. In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable, otherwise the action can be defined as assault.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to, or within earshot of, a beneficiary.
- Have children or vulnerable adults on their own in a vehicle. Where circumstances require the transportation of people in their vehicle, another member of staff/ volunteer must travel in the vehicle. Also, it is essential that there is adequate insurance for the vehicle to cover transporting people as part of the business of your work. In extreme emergencies (for medical purposes) where it is required to transport a person on their own, it is essential that another staff member and the parent is notified immediately.

- Take a child to the toilet unless another adult is present or has been made aware (this may include a parent, group leader)
- If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child/ vulnerable adult, make sure that you can be clearly observed by others.
- Engage in a personal relationship with a child, or vulnerable adult who becomes a participant, beyond that appropriate for a normal staff/relationship.

**Staff who breach any of the above may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.**

- If an allegation against a member of staff has occurred, then an investigation may be carried out in accordance with the procedure for dealing with such allegations against staff: copies of this procedure are available in MS Teams or on the Charities HR System (Bright HR).

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Responsibility for Safeguarding at AoS**

**Board of Trustees** hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding at the AoS. To manage the policy, responsibility is designated to the Chief Executive.

**The Chief Executive** appoints a Designated Senior Officer who is responsible for ensuring staff and volunteers follow procedures and manages any relevant incidents.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** responsible for supporting staff and managing safeguarding concerns in their perspective programmes and/ or areas.