

Storm Basketball Club Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



Updated October 2024
Review October 2025

Key Points Summary

1. **The Welfare of the Child:** The welfare of the child is paramount.
2. **Inclusion:** All children, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
3. **Reporting Concerns:** All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be reported to the appropriate officer and will be taken seriously.
4. **Responsibility:** All staff, volunteers, and officials are responsible for the safety and well-being of children.
5. **Contacts:**
 - **Welfare Officer:** Daniel Hildreth | **Email:** office@stormbasketballclub.com
 - Alternative Contacts: Sussex Storm Basketball Club Team (details in the appendix).

1. Policy Statement

Storm Basketball Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its programmes. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of those who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered.

This policy is guided by:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Equality Act 2010.
- GDPR.

A child is defined as anyone under 18 years old.

2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

1. Ensure a safe environment for children.
2. Provide clear guidelines for staff/volunteers to respond to Welfare issues confidently and appropriately.
3. Promote good practices to protect children and staff from harm or false allegations.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Welfare Officer

- Handle all safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding procedures.
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- Act as the liaison with social services and the police in cases of reported abuse.

Coaches, Volunteers, and Staff

- Maintain safe practices.
- Report concerns to the CPO or alternative designated contacts.
- Attend mandatory safeguarding training.

4. Good Practice Guidelines

Always:

- Work in open environments, avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Put children's welfare first.
- Maintain professional boundaries (e.g., avoid intimate relationships with players or sharing rooms).
- Encourage open communication and mutual trust.
- Involve parents/carers in activities wherever possible.
- Be an excellent role model (e.g., no smoking or drinking around children).
- Provide clear and constructive feedback.
- Keep written records of any injuries or incidents.

Practices to Avoid:

- Spending excessive time alone with a child.
- Taking or dropping off a child at events without parental consent.

Practices Never to Be Sanctioned:

- Rough or sexually provocative games.
- Inappropriate touching or sharing rooms with children.
- Making suggestive comments to children.
- Ignoring allegations made by children.
- Engaging in tasks children can do themselves without consent.

5. Coach-to-Player Ratios

To ensure the safety and effective supervision of children, the club requires:

- A **minimum ratio of 1 coach to 30 players** during all training sessions, games, and activities.
- A minimum of **two adults** must be present when sessions are held in venues where there are no other adults or parents present (e.g., empty sports halls or isolated outdoor spaces).
- When delivering sessions at schools, leisure centres, or other venues where parents, school staff, or other adults are present, **1 coach** is sufficient to supervise the group.

Key Considerations for Supervision

When planning activities, the following factors must be assessed to determine appropriate supervision levels:

1. **Ages of Participants:** Younger participants may require closer supervision.
2. **Additional Needs:** Children with disabilities or additional needs may require more support or lower ratios.
3. **Experience and Competence:** The experience level of participants in the specific activity (e.g., advanced drills vs. introductory sessions).
4. **Nature of the Venue:** Consider whether the venue is:
 - Open or enclosed.
 - Shared with the public or private to the group.
 - Equipped with potential hazards or high-risk equipment.
5. **Risk Assessment:** A specific risk assessment must be undertaken before activities to identify and mitigate risks that may require adjustments to supervision levels.

Staff Suitability

It is the club's responsibility to ensure all supervising staff are:

- Appropriately qualified for their roles and activities.
- Recruited safely, with necessary checks (e.g., DBS).
- Insured for their activities.
- Signed up to the club's code of conduct and safeguarding policies.

Benefits of Appropriate Ratios

Maintaining appropriate supervision levels helps:

- Minimise risks to participants.
- Enhance children's enjoyment and learning.
- Reassure parents/carers of their children's safety.
- - Protect coaches and volunteers by ensuring safe and structured sessions.

6. Player Collection Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

- Players will only be dismissed once their parent or guardian is visibly present for collection.
- If a player's parent or guardian is not present at the scheduled pickup time:
 1. Coaches will attempt to contact the parent/guardian using the provided contact details.
 2. The player will remain supervised until the parent/guardian arrives.

Walking Home

- Players will not have permission to walk home unless parental consent has been provided in advance via class for kids.

7. Changing Rooms

- In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms.
- For situations where coaches need to oversee the changing rooms, there must always be two coaches or responsible adults present.
- Adults should not change or shower at the same time as players using the same facilities.
- Mixed-gender teams must have separate changing facilities.
- No photographic or video equipment (including mobile phones) should be used in changing areas.

8. Managing Challenging Behaviour

Staff and volunteers should:

- Provide clear behavioural expectations to children, parents, and staff.
- Avoid any forms of physical or humiliating punishment.
- - Engage parents and external agencies if behavioural challenges persist.

9. E-Safety and Social Media

- All communication with players should occur through official channels and be accessible to parents.
- Players should be educated about safe internet use and the prevention of cyberbullying.
- Staff must adhere to social media and electronic communication guidelines to maintain professional boundaries.

10. Safeguarding in Schools

- When coaches are delivering activities under school management, the school's safeguarding policies will apply.
- Coaches must report concerns to the school's designated safeguarding lead.

11. Reporting Procedures

- Concerns should first be reported to the Welfare Officer.
- For serious incidents, the welfare officer should contact Basketball England's safeguarding team.
- A standardised referral form must be completed for all significant incidents.

12. Incident Recording

All safeguarding concerns must be documented using a standard incident form, including:

- Names of those involved.
- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Observations or statements.
- Actions taken and next steps.

13. Positions of Trust

Staff must not:

- Engage in any intimate or sexual relationships with players under their care, regardless of age.
- Use their position to exert inappropriate influence or control over players.

14. Recruitment and Training

Recruitment:

- Staff must undergo DBS checks, provide references, and agree to a code of conduct.
- Under-18s assisting in coaching must be supervised and not counted in coach-to-player ratios.

Training:

- All staff must complete safeguarding training and attend refresher courses regularly.
- Coaches must hold appropriate qualifications and follow governing body standards.

15. Photography and Video Use

- Parental consent must be obtained for photography and filming during sessions.
- Images must only be used for authorised purposes and stored securely.

16. Transport and Trips

- Obtain parental consent for all transportation.
- Ensure mixed teams are accompanied by male and female staff.
- Adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into theirs.

17. Medical Declaration and Risk Acknowledgement

Parents/guardians must:

- Inform the club of any medical conditions, allergies, or special needs that may affect their child's participation in club activities.
- Authorise emergency medical treatment if required during training sessions, matches, or events.
- Acknowledge the inherent risks of participation in basketball and agree to release the club from liability for unforeseen accidents, except in cases of negligence by the club.

18. Concerns About Poor Practice

- If, after consideration, an allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Welfare Officer will address it as a misconduct issue in accordance with the club's disciplinary procedures.
- If the allegation involves a Welfare Officer, or if concerns remain about how the matter was handled, the issue must be reported to the Storm Basketball Club Committee. The committee will determine how to proceed and whether disciplinary action is required.

19. Concerns About Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion of child abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Welfare Officer.
- The Welfare Officer will take steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other children who may be at risk.

Action Steps:

1. The Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department, which may involve the police. If the incident occurs outside regular hours, the Welfare Officer may contact the police directly.
2. The child's parents or carers will be contacted as soon as possible, following advice from social services.

3. The Welfare Officer will handle any media enquiries.

- If the allegation concerns the Welfare Officer, the report must be directed to another designated Welfare Officer, who will refer the matter to social services.

20. Confidentiality

Every effort must be made to ensure confidentiality for all parties involved. Information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis and handled sensitively.

This includes the following people:

- The Welfare Officer.
 - The parents of the child who is alleged to have been abused.
 - The person making the allegation.
 - Social services or the police.
 - The Basketball England Safeguarding team.
 - The alleged abuser (and their parents, if the alleged abuser is a child).
- Social services should be consulted for advice on how to approach the alleged abuser.
- All information must be stored securely, with limited access for designated personnel, and in compliance with data protection laws (e.g., ensuring accuracy, relevance, and security).

21. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Storm Basketball Club Welfare Officer will decide whether an individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further investigations by the police or social services.

- Regardless of the outcomes of external enquiries, the Storm Basketball Club Disciplinary Committee will assess each case individually to determine whether a staff member or volunteer can be reinstated.

Key Considerations:

- In cases where evidence is insufficient for police action, the committee must decide based on the "balance of probabilities" standard, prioritising the welfare of the child.
- Decisions should be handled sensitively, particularly when reinstatement is considered.

22. Support Following Incidents of Abuse

The club recognises the importance of providing support to children, parents, and staff involved in incidents. Support mechanisms include:

- Access to counselling services and support groups.
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- Open communication to promote a culture of healing and transparency.

For professional counselling, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) can provide resources:

Website: <https://www.bacp.co.uk>
Contact: 01788 550899 | Email: bac@bacp.co.uk

Support for the alleged perpetrator should also be considered, depending on the outcome of investigations and the nature of their involvement.

23. Allegations of Historical Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made long after the event, such as by an adult who was abused as a child or by a current staff member reflecting on past events.

In such cases:

- The club must follow standard safeguarding procedures, reporting the matter to social services or the police.
- These allegations are critical as other children, either within or outside the sport, may still be at risk.

Important Note

- Individuals with prior convictions for abuse-related offences are automatically prohibited from working with children, as mandated by the Protection of Children Act 1999.

23. Support After Incidents

The club will:

- Provide access to counselling and support services for all parties affected by incidents, including children, parents, and staff.
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- Foster open communication to ensure a supportive and transparent environment for recovery and well-being.

24. Contacts

- Welfare Officer: Daniel Hildreth | office@stormbasketballclub.com
- Co-Chairs:
 - **Daniel Hildreth (NL Head Coach)** | office@stormbasketballclub.com
 - **Karl Youngman (SBL & Schools Head Coach)** | karl@stormbasketballclub.com
 - **Marnie Williams (Administration)** | finance@stormbasketballclub.com
- **Office Administrator/Officials Coordinator:** Kelsey Sanders | finance@stormbasketballclub.com