Safeguarding Policy

Approval date: March 2026 **Approved by: Board of Trustees**

Review date: March 2027

The North Somerset Sports Foundation position on Safeguarding.

Safeguarding is everybody's business.

All staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders share responsibility for safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

If you are worried about a child or young person who could be in danger, contact immediately:

North Somerset Children's Social Care
0300 123 6996

Somerset Children's Social Care
0300 123 2224
childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Bristol First Response Team
0117 903 6444
firstresponse@bristol.gov.uk

Police: 101
Emergency: 999

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all individuals associated with North Somerset Sports Foundation operate within an environment that prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
We are committed to safeguarding and promoting welfare by adhering to current legislation and statutory guidance, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and working collaboratively with multi-agency partners where required.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable)

3. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment (including online)
- Preventing impairment of mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care environments
- Promoting upbringing within family networks where appropriate
- Taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes

Child protection refers to activity undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding practice must consider factors such as social and economic circumstances, ethnicity, and lived experience.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Participants
- Contractors and external providers
- Visitors and partners

5. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Lucy Chappell (CEO and Founder)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns
- Liaising with external agencies
- Ensuring reporting procedures are followed

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers must:

- **T**ake safeguarding concerns seriously
- Recognise signs of abuse and neglect
- Report concerns immediately
- Never investigate concerns themselves
- Record information accurately using the individual's own words

6. Types of Abuse

Includes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Online abuse

7. Safer Recruitment

We will ensure:

- Appropriate DBS checks are completed
- References are obtained
- Safeguarding is included in induction
- Ongoing suitability is monitored

8. Training

All staff and volunteers will:

- Receive safeguarding training at induction
- Undertake regular refresher training
- Be supported to understand their responsibilities

9. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If you have a concern:

- Act immediately
- Report to the DSL or senior staff member
- If immediate risk: contact emergency services

Do not:

- Delay
- Investigate
- Promise confidentiality

10. Responding to Concerns

North Somerset Sports Foundation will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Record and assess information
- Refer to appropriate agencies where necessary
- Prioritise the safety of the individual

11. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Where concerns relate to staff or volunteers:

- The organisation will act immediately
- Concerns will be assessed against harm thresholds
- Where the harm threshold is met, we will:
- Report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Work collaboratively with:

- Police
- Children's Social Care
- Other relevant agencies
- This includes concerns relating to behaviour inside or outside of work, including online activity.

12. Code of Conduct and Digital Safety

All staff and volunteers must:

- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Use organisational systems responsibly
- Not access inappropriate content (including pornography or illegal material) on work devices, Wi-Fi, or premises

Failure to comply may:

- Trigger safeguarding procedures
- Lead to referral to external authorities
- Result in disciplinary action or barring from working with children

Social Media and Digital Communication

North Somerset Sports Foundation recognises that social media platforms present both opportunities and risks in relation to safeguarding.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- Facebook
- WhatsApp and other messaging platforms

All staff, volunteers, and representatives must adhere to the following expectations:

Professional Boundaries

- Staff must not engage in private or personal communication with children or young people via social media or messaging platforms
- Direct messaging (DMs), private chats, or one-to-one communication with participants is not permitted unless explicitly authorised and appropriate safeguards are in place
- Staff must not "follow", "friend", or connect with children or young people on personal social media accounts

Use of Organisational Accounts

- Communication with participants must take place via official organisational channels where possible
- Group communication (e.g. group chats) must be transparent, appropriate, and include more than one responsible adult where possible
- Content shared must be appropriate, professional, and in line with organisational values

Sharing Content and Images

- Images or videos of children and young people must only be shared where appropriate consent has been obtained
- Content must not identify individuals in a way that puts them at risk
- Location tagging should be used carefully to avoid exposing real-time whereabouts

Inappropriate Use

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

- Sharing or engaging with inappropriate, sexualised, or harmful content
- Communicating with children or young people in a way that is secretive, excessive, or outside professional boundaries
- Using personal devices or accounts to bypass organisational safeguards

Any concerns relating to online behaviour must be reported immediately in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding Concerns Online

Concerns relating to online activity, including:

- Inappropriate contact
- Grooming behaviours
- Cyberbullying
- Exposure to harmful content

Must be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

14. Working with Third Parties

All partners, contractors, and external providers must:

- Comply with safeguarding expectations
- Have appropriate safeguarding measures in place
- Not pose a risk to service users

15. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will be:

- Shared on a need-to-know basis
- Handled in line with data protection requirements
- Shared appropriately to protect individuals
- Safeguarding concerns will always override confidentiality where necessary.

16. Safeguarding Adults

We are committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults in line with the Care Act 2014.

This includes protecting individuals from:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

17. Monitoring and Review

North Somerset Sports Foundation will:

- Review safeguarding practice regularly
- Monitor incidents and outcomes
- Update policy annually or as required

18. Conclusion

North Somerset Sports Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all individuals.

Through strong procedures, clear responsibilities, and a culture of vigilance, we aim to ensure a safe and supportive environment for everyone involved in our activities.