

SLCC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 23-24



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A General Policy Statement

1. SLCC has a moral duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Throughout these policies and procedures, reference is made to “children and young people”. This term is used to mean “those under the age of 18”.

SLCC recognise that some adults are also vulnerable to mal treatment, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of mal treatment and the protection of vulnerable adults, such as, but not limited to, persons with learning disabilities, regardless of age.

SLCC is committed to ensuring that the organisation

- Provides a safe environment for children and young people
- Identifies children and young people who are suffering
- Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe from harm.

In pursuit of these aims, SLCC will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people.

- Have robust procedures for reporting concerns
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of mal treatment against members of staff.
- The safe recruitment of staff

2. Head Coach Millie Fannin and Welfare Officer Lou Webb are Designated Safeguarding Leads with special responsibility for child protection issues for the season 2022-23. We have appropriate training which is continually maintained.

3. Staff and volunteers working with children will receive in house training adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the organisation's procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every year. If appropriate there will be also be a member of the management team or volunteer who may through their employment background have particular expertise in child protection issues. All staff and volunteers will undergo DBS.

4. SLCC recognises the following as definitions of mal treatment:

- Physical mal treatment: where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child mal treatment.
- Emotional mal treatment: the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional mal treatment.

Emotional mal treatment in sport may occur when the young person is constantly given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are clearly unrealistic for their age/skill level.

Other forms of emotional mal treatment could include, but are not limited to name calling and bullying.

- Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages or social media posts), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). This may also

include cyber bullying inclusive of comments and contact through social media.

- Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect. Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- Sexual mal treatment occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual mal treatment.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual mal treatment may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

5. Indicators of mal treatment

Even for those experienced in working with child mal treatment, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where mal treatment may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being mal treatmentd may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others

- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
 - losing weight for no apparent reason
 - becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
 - Cutting or self harm
- Signs of bullying include:
- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
 - an unexplained drop off in performance
 - physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
 - a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that mal treatment is taking place. It is not the responsibility of those working with or for SLCC decide that child mal treatment is occurring. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

B Designated Staff with Responsibility for Child Protection

1. The designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection issues is: Welfare Officer Lou Webb, available on welfare@swindonlightning.com and 07595 943140. Our other lead is Head Coach Millie Fannin chair@swindonlightning.com and 07983363541.
2. We have a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the organisation of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people.
3. We are responsible for ensuring that exempted questions are asked on relevant volunteer and employment application forms.
4. We receive appropriate training and are up to date with developments in child protection issues. We will also have responsibility for making new staff and volunteers aware of the existing child protection policy.
5. We are the main contact point for Child Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers. This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police child protection unit.

C Dealing with Disclosure of mal treatment and Procedure for Reporting Concerns If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible mal treatment

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interview the child, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the child is telling you.
- Do not put words into the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.
- Note the main points carefully.
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and your questions etc.
- Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the Designated Person.

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed written is always made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. If you include your own opinion it just be clear that is if your opinion and not fact. This can be helpful when a coach has known a child for some time and a bigger picture can be made.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's

- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the mal treatment? Record detail

Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual mal treatment is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

SLCC expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

While SLCC has its own policy, the organisation will also adhere to the policies of the organisations and venues that it works with social services department or the police.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Legacy Cheer and Dance Ltd will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document, SLCC volunteers are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not mal treatment has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been mal treatmentd by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to SLCC, who will take appropriate steps to

ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

This will include the following:

- SLCC will refer the matter to social services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- Millie and Lou should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- if the welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Head Coach Millie Fannin and vice Versa of there is a concern regarding the head coach, reports must go to Lou Webb.

Allegations of mal treatment are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services.

This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged mal treatment. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offenses related to mal treatment against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

D. Regulated Activity and obtaining Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks

1. Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, an individual working unsupervised with children is considered to be engaged in regulated Activity and must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will involve a check of the children's barred list, in order to perform their duties.
2. However, an individual working in a directly and permanently supervised position is not considered to be engaged in regulated activity but should still have an enhanced DBS disclosure check. However because they are working in a supervised role the enhanced check will not include a check of the children's barred list.
3. Note that applications for a DBS enhanced check can only be submitted where the applicant is aged 16 or over at the time of making the application.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- SLCC Management and Welfare Officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police

- The alleged mal treatment (and parents if the alleged mal treatment is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged mal treatment.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

E. Duty to refer to the DBS (Now Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS))

1. The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 both make it mandatory to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to a child or vulnerable people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This means that the designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding must not knowingly employ anyone who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, this includes anyone who is believed to have committed a relevant conduct while on the job or who has a record of such conduct.

2. SLCC has a legal duty to refer an employee or volunteer who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to 5 years imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the employee or volunteer poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. The employer should also inform the police and other relevant authorities if they believe a relevant conduct has occurred.

3. Referral forms can be downloaded from the DBS's website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs.

F. Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at SLCC events and training sessions

SLCC does not allow photography and video with hand held mobile devices such as mobile phones or I-Pads by friends and family of athletes unless permission is given by the head coach to use a team device.

Sale of photos taken at SLCC events is strictly prohibited unless you are the hired photo vendor for the given event.

Where SLCC may work with a photographer, a current DBS check is in place.

All clubs, athletes, and spectators of cheerleading and dance should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming and any concerns should be reported immediately to security, SLCC staff, or the welfare officer directly.

G. Use of children's images for SLCC publicity, website, social media and press

SLCC will regularly use images of the clubs members to promote its activities through their website, social media, promotional materials such as posters/flyers and press releases.

Parents/guardians are asked to sign written consent forms. Where a form is signed, the parents/guardians gives consent for photographs to be taken, and/or footage filmed during practices and performances for promotional materials relating to SLCC (including the SLCC Website, You-tube page, Facebook page and Instagram account)

Footage will not be broadcast or distributed through any commercial operations and names will not be placed next to photos. Nor will we 'tag' or follow accounts which are clearly made by children.

H. The DBS's barring process

1. Whenever new relevant information (such as a conviction or caution) becomes known, the information will be sent to the DBS. The DBS will consider this information, together with other information known on the individual, and decide whether it indicates that the individual poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups. If so, the DBS will commence its barring process and the DBS will issue a disclosure certificate to the applicant with the barring information.

2. The applicant should be advised by the designated member of staff to make a representation to the DBS regarding the barring information. The DBS will assess the barring information and representation and decide whether to

bar the applicant. If there is sufficient barring evidence, the applicant will be placed on either the Children's Barred List or the Vulnerable Adults Barred List or both depending on the offence. The applicant must then be removed from regulated activity.

3. The applicant has the right of appeal to a tribunal and must be advised of this right. Serious offences committed against vulnerable people will lead to automatic barring and the applicant will have no right to make representations or to appeal against a barring decision.

I. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of mal treatment against Members of Staff.

The procedures apply to all staff, whether trustees, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

1. SLCC recognises that an allegation of child mal treatment made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

2. SLCC recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career.

Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

J. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure

SLCC will already have recruitment and selection procedures.

These should be reviewed in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- They should apply to staff and volunteers who may work with children.
- The post or role should be clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role should be identified.
- Vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- Obtain professional and character references.
- Verify previous employment history.

- Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure/List 99 checks (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure).
- Use a variety of selection techniques (eg qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).