

Ball4All Safeguarding Policy

Last updated: September 2024

At Netball For All we are dedicated to providing a safe and positive environment for all individuals participating in our netball programs, regardless of their age, gender, or background. Our Safeguarding Policy outlines the steps we take to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, ensuring that all coaching and activities are conducted in a manner that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and dignity of every participant. This policy applies to all employees, coaches, volunteers, and participants in our programs and services.

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

Netball For All is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all participants in our programs, particularly children and vulnerable adults. We recognize that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that promoting a safe environment requires the active involvement of everyone, including staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and participants.

2. Definitions

- **Children:** Any individual under the age of 18 years.
- **Vulnerable Adults:** Individuals who may be at an increased risk of abuse or neglect due to physical or mental health conditions, age, or other factors. This includes adults with learning disabilities, mental health issues, or those who are otherwise unable to protect themselves from harm.

3. Our Safeguarding Principles

- **Respect and Dignity:** All participants, regardless of age or background, will be treated with respect and dignity. Discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any form will not be tolerated.
- **Prevention:** We take proactive steps to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation, ensuring that all coaching staff, volunteers, and other relevant parties are properly trained in safeguarding matters.
- **Support:** We offer a supportive environment for all participants, especially children and vulnerable adults, ensuring they feel safe to express concerns or report any worries.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We have a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse, neglect, or any form of harm. Any allegation of abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately, in line with our reporting procedures.
- **Confidentiality:** All safeguarding matters will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those who need to know, in accordance with legal or regulatory requirements.

4. Safe Recruitment and Training

To ensure the safety of our participants, we follow safe recruitment procedures, including:

- **Criminal Background Checks:** All coaches, volunteers, and staff working with children or vulnerable adults will undergo appropriate background checks (e.g., DBS checks in the UK) especially if working with them alone.
- **References:** We will seek references for all new employees or volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults to ensure their suitability.

5. Code of Conduct for Coaches, Staff, and Volunteers

All coaches, staff, and volunteers are required to adhere to the following standards:

- **Respect:** Treat all participants with respect, understanding, and dignity.
- **Boundaries:** Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries at all times. Physical contact should only occur when necessary for the activity and with the participant's consent.
- **Professionalism:** Maintain a professional and positive attitude at all times. Coaches and staff should refrain from personal relationships or inappropriate interactions with participants.
- **Behaviour Management:** Any behaviour that causes harm, distress, or discomfort to others, including bullying or intimidation, will not be tolerated. Coaches should manage group dynamics in a fair and respectful manner.
- **Supervision:** Ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are appropriately supervised during all activities, with a sufficient adult-to-participant ratio in place.

6. Reporting Concerns and Allegations

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, vulnerable adult, or any other participant, or if you believe there has been an incident of abuse, please follow these steps:

1. **Report to a Safeguarding Lead:** All concerns or allegations should be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) within our organisation. This individual will be responsible for investigating the concern and determining the appropriate course of action.
2. **Listen and Record:** If a child or vulnerable adult discloses a concern, listen to them without judgment or interruption. Record the details of the disclosure, including dates, times, and any relevant information.
3. **Confidentiality:** Ensure confidentiality throughout the process. Do not share the details of the concern with anyone who does not need to know. Information should only be shared with relevant authorities or individuals involved in the investigation.
4. **Emergency Situations:** In cases where immediate action is required (e.g., suspected harm or danger), contact emergency services (e.g., police or healthcare providers) right away.

7. Safeguarding Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Eilis Tuohy will be responsible for overseeing safeguarding concerns and ensuring compliance with this policy. The DSL will be trained in safeguarding issues and be a point of contact for all concerns.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** All staff and volunteers have a duty to recognize and report any safeguarding issues. They should be vigilant and proactive in ensuring the safety of all participants.
- **Parents and Guardians:** Parents and guardians play a key role in safeguarding. We encourage open communication between the company and families to ensure that any concerns are raised and addressed promptly.

8. Managing Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a netball environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. We will:

- **Promote Respectful Behaviour:** Foster a culture where mutual respect and kindness are encouraged at all times.
- **Address Bullying Promptly:** Any bullying or harassment, whether physical or emotional, will be addressed immediately. Any incidents will be investigated and handled according to our policies, with appropriate action taken.
- **Support for Victims:** We will provide support for victims of bullying or harassment, offering a safe space for them to talk and providing necessary interventions.

9. Working with Parents and Guardians

For children under the age of 18, we encourage ongoing communication with parents and guardians:

- **Consent:** We will always seek written consent from parents or guardians before collecting sensitive information or involving children in certain activities.
- **Information Sharing:** We will keep parents informed about any concerns, incidents, or developments related to their child's participation in our programs.
- **Encourage Involvement:** We invite parents and guardians to be actively involved in their child's netball journey and encourage them to report any concerns or observations about safeguarding.

10. Monitoring and Review

We will regularly review and update our safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they remain effective and in line with best practices. Feedback from participants, parents, coaches, and staff is an essential part of this process.

11. Contact Information

If you have any safeguarding concerns or questions regarding this policy, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the safeguarding team at:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Eilis Tuohy
- **Contact Email:** info@netballforall.co.uk

By participating in our programs, you agree to abide by this Safeguarding Policy and support our commitment to providing a safe and positive environment for all.
