

Safeguarding Children Policy

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Significant Information

SPA Richmond: 020 8547 5008

MASH Wandsworth: 020 8871 7899 (Weekdays)

020 8871 6000 (Evenings and Weekends)

mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

SPA Surrey: 0300 470 9100 (Weekdays)

01483 517 898 (Evenings, Weekends and bank holidays)

cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

LADO: Richmond:

020 8891 7370

07774332675

lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Wandsworth:

020 8871 6622

mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

Surrey:

0300 123 1650

LADO@surreycc.gov.uk

Introduction and purpose

Platform Sports Coaching fully recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is one of a range of documents which set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the company. We wish to create a safe, welcoming, and vigilant environment for children where they feel valued and are respected.

We recognise the role that the company and schools may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We are aware that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

We can play a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

Wherever the word “staff” is used, it covers all PSC staff on site, including full time, part time or self-employed staff, It seeks to set out the principles and procedures we operate to protect children from harm. This policy provides information regarding our safeguarding responsibilities and details how these responsibilities should be carried out.

Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Deputy Safeguarding officer (DSO)	Deputy Safeguarding officer (Sports DSO)
Dominic Johnson-King (Schools Programme Lead) dom@platformsportscoaching.co.uk	Nick Ford (Company Director) Nick.ford@platformsportscoaching.co.uk	Max Fouracre (Sports Programme Lead) max@platformsportscoaching.co.uk

Policy principles and aims

This policy aims to demonstrate to children, parents and other partners, PSC's commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

The welfare of children within our care is paramount. All children, regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.

We recognise that all adults working for PSC have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.

Our company is committed to providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, and respected and which promotes their social, physical and moral development.

This policy is used in conjunction with staff training and continued professional development to:

- raise staff awareness of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm and ensure a safe environment.
- emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff and develop and promote effective working relationships with the school and other agencies, especially Achieving for Children (AfC) and the police.
- develop a structured procedure within the company which will be followed by all staff community in cases of suspected abuse; ensure that the structured procedure is followed by staff in cases of suspected abuse.

Children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

Statutory framework, key statutory and non-statutory guidance

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Platform Sports Coaching will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Children Act 1989 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe In Education 2025](#)

- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused](#)
- [Information Sharing](#)

We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that we have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which we believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

Our procedures also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

We will ensure that all staff read and understand:

- PSC's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- They will sign to say they have read the document

Platform Sports Coaching will have its Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on our website and hard copies will be available on request at sites.

The roles of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be explicit in their job descriptions and we will ensure that they have the time and resources to fulfil their duties.

Roles and responsibilities

The Director

The director will ensure that:

- the safeguarding and child protection policy and related policies and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL and deputy(ies) to carry out their roles effectively
- where there is a safeguarding concern, that the child's wishes, and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide
- systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback which operate with the best interest of the child at heart
- all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle-blowing procedures

- they liaise with the local authority designated officer (LADO) within 24 hours, before taking any action and then on an ongoing basis, where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

- Holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in Platform Sports Coaching. This responsibility will not be delegated.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise for the whole company community in regard to our safeguarding duties.
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Undertakes multi-agency (Level 3) safeguarding training with updates every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals but at least annually.
- Will refer a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to Achieving for Children's Single Point of Access (SPA) and/or the local authority where the child resides and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Will keep detailed, accurate records, either written or using appropriate online software, of all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Will ensure that all such records are kept confidential, stored securely and are separate from the pupil's general file.
- Will ensure that an indication of the existence of the additional safeguarding and child protection file is marked on the pupil general file.
- Will ensure that a copy of the safeguarding and child protection file is retained until such a time that is deemed appropriate by the company or upon receipt of the original file. The copy will then be shredded.
- Will liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies and professionals in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Has a working knowledge of Kingston's and Richmond's LSCB and Achieving for Children procedures. Will ensure that either they, or an appropriate staff member, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments and provide a report, where required, which has been shared with the parents.
- Notifies Children's Social Care if a child subject to a child protection plan is absent from school without explanation.
- Will ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within name of the companies safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 1 and Annex A and ensure that the policies are used appropriately.
- Will organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training, and a minimum of annual updates (including online safety) for all company staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences.

- Will undertake with the DSO, an annual audit of Platform Sports Coaching safeguarding policies, procedures and practices and ensure that this is submitted to Kingston's and Richmond's LSCB.
- Has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention and will support members of staff where Early Help is appropriate.
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation.
- Will ensure that the name of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies, are clearly advertised in the school and on the website, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- Will ensure that they, or a deputy, are available during term time school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Will ensure that there are adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours or out of term activities.

A deputy designated safeguarding lead(s)

- Is trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

All company staff

- Understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse.
- Will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or if necessary where the child is at immediate risk, to the police or Single Point of Access (SPA), or if a child lives out of borough, to the relevant local authority.
- Will provide a safe environment in which children can learn, develop & play.

1. Safe company, safe staff

We will ensure that:

- safer recruitment practices are adhered to including appropriate DBS checks, reference checks and any additional checks relevant to the role undertaken

- all staff are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with staff, pupils and parents and adhere to Platform Sports Coaching code of conduct
- adequate risk assessments are in place including for off-site activities.
- any disciplinary proceedings against staff related to child protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and LSCB, LADO and HR policy, procedures and guidance
- staff are fully aware of how to and have the confidence to report misconduct
- all staff receive information about Platform Sports Coaching safeguarding policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct), safeguarding and child protection policy, the role and names of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy(ies), and Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 and Annex A on induction.
- all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction which is regularly updated. In addition, they receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually
- the safeguarding and child protection policy is made available via our company website or other means and that parents and carers are made aware of this policy.
- all parents and carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through the publication of the safeguarding and child protection policy and reference to it in our company's handbook.
- the names of the designated safeguarding lead and deputy(ies), will be advertised on site with a statement explaining the company's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse
- all staff will be given a copy of Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and will sign to say they have read and understood it.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect pupils we will:

- seek their consent and parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or social medias)
- use only the children's first name with an image
- ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- ensure that children do not take photographs or video images of other students without their express permission and the permission of a member of staff

2. Training

Annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training for all staff is undertaken. Staff are regularly updated on policy changes. Staff are trained when necessary to support children with behavioural, medical or emotional needs.

3. Child protection overview and specific safeguarding concerns

Recognising abuse

To ensure that the children in our care are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

There are four categories of abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways of grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and 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.

Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2023)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been adequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety

- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new ‘friends’ or adults recently acquainted with the child’s family

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking action

Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of ‘It could happen here’.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day.
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern, which can be found on the Platform portal and seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Platform Sports Coaching acknowledges that domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Homelessness

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead is aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:

- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour
- the family being asked to leave a property

If a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral to children's social care will be made.

Children with family members in prison

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that children who have a family member in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The company will work with the school and agencies such as [NICCO](#) to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Peer on peer abuse

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the sessions, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

- **physical abuse:** violence, particularly pre-planned, forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- **emotional abuse:** blackmail or extortion, threats and intimidation
- **sexual abuse:** indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults, forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
- **sexual exploitation:** encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties, photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older pupils may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

What to do:

- When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the designated safeguarding lead should be informed.
- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.
- The DSL should contact children's services to discuss the case. It is possible that children's services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a children's services referral where appropriate.
- The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both pupils' files.
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim).
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to Platform Sports Coaching behaviour policy and procedures.
- Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough company investigation should take place into the matter using the company's usual disciplinary procedures.
- In situations where the company considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.
- The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Platform Sports Coaching follows the DfE's advice about sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges \(DfE May 2018\)](#)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two pupils of any sex. They can also occur through a group of pupils sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single pupil or group of pupils.

It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. Platform Sports Coaching will ensure that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable at any Platform Sports Coaching session. Behaviours such as making sexual remarks, grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia is not 'banter' or 'having a laugh' and will never be tolerated.

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that the following pupils can be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans, Questioning (LGBTQ) or who are perceived to be LGBTQ by their peers.

Sexual violence:

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Consent: Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

Sexual harassment:

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, calling someone sexualised names
- sexual 'jokes' or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- online sexual harassment, which might include: non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos and sharing sexual images and videos (see Youth produced sexual imagery (Sexting)); inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be stand alone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence

Harmful sexual behaviours:

Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Harmful sexual behaviours refers to problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours which are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. For more information see [NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

When considering harmful sexual behaviours, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. A useful tool is: [Brook Traffic Light Tool](#)

Harmful sexual behaviours will be considered in a child protection context.

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that pupils displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and they will be offered appropriate support.

Platform Sports Coaching has clear platform principles, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout any platform session. The company has a Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Responding to allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence

Platform Sports Coaching will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and Platform Sports Coaching will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole wider community.

A risk and needs assessment will be completed for all reports of sexual violence. The need for a risk and needs assessment for reports of sexual harassment will be considered on a case by case basis. The assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- the alleged perpetrator
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them

Platform Sports Coaching will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator and the wider community.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Platform Sports Coaching follows the London Child Protection Procedures for safeguarding children from sexual exploitation. [Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation](#)

In February 2017, the government updated the working definition of child sexual exploitation [Child sexual exploitation definition and guide](#)

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse affecting boys and girls. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Child sexual exploitation may occur without the child being aware of events or understanding that these constitute abuse.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim’s fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

Child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity

- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child's or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources

Consent

Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

Key factor in child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation involves some form of exchange (sexual activity in return for something) between the victim and/or perpetrator or facilitator. Where there is no such exchange, for example, where the gain for the perpetrator is sexual gratification (or the exercise of power or control), this is described as sexual abuse (and not exploitation).

The exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). The receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim.

It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the definition of exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Links to other kinds of crime

- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (including online grooming)
- Abusive images of children and their distribution
- Drugs-related offences
- Gang-related activity
- Immigration-related offences

- Domestic servitude

Potential vulnerabilities

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe or stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories).
- Sexual identity

Possible indicators of child sexual exploitation

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc, without plausible explanation.
- Gang association and/or isolation from peers and social networks.
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work.
- Leaving home or care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late.
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls.
- Returning home under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age or sexually transmitted infections.
- Evidence of or suspicions of physical or sexual assault.
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups.
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers).
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.
- Concerning use of the internet or other social media.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Online exploitation.

All young people are at risk from online exploitation, and can be unaware that this is happening. Online exploitation includes the exchange of sexual communication or images and can be particularly challenging to identify and respond to. Children, young people and perpetrators are frequently more familiar with, and spend more time in, these environments than their parents and carers.

Online child sexual exploitation allows perpetrators to initiate contact with multiple potential victims and offers a perception of anonymity. Where exploitation does occur online, the transfer of images can be quickly and easily shared with others which makes it difficult to contain the potential for further abuse.

Children may be perpetrators of abuse

It must be recognised that children may also be perpetrators of abuse, sometimes at the same time as being abused themselves.

County lines: child criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years
 - can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years
 - can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual
 - can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence
 - can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults
 - is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.
- Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Online safety

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites at platform sessions. Many pupils own or have access to handheld devices and these items are not permitted at Platform Sports Coaching sessions. If a mobile phone is required for safety reasons then it must be handed into the site manager at the start of the day.

Bullying

Platform Sports Coaching has an anti-bullying policy which is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms, eg, cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is logged. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied or victims of child abuse.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are seen to be ineffective, the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

We have a duty to record and regularly report to the school/local authority incidents of recorded racism within sessions.

So-called 'honour based' violence

So-called 'honour based' violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Crimes include female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Honour based violence might be committed against young people in our sessions who;

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- want to avoid an arranged marriage
- want to avoid a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others. Staff at Platform Sports Coaching will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBV to the DSL as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral to the police, and/or the Single Point of Access as with any other child protection concern and may also contact the forced marriage unit for advice as necessary.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can

cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so company staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators.

These risk indicators may include:

- child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- family taking a long trip abroad
- pupil's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Gambia, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff will be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female children about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday period. Staff are aware that it is also possible for these procedures to be undertaken in the UK.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.

(See [Female Genital Mutilation Statutory Guidance](#) for further information).

If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the DSL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Signs that may indicate a pupil has undergone FGM:

- prolonged absence from school and other activities
- behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- bladder or menstrual problems
- finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- complaining about pain between the legs
- mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- reluctance to take part in physical activity
- repeated urinal tract infection
- disclosure

Staff are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as mandatory reporting.

The mandatory reporting duty applies to all persons at Platform Sports Coaching who are employed or engaged to carry out 'coaching work' in a school. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report to the police.

At Platform Sports Coaching staff in this situation will record their concerns on Platform Sports Coaching record of concern form and inform the DSL, who will support the staff member in making a direct report to the police.

There are no circumstances in which a coach or other member of staff will examine a girl.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a child about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014, forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

For further information see: [Guidance forced marriage](#)

Staff will never attempt to intervene directly as a company or through a third party. Contact will be made with the Single Point of Access or the Forced Marriage Unit (020 7008 0151) for advice and support.

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Human trafficking, is defined in the UN Protocol on trafficking, adopted in 2000, as the acquisition of a person, by means of deception or coercion, for the purposes of exploitation. Human trafficking, or modern day slavery, as it is often referred to, is a crime and a safeguarding issue affecting millions across the world and in the United Kingdom.

Staff at Platform Sports Coaching are alert to the existence of modern slavery and child trafficking and concerns will be recorded and reported to the Single Point of Access as appropriate.

Types of Modern Day Slavery

Examples of industries and services where slavery exist in the UK today, the victims of which include children and young people are (with examples):

- the sex industry, including brothels
- retail: nail bars, hand car washes
- factories: food packing
- hospitality: fast-food outlets

- agriculture: fruit picking
- domestic labour: cooking, cleaning and child minding
- additionally, victims can be forced into criminal activities such as cannabis production, theft or begging

Modern day slavery is an issue that transcends age, gender and ethnicities. It can include victims that have been brought to the UK from overseas or vulnerable people in the UK being forced illegally work against their will. Children and young people have an increased vulnerability to slavery.

Poverty, limited opportunities at home, lack of education, unstable social and political conditions, and war are some of the situations that contribute to trafficking of victims and slavery.

Slavery can be linked to a number of safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation, but normally includes at least one of the following specific situations.

- Child trafficking: young people being moved internationally or domestically so that they can be exploited.
- Forced labour: victims are forced to work through physical or mental threat, against their will, often very long hours for little or no pay, in conditions that can affect their physical and mental health. They are often subjected to verbal or physical threats of violence against them as individuals or their families.
- Debt bondage: victims forced to work to pay off debts that they will never be able to. Debts can be passed down to children. Extreme examples include where a victim may be owned or controlled by an 'employer' or sold as a commodity.

Possible signs and indicators that someone is a victim of modern slavery that anyone working with children and young people should be aware of include:

- physical appearance: poor physical condition, malnourishment, untreated injuries, and looking neglected
- isolation: victims may not be allowed out on their own and may appear to be under the control or influence of people accompanying them, with the absence of a parent or legal guardian. they may not interact and be unfamiliar in their local community
- poor living conditions: victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, with multiple children living and working at the same address or premises
- personal belongings: few possessions, wearing the same clothes each day, and no identification documents
- restricted freedom: victims have little opportunity to move freely and may be kept from having access to their passport
- unusual travel times: victims may be dropped off or collected from work on a regular basis either very early or late at night
- reluctant to seek help: victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to approach people and have lack of trust or concern about making a report should they be deportation or fear of violence on their family

If a member of Platform Sports Coaching staff suspects that a pupil may be a victim they will, in the first instance report their concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will seek advice and support from the Single Point of Access who may in turn make a referral to the National Crime Agency via the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Further advice can be provided directly by the modern slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700.

Radicalisation and extremism

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of Platform Sports Coaching wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on education and other children's services ('specified authorities') to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values.

Platform Sports Coaching seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to far right/neo Nazi/white supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist animal rights movements.

Even very young children have been exposed, in rare circumstances, to extremism at home and elsewhere including online. As children get older, they look for adventure and excitement and they may start to ask questions about their identity and belonging. During that stage of their development they are vulnerable to extremist groups that may claim to offer answers, identity and a social network apparently providing a sense of belonging. Many of those extremist groups make sophisticated use of the internet and social media to target young people and spread their ideology, making young people more vulnerable to being influenced by extremist ideas.

Platform Sports Coaching takes seriously our responsibility to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when in our sessions.

During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. Platform Sports Coaching is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. Platform Sports Coaching promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with opportunities throughout sessions to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and learn how to discuss and debate points of view; and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to within our sessions.

Platform Sports Coaching staff receive training that provides them with both the information they need to understand the risks affecting children and young people in this area, and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them. Staff are trained to report all concerns about possible radicalisation and extremism to the DSL immediately as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Platform Sports Coaching recognises the importance of providing a safe space for children to discuss controversial issues and build the resilience and critical thinking skills needed in order to challenge extremist perspectives.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the DSL.

Platform Sports Coaching will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in sessions with a child's parents and carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk. They will also support parents and carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation.

We will then follow normal safeguarding procedures, which may involve contacting the school and Single Point of Access for consultation and further advice and/or making appropriate referrals to the police PREVENT team and Channel programme for any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

Parents and staff may find the following websites informative and useful:

[Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty](#)

[Educate against hate](#)

Suicide and self-harm

Suicide: an act of deliberate self-harm which results in death.

Self-harm: self-poisoning or self-injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act.

Suicide and self-harm links: self-harm is generally a way of coping with overwhelming emotional distress. Many young people self-harm where there is no suicidal intent. However, research shows that young people who self-harm can be at a higher risk of suicide.

Self-harm is a coping mechanism which enables a person to express difficult emotions. Young people who hurt themselves often feel that physical pain is easier to deal with than the emotional pain they are experiencing, because it is tangible. But the behaviour only provides temporary relief and fails to deal with the underlying issues that a young person is facing. For some people, self-harm may last for a short time. For others, it can become a long-term problem. Some people self-harm, stop for a while, and return to it months, even years, later, in times of distress.

Risk factors that indicate a child or young person may be at risk of taking actions to harm themselves or attempt suicide can cover a wide range of life events such as: bereavement, bullying, cyber bullying, mental health problems including eating disorders, family problems such as domestic violence, any form of abuse or conflict between the child and parents.

The most common forms of self-harm are:

- cutting
- biting self
- burning, scalding, branding

- picking at skin, reopening old wounds
- breaking bones, punching
- hair pulling
- head banging
- ingesting objects or toxic substances
- overdosing with a medicine

Self-harm is usually a secretive behaviour but signs may include:

- wearing long sleeves at inappropriate times
- spending more time in the bathroom
- unexplained cuts or bruises, burns or other injuries
- unexplained smell of Dettol, TCP, etc
- low mood - seems to be depressed or unhappy, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- any mood changes - anger, sadness
- changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- losing friendships, spending more time by themselves and becoming more private or defensive
- withdrawal from activities that used to be enjoyed
- abuse of alcohol and or drugs

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that any pupil who self-harms or expresses thoughts about self-harm and/or suicide, must be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention will be offered at the earliest point. Any member of staff who is made aware that a pupil has self-harmed, or is contemplating self-harm or suicide will record and report the matter to the DSL as soon as possible as with any other safeguarding concern.

Fabricated or induced illnesses

Staff at Platform Sports Coaching are alert to the issues surrounding fabricated or induced illnesses. Fabricated or induced illness is a condition whereby a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm through the deliberate action of their parent and which is attributed by the parent to another cause.

There are three main ways of the parent fabricating (making up or lying about) or inducing illness in a child:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms, including fabrication of past medical history
- fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts, records, letters and documents and specimens of bodily fluid
- induction of illness by a variety of means

The above three methods are not mutually exclusive. Existing diagnosed illness in a child does not exclude the possibility of induced illnesses. The very presence of an illness can act as a stimulus to the abnormal behaviour and also provide the parent with opportunities for inducing symptoms.

Fabricated or induced illness is most commonly identified in younger children. Although some of these children die, there are many that do not die as a result of having their illness fabricated or induced, but who suffer significant long term physical or psychological health consequences.

Fabrication of illness may not necessarily result in a child experiencing physical harm, but there may be concerns about the child suffering emotional harm. They may suffer emotional harm as a result of an abnormal relationship with their parent and/or disturbed family relationships.

Staff at Platform Sports Coaching will record and report any concerns about a child who might be experiencing Fabricated or induced illness to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as with any other safeguarding concern. The DSL will consider the need to make a referral or consult with the Single Point of Access as with any other child protection concern.

Contextual Safeguarding

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside its sessions and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding leads will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur and whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare [contextual safeguarding](#)

4. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability, including: prejudice and discrimination; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the local authority or otherwise living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality

- already viewed as a ‘problem’
- at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

1. Early help and interagency working

At Platform Sports Coaching we are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to teenage years. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the DSL and the school.

Any child may benefit from early help, but at Platform Sports Coaching we are particularly aware of the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is a privately fostered child.

Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help Assessment (EHA) [Early help assessment](#).

This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment. If early help is appropriate the DSL should support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

If early help and or other support is appropriate the case will be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving. The DSL is aware of the local escalation policy and procedures. We work closely with local professional agencies including social care, the police, health services and other services including voluntary organisations to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

As part of meeting a child's needs the company recognises the importance of sharing information between professionals and local agencies. Fears about sharing information do not stand in the way of promoting the welfare and safety of children.

2. What to do if staff are concerned about a child's welfare

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. Any concerns regarding indicators of abuse or neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue should be recorded on a Platform Sports Coaching record of concern form and passed to the DSL or Deputy DSL. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used (appendix 3). Concerns can also be discussed in person with the DSL but the details of the concern should be recorded in writing.

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding.

In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the record of concern form to record these early concerns and give the completed form to the DSL.

Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing.

If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a disclosure.

3. What to do if a pupil discloses to a member of staff

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

During their conversation with the pupil staff will:

- listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener
- reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk
- take what the child is disclosing seriously
- ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about it when it started’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive, but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong
- tell the child what will happen next

If a pupil talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on. Staff are not allowed to keep secrets.

The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on a record of concern for, in the child’s own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority. The record should be signed and dated, the member of staff’s name should be printed and it should also detail where the disclosure was made and who else was present. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used (appendix 3). The record should be handed to the DSL.

4. Notifying parents

The company will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will make contact with the parent and the school in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the company believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the school and Single Point of Access.

Where there are concerns about forced marriage or honour based violence parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

5. Making a referral to the Single Point of Access (SPA)

Concerns about a child or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL who will help decide whether a referral to the Single Point of Access is appropriate. If a referral is needed then the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made they can and should consider making a referral themselves.

The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the pupil.

If after a referral the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving the DSL (or whoever made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed, and most importantly the pupil's situation improves.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to SPA and/or the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

SPA contact number: 020 8547 5008.

6. Support for staff

We recognise that staff working in a setting who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate.

7. Confidentiality

Platform Sports Coaching recognises that in order to effectively meet a child's needs, safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm the company must contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a pupil to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. It is important that staff and volunteers tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age and development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality and that they may need to pass information on to other professionals to help to keep the child or other children safe.

However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential and the director, DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to SPA with their parents and carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with SPA on this point.

8. Record Keeping

Child's safeguarding and child protection records will be stored securely and access to them will be appropriately limited.

When children are too old to attend our services, we will ensure that their child protection file is kept for an appropriate time before being destroyed securely.

9. Procedure for dealing with complaints and allegations about staff

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of abuse against children are reported to have been committed by staff, practitioners and/or volunteers, who work with children at Platform sessions.

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff or volunteer may have:

- behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

This applies to any child the member of staff or volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life, such as if they had a child protection concerns raised for their own children.

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the staff handbook, companies code of conduct and the 'Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings' [Guidance for safer working practice](#)

Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff will also be given at induction.

All staff should be aware of the Platform Sports Coaching behaviour policy.

All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a pupil. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

We understand that a child may make an allegation against a member of staff or staff may have concerns about another staff member. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the director or the DSL.

The Director or the DSL on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the local authority designated officer (LADO) within 24 hours and before taking any further action.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the director, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform LADO as above, without notifying the director first.

Reporting to the LADO applies even where the nature of the alleged assault would not normally meet the threshold if applied to children in their own families. For example, a report of a child being smacked by a parent, with no injury caused, would be unlikely to require any response by police or Children's Social Care. However, a similar report of a child being smacked by a member of staff should be responded to because of:

- the vulnerability of children away from home
- the higher standards of conduct demanded by law and regulation of those caring for other people's children
- the position of trust enjoyed by such people

Platform Sports Coaching will follow the London child protection procedures for managing allegations against staff [London child protection procedures: allegations](#) and procedures set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

Suspension of the member of staff, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Director will seek the advice of the LADO and an HR consultant in making this decision. All options to avoid suspension will be considered. In the event of an allegation against the Director, the decision to suspend will be made by LADO.

If an allegation pertains to an adult not employed directly by the company, for example, catering staff, cleaning staff, peripatetic teachers, sports coaches etc. the school will work directly with the employing agency and the LADO as described above.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a staff member who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

10. Whistleblowing

Platform Sports Coaching has a whistleblowing policy which is available as a separate document. We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Our company works hard to encourage a culture of mutual respect and learning. We welcome comments and feedback and provide staff, pupils and parents with a safe mechanism to raise any concerns.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the companies safeguarding arrangements.

In the first instance this should be raised with the site manager, the DSL or company director. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the company, they should speak to the LADO for further guidance and support.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.

Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Whistle-blowing issues regarding the director should be raised with LADO and the school the sessions are taking place in.

11. Physical intervention

Platform Sports Coaching has a Behaviour policy (which includes guidelines for physical intervention) which is available as a separate document. We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering themselves or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

All incidents involving physical intervention will be recorded and signed by a witness.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'safe practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

12. Linked policies

- Behaviour
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-bullying
- Allegations against staff

- Administration of medicines
- Risk assessment
- Recruitment and selection

Appendix 1

Concern reporting form

Please complete this form as soon as possible if you have any concerns about a pupil

Pupil's name			
Pupil's DOB		Day/Date/Time	
Name of member of staff noting concern			

Details of concern

(Please describe as fully as possible and use the child's own words where applicable. Include names of witnesses, if relevant, and any immediate action taken.)

Body map attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature:

Date:

Please ensure that the completed form is given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Actions taken			
Date	Person taking action	Action	Signature

If the parent or carer has **NOT** been informed, please state the reason for this decision:

Signature:

Date:

Appropriate feedback must be given to the person completing the Record of Concern Form

Feedback given to:

Feedback given by:

Signature:

Date:

It may be useful to record the category of the concern for monitoring purposes and to identify any areas for training, education etc.

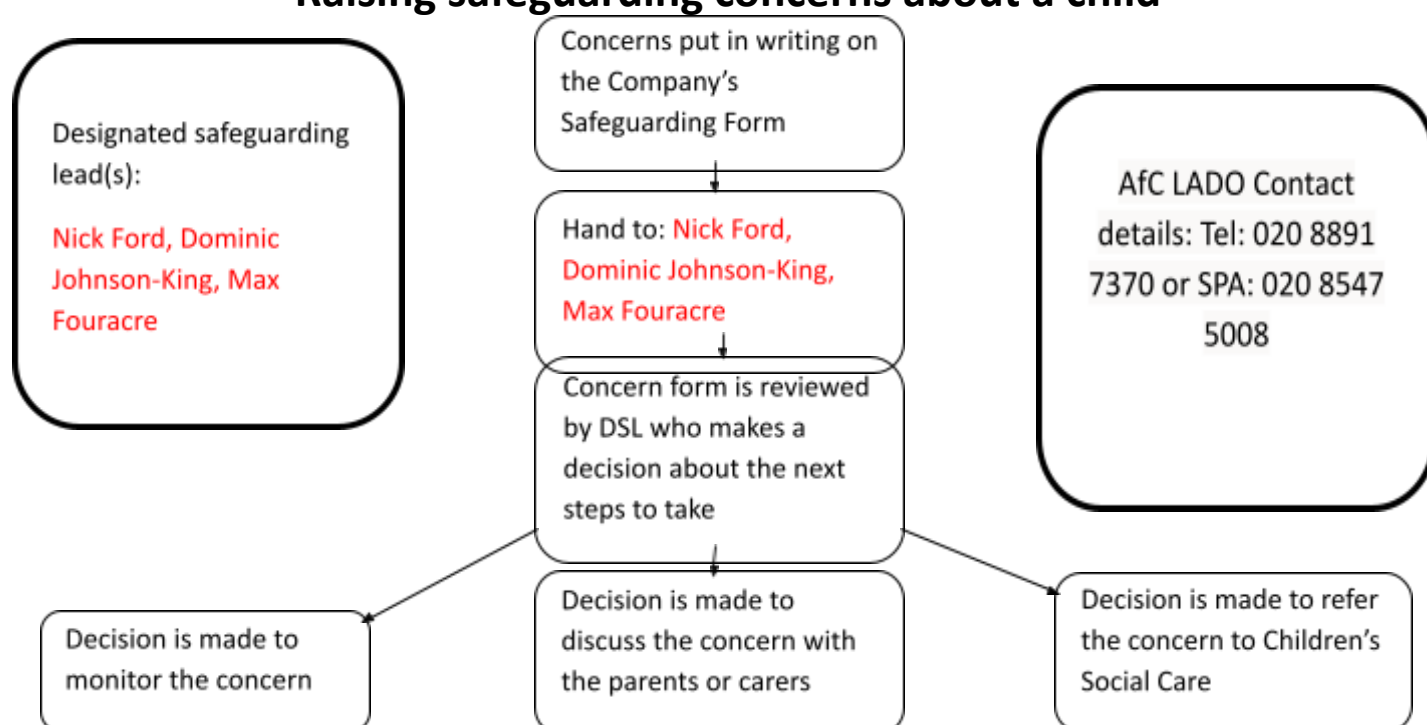
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Emotional	
Sexual Abuse	
Neglect	
CME	
FGM	

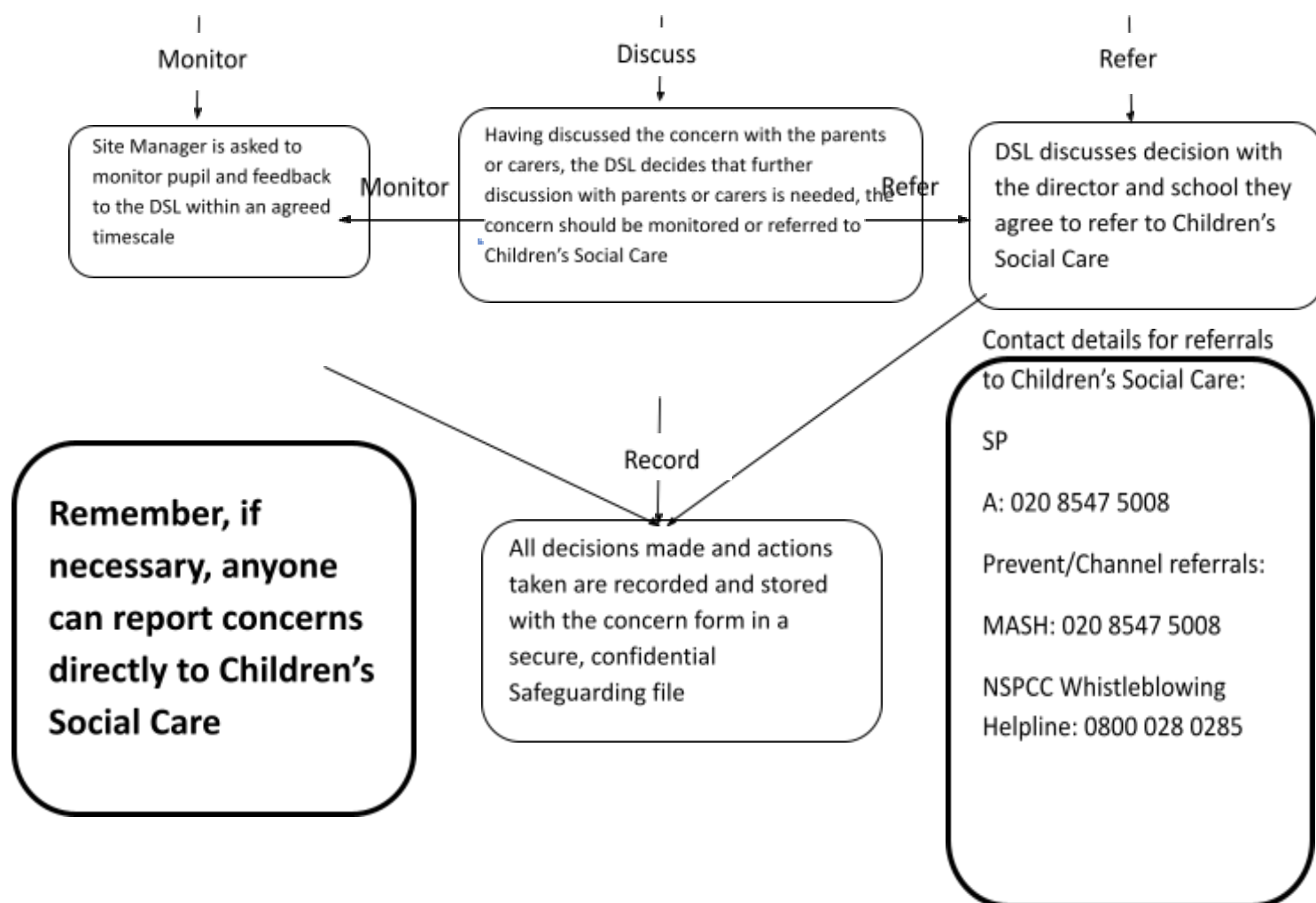
CSE	
Radicalisation	
Peer on Peer Abuse	
Online	
Sexting	
Mental Health	

Appendix 2

Concerns flow chart

Raising safeguarding concerns about a child





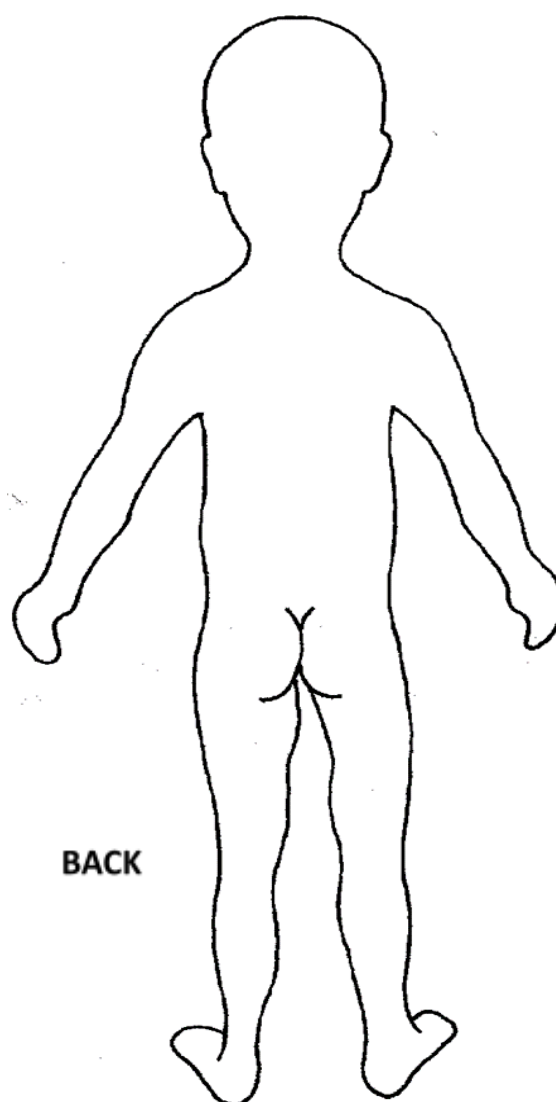
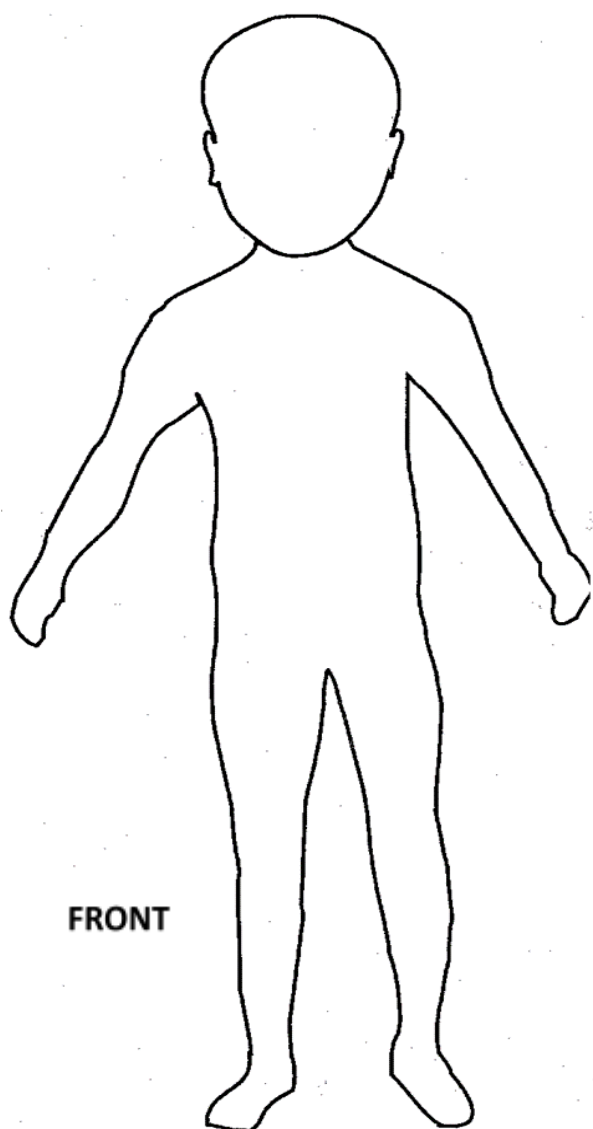
Appendix 3

Body map

(This must be completed at time of observation)

Platform Sports Coaching Staff Handbook 2025-2026

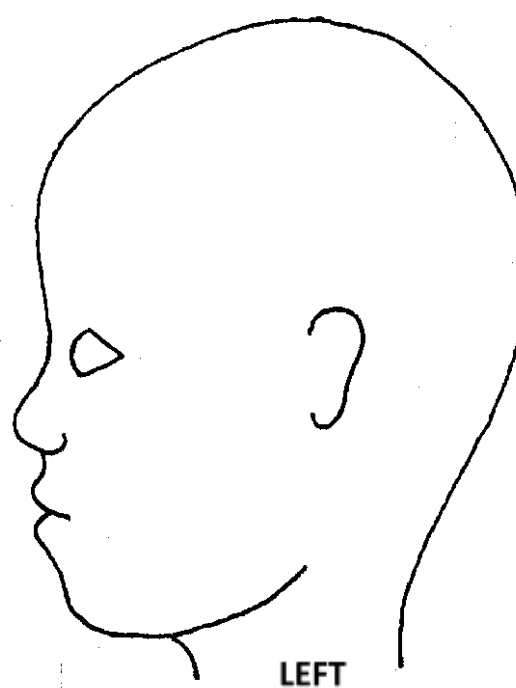
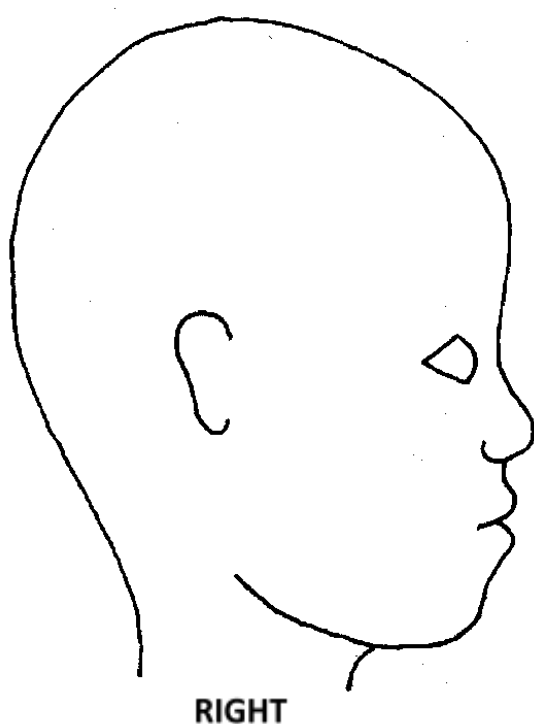
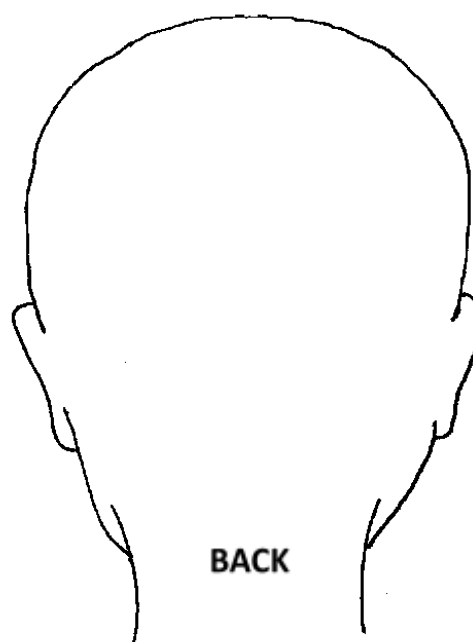
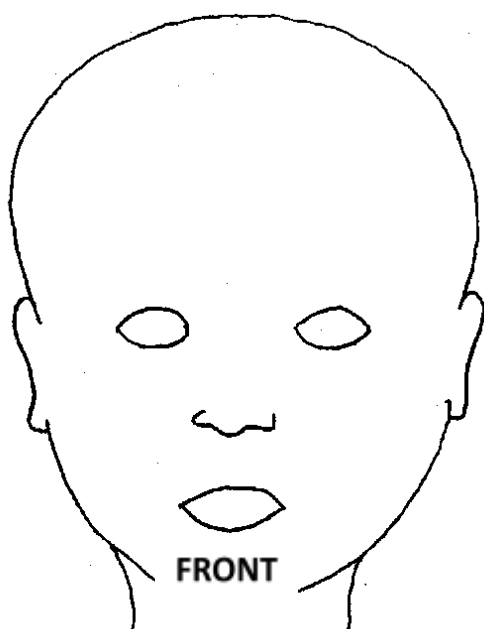
Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Name of Staff:		Date and time of observation:	



Signature
:

Date
:

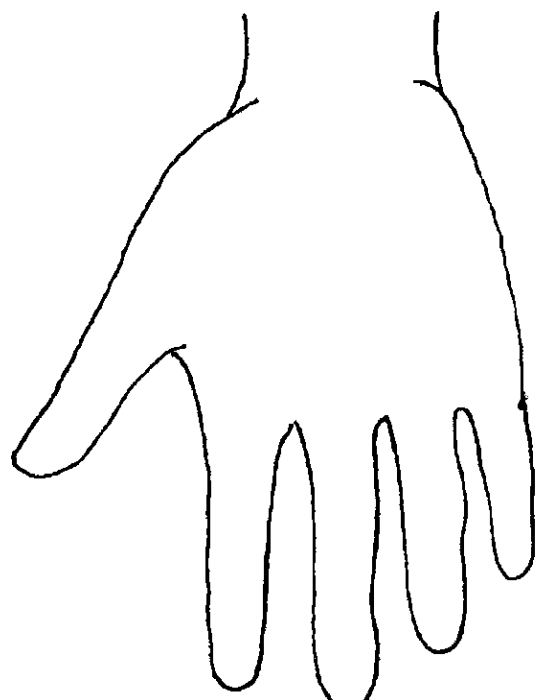
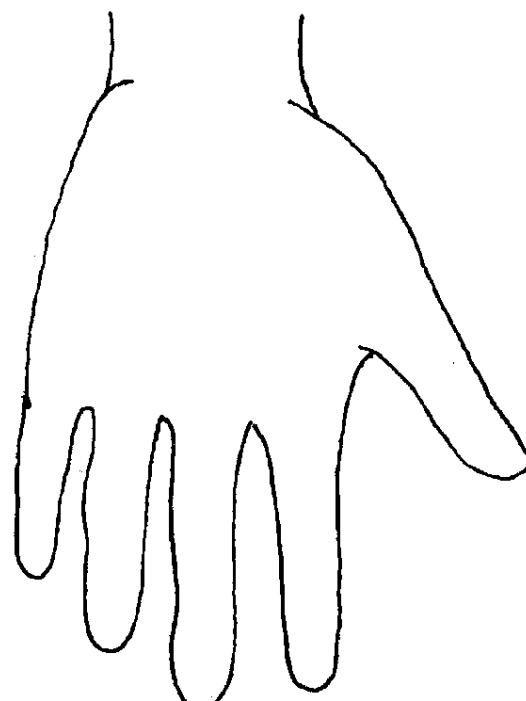
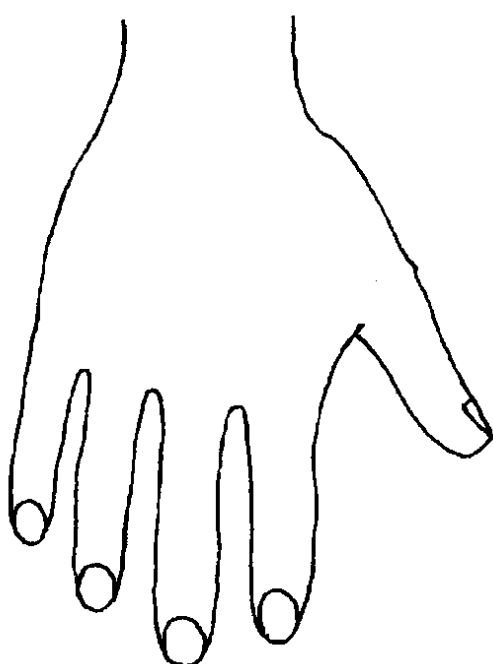
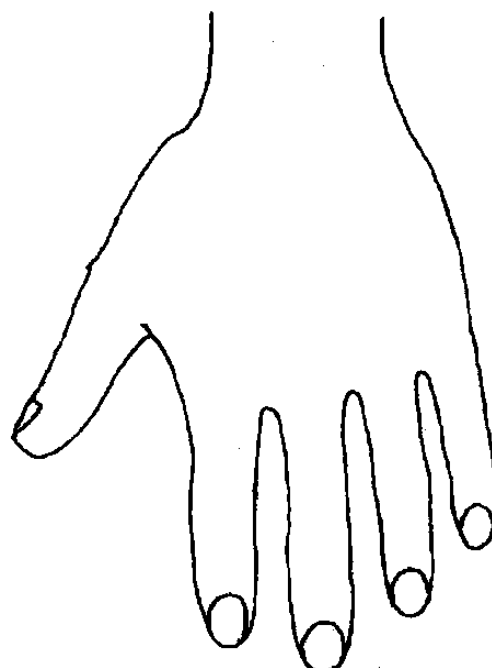
Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Name of Staff:		Date and time of observation:	



Signature
:

Date
:

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Name of Staff:		Date and time of observation:	

RIGHT**LEFT****PALM****RIGHT****LEFT****BACK**

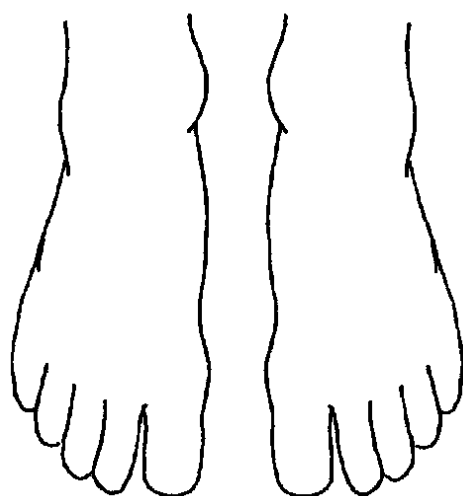
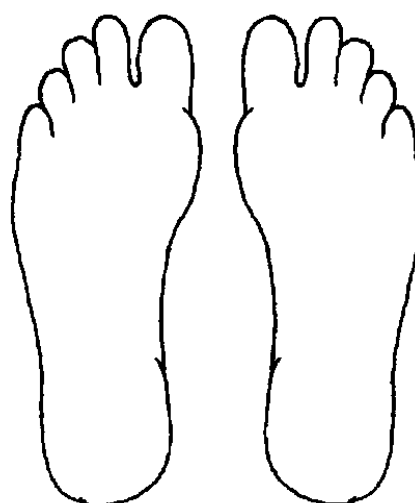
Signature

:

Date

:

Name of Pupil:		Date of Birth:	
Name of Staff:		Date and time of observation:	

TOP**RIGHT****LEFT****BOTTOM****RIGHT****LEFT****INNER****RIGHT****LEFT****OUTER**

Signature

:

Date

:

Appendix 4

Links

Children Act 1989 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review

Children Act 2004: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents

Education Act 2002: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175

London Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance: www.londoncp.co.uk

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2

Information Sharing:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice

Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation:

www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_sex_exploit_ch.html

Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Guide:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners

Sexting in School and Colleges:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

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Searching, Screening and Confiscation:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554415/searching_screening_confiscation_advice_Sept_2016.pdf

Female Genital Mutilation Statutory Guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation

Guidance Forced Marriage: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage

Looking After Someone Else's Child: www.gov.uk/looking-after-someone-elses-child

Protecting Children from Radicalisation: The Prevent Duty:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty

Educate Against Hate: [Educate against hate](http://Educate%20against%20hate)

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269764/role_and_responsibilities_of_the_designated_teacher_for_looked_after_children.pdf

AfC Virtual School: www.afcvirtuelschool.org.uk

Early Help Assessment: www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/early-help-assessment

Guidance for Safer Working Practice:

www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final1.pdf

London Child Protection Procedures: Allegations: www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/alleg_staff.html

Contextual Safeguarding:

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges