

## **NORWCH ROAD RUNNERS**

### **Safeguarding and Child Welfare Policy**

The purpose of Norwich Road Runners Safeguarding and Welfare Policy is to ensure that every child at our organisation is safe and protected from harm and all those involved know and understand their responsibilities in achieving this aim. Our policy applies to all children, club members, coaches, volunteers and visitors. In matters regarding Safeguarding, a child is someone who is under the age of 18. This means that someone running in the Senior club could be regarded, under Safeguarding law, as a child.

We will do this by

1. Appointing a Club and a Deputy Club Welfare Officer and providing their contact information and other immediate points of contact  
Club Welfare Officer - Beryl Knowles 07445 277684  
Deputy Club Welfare Officer - Alma Simmonds 07950 555467  
[welfare@norwichroadrunners.co.uk](mailto:welfare@norwichroadrunners.co.uk)

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) 0344 800 8020 is a useful source of advice for matters concerning safeguarding. All disclosures are reported to this service.

2. Adopting and acting on this policy and appendices which give

- a) Clear direction to coaches, club members, visitors, volunteers and parents about the expected behaviours, activities and procedures required to ensure that we meet our legal responsibilities to provide an environment where children feel safe and secure.

- b) Guidance on the recruitment and training of those involved in the club

- c) Information about different types of child abuse,

- d) Advice on how to deal with disclosures

- e) Details on the review and distribution of the policy

### **Key principles**

Norwich Road Runners is a well established, inclusive athletics club which caters for all runners from 7 year olds through to adulthood. All children, regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, have a right to be cared for, protected from all forms of harm and abuse and to participate in a sporting environment which is safe, and in which their rights, views and opinions are respected and their needs met. Children should get the help they need, when they need it, and their safety is paramount. Within our club, we believe that the welfare of children is the primary concern and the protection and well being of children in our care is everyone's responsibility. The best way to promote the well-being, health and development of a child is to work in partnership with the child, parents/careers and other relevant organisations.

Norwich Road Runners is affiliated to UKA and works within their guidelines. As such, we fully accept the responsibility to

Keep children and young people safe by valuing, listening to and respecting them,

Promote the well-being of children through opportunities to take part in athletics safely,

Put in place policies and procedures to promote the well-being and protection of children,

Recruit, train and support all staff and volunteers to prioritise the safety of children who take part in our activities.

### **Implementation of principles**

The club will agree to adopt and implement the guidelines and procedures relating to this policy and

Require all coaches and volunteers to read this policy yearly after it has been reviewed and updated if necessary. They will sign the agreed abbreviated version to say they have read and understood the policy.

Make this policy available on the club website so that all members and prospective members can read and abide by it.

Accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for safeguarding children's well-being and protecting them from harm and are prepared to respond to any concerns of abuse or poor practice.

Challenge and change poor practice.

Promote an environment where all concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal.

Ensure that everyone volunteering or working with children at the club completes a relevant Safeguarding training course as required by UK Athletics.

### **Putting principles into practice**

Norwich Road Runners will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel valued and secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any coach, volunteer or regular visitor to our organisation if they are worried or concerned about something.

All coaches, volunteers and regular visitors will, either through training or induction know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and how to manage this. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will do with whatever they have been told.

We will provide activities and opportunities that will equip our children with the skills they need to stay safe.

At all times we will work in partnership and try to establish effective working relationships with parents and carers, and colleagues from other agencies and organisations.

Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. This means everyone should be prepared to take action to report any concerns about their welfare.

## **Best Practice**

To provide everybody with the best possible experience and opportunities in athletics, it is important that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour through best practice.

Best Practice means:

- Being open and conducting all interactions with children in a public place and with appropriate consent;
- Avoiding situations where you are alone with one child;
- Never sharing a room on your own with a child;
- Challenging bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language, or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears;
- Never ignoring bullying by parents, coaches or children.
- Listening to and supporting the person being bullied;
- Maintaining an appropriate relationship with children; this means treating people fairly, with respect, and avoiding favouritism;
- Being friendly and open, and ensuring that relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust;
- Respecting all athletes and helping them to take responsibility for their own development and decision making;
- Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances, physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or disturbing to the athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and appropriate parental consent.
- Being qualified and insured for the activities you are coaching, and ensuring that your licence remains valid and in date. Ensuring that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the individual's welfare, it also protects you from possible wrongful allegations. Children very rarely make false allegations. If they do it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else's behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

Best practice in athletics benefits everyone—the sport's governing bodies, coaches and officials, teachers, parents, carers and athletes. Most importantly it ensures that children who choose to participate in athletics have a safe and fun experience.

## **Poor practice and areas for concern**

### **A practice concern.**

A practice concern is behaviour that falls short of abuse but may harm or put someone at risk of harm or has a negative effect on the safety and well-being of children. Practice concerns include any behaviour, actors of omission that may contravene this policy and codes of conduct. For example

Coaches leading activities for which they are not trained, licensed or insured

Coaches who continually break rules, ignore recognised good practice or breach terms of their UKA licence.

### **A well-being concern**

Although most children's needs are met by their parents/carers, taking part in sporting act can support and promote well-being. Coaches are therefore well placed to identify when a child's well-being and health is at risk or being adversely affected.

A well-being concern can be identified in different circumstances

A child may reveal that are worried, anxious or upset about an incident or set of circumstances, either within or outside of athletics

You may notice a change in a child's behaviour, demeanour or developmental progress

You may have concerns about the impact on a child of an incident or set of circumstances, either within or outside of the sport.

You may have concerns for a child's physical or mental health.

The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not perceived 'to be working hard enough';
- A coach using harassing and/or discriminatory language, such as 'you run like a girl';
- A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes;
- A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her
- A coach taking a group of children away to a weekend event on his/her own

If any of the following incidents occur you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident, and inform the Club Welfare Officer, who will contact the appropriate agency.

- If you accidentally hurt a child athlete;
- If a child appears distressed in any manner;

- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions;
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

### **Working together to safeguard children**

All reasonable steps will be taken, at all levels, to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with children.

When recruiting, Norwich Road Runners will be clear about:

- The responsibility of the role;
- The level of experience or coaching qualification(s) required;
- Obtaining and checking personal details of applicants
- Taking a positive stance on all aspects of welfare and safeguarding children.

### **Recruitment of volunteers and coaches/leaders**

If volunteers are required, each one needs to complete an application form, giving details of two referees. They also need to apply a DBS and complete an online Safeguarding Course, provided by UKA. Norwich Road Runners will meet any expenses incurred. Application forms are available at the club, and on the website. All volunteers must complete an application form that includes:

- Name and address;
- National Insurance Number to confirm identity and right to work
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken.
- Contact details for two referees. Where the applicant is to work with children at least one reference will be associated with former work with children or young people. Referees (not relatives) should provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, working with children, and permission to clarify information with these referees. Ideally one reference should be from paid employment or education and the other reference should be in a sporting capacity, ideally in a role similar to the one they are applying for. The Club Welfare Officer will take up a minimum of two written references.

Any person wanting to undertake a coaching/training course must be approved by either the Lead Junior coach or a Senior Coach and agreed on by the Committee. UK Athletics has mandatory online Safeguarding training as part of the training courses.

The Club Welfare Officer will keep a record of training and licensing dates.

When new coaches, volunteers or regular visitors join Norwich Road Runners, they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and who the Club Welfare Officer is and how to contact her. They will be given a copy of the abbreviated policy to read and coaches and volunteers will be asked to sign it.

Parents will also sign a consent form at the start of their involvement with Norwich Road Runners, which tells parents where they can read the Safeguarding and Child

Welfare Policy and includes any vital health or otherwise notable information. It also requests permission for photographs to be taken for promotional purposes only.

### **Responding to Disclosures and Reports of Abuse**

Concerns may arise in a number of ways and while it is not the responsibility of club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report the concerns.

It is our responsibility to pass on relevant information and it is the responsibility of the Local Authority and the Police to lead any investigation regarding safeguarding.

These concerns may arise due to:

- A direct disclosure of abuse to you;
- The behaviour of an adult towards a child
- A number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time

Any concerns must be reported to the Club Welfare Officer. Child protection and safeguarding referrals should be made by phone to the **Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021**.

The Club Welfare Officer (or whoever made the referral call) should keep a written record of conversations, including dates, times and who was spoken to, information shared and action agreed. No referral form is needed.

If the concerns relate to a coach/volunteer within the club, it will be necessary to take account of the Allegations against Staff Procedure. The first priority must be to ensure the immediate safety of the child and any other children affected and consider what supervision / risk assessments arrangements are required to safeguard the child. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, 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 that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Should an allegation be made against the Club's Welfare Officer, or if the Welfare Officer is implicated, then the incident must be reported to the LADO within 24 hours of the allegation being made. See [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org) for details of referral forms or phone **01603 223473**. Non-action is not an option in the protection of children and all staff have a duty to act. Failure to do so may be considered gross misconduct and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

### **Guidance on Responding to a Child**

**Think about where you are** – you might have to check on other children and make sure they are safe before you can respond. Although you will need a degree of privacy, do not listen to a child's disclosure in a completely private place – try to ensure other adults are present or at least nearby. Ensure that you protect yourself against misinterpretation or potential allegations.

Do not panic – react calmly so as not to frighten the child;

- Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult but they are right to confide in you
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame;
- Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying
- Be honest straight away and tell the child that you can not make promises that you will not be able to keep;

- Do not promise that you will keep the conversation a secret. Explain that in order to help them, you will have to involve other people and that you will need to write things down.
- Listen carefully to the child – take them seriously;
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show;
- Keep any questions to a minimum required for you to clarify the facts or words that you do not understand – do not speculate or make assumptions;
- Do not probe for any more information than is offered as this may affect any future investigations by statutory agencies;
- Encourage the child to use their own words;
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- At the end of the conversation, ensure that the child is either being collected or is capable of going home on their own
- Do not approach the alleged abuser.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Any information recorded will be kept in a separate named file, in a secure cabinet and not with the child's file. These files will be the responsibility of the Club Welfare Officer and information will only be shared within the organisation on a need to know basis for the protection of the child.

Any safeguarding information will be kept in the file and will be added to. Copies of referrals will be stored in the file. All information is confidential, however if there is a safeguarding or child protection concern about a child then information can be shared with other agencies, namely the Police or Children's Services. Reports of a concern to the Club Welfare Officer must be made in writing and signed and dated by the person with the concern.

#### **Adoption and review**

This policy was adopted by NRR Committee on March 6th 2023 and replaces previous Safeguarding and Welfare Policies. Minor adjustments were made on May 22nd, reflecting UKA Safeguarding training requirements.

It will be reviewed in March 2024 or sooner if legislation changes.

## **Additional material/appendices**

### **Types and Definitions of Abuse**

Abuse and neglect is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (via the internet) They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Child abuse can take many forms, but there are four main categories: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect. These categories are not mutually exclusive, for example, a child who is experienced physical abuse is undoubtedly experiencing emotional abuse as well.

**Physical abuse** occurs when someone causes physical harm or injury to a child. Examples may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child;
- Giving a child drugs or alcohol;
- Causing deliberate harm to a child;
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Most children sustain accidental cuts and bruises throughout childhood. An important indicator of physical abuse is when the injuries are not explained, the injury does not fit the explanation or the injury is on a part of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely to occur.

Physical abuse in a sport situation may be deemed to occur if the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's developmental stage. This includes instances where prohibited substances are used to delay the onset of puberty, control diet or enhance performance. Another example of abuse in sport is a coach physically punishing a child for performance. Signs which may raise concerns include

Refusal to discuss injuries

Reluctance to go home

Repeat injuries over time

Fear of parents being asked for explanations

Avoiding certain activities due to injuries

Avoiding the removal of warm up clothes during sessions.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. 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 forms of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Children of all ages can be emotionally abused in a number of ways, such as:

- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on them. 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.
- Making them feel worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Making their positive self-image entirely dependent on sporting achievement and success;
- Not giving the child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her or making fun of what he/she says or how he/she communicate;
- Acting in a way which undermines a children self-esteem

Emotional abuse may occur in sport if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure to consistently perform to high expectations. This may come from parents and coaches. The inappropriate use of availability of personal information or images can be distressing for a performer. Signs which may raise concerns include

Low self esteem

Running away from home

Extremes of passivity and aggression

Significant decline in concentration

Indiscriminate friendliness and neediness

Self harming

Bullying is deliberate, serious and hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can be verbal, written or physical and can include actions such as:

- Physical assaults;
- Name calling, sarcasm or racist taunts;
- Threats or gestures;
- Unwanted physical contact;
- Graffiti;
- Stealing or hiding personal items;
- Being ostracised or ignored.

Bullying can also occur via the internet, through blogging and social medial sites, and by phone, through text messaging.

The competitive nature of sport makes it an ideal environment for a bully, who could be:

- A parent who pushes his/her child too far;
- A coach who shouts at or humiliates a child;
- A child who actively seeks to make sport a difficult or unhappy experience for others.

We expect all volunteers and coaches to work together to prevent and reduce bullying by

Developing positive relationships among children, young people and parents/carers to prevent and deal with bullying.

Building capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people through a range of strategies and approaches

Supporting children and young people who are affected by bullying.

**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 and whether or not the child has consented or assented. The activities may involve

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or sexual intercourse)
- Non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non contact activities such as involving a child in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways (photos, videos)
- Showing a child pornographic material (photos, videos, magazines) or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.
- Sexual intercourse/sexual activity with a child under 16

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. It is not only perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

There are situations where the potential for this form of abuse exists:

- Some individuals deliberately target sports activities to gain access to and abuse children;
- Some individuals have ignored codes of practice and used physical contact within a coaching situation to mask inappropriate touching of children;
- Some coaches consider it an acceptable part of the sport's culture to have a sexual relationship with the children they teach;
- Some people have used sporting events to take inappropriate photos or videos of children in vulnerable positions.
- Some people have used involvement in sports clubs as a method of 'grooming' children.

The term 'grooming' refers to the way in which sexual abusers (or potential abusers) manipulate targeted victims, professional carers, colleagues and their environment. Grooming behaviours may appear to be positive, providing a particular child or group with extra attention or the individual making him/herself highly thought of and indispensable within a club. The plausibility of the individuals concerned often makes it difficult for others to identify their real motivation. However, they will also ignore, undermine or resist the application of best practice and other safeguarding guidelines. Concerns about an adult's behaviour should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer. Signs which may raise concerns about sexual abuse include

Lack of trust in adults , over familiarity with adults or fear of a particular adult  
Sleep disturbances  
Girls taking over mothering role  
Resistance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes  
Drug or alcohol abuse  
Eating disorders  
Social isolation  
Running away from home  
School problems  
Low self esteem  
Sexual knowledge beyond the child's age  
Sexual promiscuity/over sexualised behaviour  
Anxiety/depression

**Neglect** occurs when adults fail persistently to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and is 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. Neglect may involve a parent or carer:

- Failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs resulting in a child's failure to thrive.

Neglect in a sports situation could include a coach failing to ensure a pitch is suitable to train on, or exposing children to extreme temperature during a training session.

Signs to indicate neglect may include

Constant hunger, tiredness  
Untreated medical problems  
Poor relationship with peers  
Poor personal hygiene, clothing  
Being late or not attending sessions  
Low self-esteem  
Stealing

Disabled children are vulnerable to abuse and are at least three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. Those working with them must be aware of this and willing to acknowledge their concerns. There can be a tendency to make allowances for families with sick or disabled children. Practitioners may over-identify with the child's parents/carers and be reluctant to accept that abuse or neglect is taking or has taken place, or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child. When suspecting abuse, practitioners should always ask: "Would this be acceptable if the child were not disabled?"