

Elite SF Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy



PART 1: Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Procedures

Introduction

Elite SF is dedicated to the support, development, and promotion of high-quality care and education for the benefit of our children, families, and community. We are committed to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare through building a safe organisational culture.

All coaches, students, and volunteers have a responsibility for safeguarding children, being vigilant, and identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns, in line with this and supporting policies.

We ensure all coaches, students, and volunteers have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties and are confident to implement these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis. This is achieved through recruitment and induction processes and by offering ongoing training and support to all coaches, appropriate to their specific role, in line with Ofsted.

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains in line with statutory guidance. Its effectiveness is monitored through staff and stakeholder reviews, appraisals, and feedback.

It is the responsibility of every coach, student, and volunteer to report any breaches of this policy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Policy Intention

This policy makes it clear that all coaches, students, and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people and to protect them from harm. It aims to raise awareness of how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides procedures should a child protection issue arise.

This policy applies to all children up to the age of 18 years, whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy, is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise family network through a kinship care arrangement, wherever possible and in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework

Child protection is an integral part of safeguarding children and promoting their overall welfare. It is defined as:

- The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Our Approach to Safeguarding

To safeguard children and promote their welfare, we will:

- Develop a safe organisational culture where coaches are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Ensure all coaches are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, including softer signs, and know what action to take
- Understand and be sensitive to factors including economic, social, and ethnic circumstances which can impact children and families
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate

We promote:

- Always listening to children
- Positive images of children
- Children developing independence and autonomy appropriate for their age and stage of development
- Safe and secure environments for children
- Tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures, and communities

- British values
- Providing intervention and help for children and families in need

We have a duty to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

If in doubt about what constitutes a safeguarding concern, refer to the DSL. **If there is a concern, never do nothing — always do something, including sharing information with any relevant agencies. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.**

Elite SF Safeguarding Aims

Elite SF aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do, providing sensitive interactions that develop and build children's well-being, confidence, and resilience
- Support children to develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, healthy, and develop positive relationships
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with SEND, isolated families, and vulnerabilities including the trio of ACEs
- Ensure that all coaches feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, maintaining professional curiosity
- Ensure that all coaches are trained at least every two years, with regular updates on local and national procedures
- Make child protection referrals in a timely manner
- Share information only with those who need to know
- Identify, minimise, and manage risks while caring for children
- Follow clear whistleblowing procedures regarding poor or unsafe practices or allegations of serious harm
- Ensure parents are aware of safeguarding policies when registering and informed of updates
- Regularly review and update the policy to comply with legal requirements and local guidance

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL Responsibilities:

- Overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection policies
- Coordination of training for coaches
- Always at least one designated person on duty
- Update knowledge at least annually and training at least every two years
- Support ongoing development and knowledge of the staff team

DSL Team:

- Jack Bartram - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Dempsey Thomas - Deputy DSL
- Leon Brown - Deputy DSL
- Joshua Standen - Deputy DSL
- Ellie Knight - Deputy DSL

Role of the DSL:

- Monitor and update policy in line with legislation
- Act as a source of support, advice, and expertise
- Maintain detailed, accurate, secure written records
- Consult with statutory child protection agencies and regulatory bodies
- Make formal referrals as required

The DSL does not investigate abuse; investigations are for appropriate authorities.

Low-Level Concerns

A **low-level concern** is any concern, no matter how small, about an adult's behaviour inconsistent with the coach Code of Conduct, or a 'nagging doubt' that does not meet the harm threshold.

- All concerns must be shared with the DSL
- coaches are encouraged to self-report if their behaviour falls below expected standards
- DSL determines whether behaviour:
 - Meets or may meet the harm threshold

- Constitutes a low-level concern
- Is appropriate and consistent with the law and policy

Records of low-level concerns are confidential and held securely. They will be retained at least until the individual no longer works with Elite SF.

Monitoring Children's Attendance

- Follow up absences in a timely manner (Attendance Policy)
- Parents should inform Elite SF of no attendance prior to sessions.
- Contact parents if a child has not arrived within one hour of normal start time for Holiday Camps
- Contact the administrator of the venue if a child has not arrived upon register in schools and preschools
- Contact authorities if child's safety is in doubt

Informing Parents

- Parents are normally first point of contact
- Exceptions occur if the parent is likely abuser or child may be endangered
- Investigating officers inform parents in such cases

Support to Families

- Build trusting and supportive relationships
- Continue to welcome children while abuse enquiries are ongoing
- Families treated respectfully and non-judgmentally

Confidentiality

- Must not override children's right to protection
- Sensitive information shared only when appropriate
- Coaches must not comment publicly or privately on alleged abuse

Record Keeping and Data Protection

- Confidential records shared only if appropriate
- Early identification of children/families requiring help
- Records kept chronologically, reviewed regularly by DSL
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy applied

PART 2: Definitions of Abuse

Significant Harm

- Threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life
- Consider: severity, extent, frequency, and impact of abuse
- Can be single traumatic events or a combination of long-standing events

Abuse and Neglect

- Abuse: inflicting harm
- Neglect: failing to prevent harm
- Can occur in family, institution, or community
- Perpetrators: adults or children

Signs and indicators:

- Failure to thrive, unexplained injuries, behavioural changes, unaddressed illness
- Softer signs (NICE): fear, withdrawal, low self-esteem, aggression, indiscriminate contact, excessive clinginess

Child on Child Abuse

- Bullying, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Reporting remains the same as other safeguarding concerns

Physical Abuse

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)

- Parent fabricates or induces illness
- Encourages child to appear disabled or ill
- Form of physical abuse

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Injury to female genital organs without medical reason
- Can occur shortly after birth, during childhood, adolescence, or first pregnancy
- Mandatory duty to report to police if under 18

Breast Ironing / Flattening

- Ironing, massaging, or pounding young girls' breasts to delay development
- Causes physical and psychological harm

Emotional Abuse

- Persistent emotional maltreatment
- Examples: conveying child is worthless, silencing, age-inappropriate expectations, bullying, witnessing domestic abuse

Sexual Abuse

- Forcing or enticing child into sexual activity
- Can be physical or non-contact, including online
- Adult males, females, or other children can be perpetrators

Signs include: emotional and physical indicators, inappropriate sexual behaviour, regression, anxiety, withdrawal, changes in appetite

Neglect

- Persistent failure to meet child's basic physical and psychological needs
- Can occur pre-birth via maternal substance abuse

- Signs: poor hygiene, inadequate food/clothing, unaddressed illness, unmet emotional needs

Domestic Abuse

- Physical, sexual, violent, controlling, economic, psychological or emotional abuse
- Children witnessing abuse are also affected
- Coach disclosures respected but child protection takes priority

Contextual Safeguarding

- Vulnerability to abuse outside family: school, peers, community, online
- Collaboration with parents and agencies required

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- Exploitation through imbalance of power for sexual or criminal activity
- Can be physical, online, or via trafficking

Signs: physical injuries, gifts/money unexplained, mood changes, secretive behaviour, running away, involvement in drugs/alcohol, gang association

County Lines

- Gangs exporting drugs to smaller towns
- Victims coerced via intimidation, violence, sexual exploitation

Signs: changes in dress, missing from school, anti-social behaviour, unexplained money, injuries

Cuckooing

- Exploitation using vulnerable person's home for criminal activity

Signs: increase of unknown visitors, vehicles, secretive behaviour, substance misuse

Child Trafficking & Modern Slavery

- Recruitment, transport, harbouring for exploitation, forced labour, sexual exploitation

Signs: control over child, few belongings, unsuited clothing, restricted movement, fear or abuse

Forced Marriage

- Marriage without consent
- Coercion includes physical, psychological, financial, sexual, emotional pressure

Honour-Based Abuse (HBA)

- Abuse to protect family/community 'honour' (FGM, forced marriage, breast ironing)

Signs: changes in dress, visible injuries, depression, frequent absences, restrictions on social activity

Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB)

- Abuse due to belief in witchcraft, spirits, rituals, magic

Extremism & Radicalisation

- Prevent Duty: protect children from extremist ideology
- Radicalisation includes grooming, exploitation, psychological manipulation, exposure to violent material

Online Safety

- Risks: content, contact, conduct, commerce
- Concerns reported to DSL, CEOP, or IWF

Up-skirting / Down-blousing

- Criminal offences involving taking intimate images without consent

PART 3: Reporting Procedures

3. Responding to a Child Disclosure

If a child discloses abuse or any safeguarding concern, coaches must follow the below procedure:

3.1 Immediate Response

Coaches must:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Allow the child to speak freely without interruption
- Never ask leading or investigative questions
- Use open prompts such as “Tell me what happened”
- Reassure the child that they are being taken seriously
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Explain that the information may need to be shared to keep them safe

3.2 Recording the Disclosure

As soon as possible after the disclosure, the coach must:

- Write down exactly what was said using the child’s own words where possible
- Include date, time, location, and context
- Record any visible injuries or behaviours observed
- Sign and date the record

Records must be factual, not opinion based.

3.3 Immediate Action

The Coach must immediately report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

If the child is in immediate danger:

- Call 999 without delay
- Follow emergency procedures

3.4 Referral to Integrated Front Door / Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Where a child is identified as at risk of significant harm, the DSL will make a referral to the local authority safeguarding team via the Integrated Front Door (IFD) / MASH service.

The DSL will:

- Provide a clear written account of concerns
- Share relevant information proportionately
- Follow local threshold guidance for intervention
- Record all decisions and actions taken

Referral will be made without delay where risk is identified.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

- Report safeguarding allegations to DSL
- Concerns may also be reported anonymously to Local Authority, NSPCC, Police, or Ofsted

Allegations Against Coaches

- Harm, criminal offence, or risk of harm
- Confidentiality maintained
- If necessary, after investigation from the DSL contact LADO
- Founded allegations: gross misconduct, possible dismissal, DBS notification
- Unfounded allegations: rights reinstated, return to work plan provided

If an allegation is made about a coach, volunteer, or any adult working with children, this must be treated with the highest level of seriousness.

5.1 Immediate Action

The coach receiving the allegation must:

- Report immediately to the DSL
- Not investigate or question the allegation
- Not inform the accused person unless instructed by the DSL or LADO

5.2 Referral to LADO

The DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay if the allegation meets any of the following criteria:

- The adult may have harmed a child
- The adult may have committed a criminal offence against a child
- The adult may have behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children

The DSL will:

- Follow LADO guidance and procedures exactly
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Work with HR/management regarding suspension or risk management if required

Support for Coaches

- DSL provides support and counselling
- Coaches may speak confidentially to DSL regarding safeguarding concerns

Reporting Procedure

Coach Role:

1. Contact DSL immediately (verbal conversation)
2. Write an objective report (child's name, DOB, details, observations, signatures)
3. Escalate if concern not taken seriously
4. Inform owner/manager if allegation against coach
5. Follow up with Local Authority if no response
6. Review safeguarding procedures
 - Anonymous concerns treated as valid
 - Malicious calls still investigated

PART 4: Recruitment, Selection, Induction, and Training

Recruitment & Selection

- Safe recruitment procedures to prevent unsuitable Coaches

- References, identity verification, DBS checks
- Suitability determined via clear criteria

Induction & Probation

- Basic training on safeguarding policies
- All training completed by end of 6 months
- Coaches expected to keep knowledge up to date

Learners on Placement

- Sign up to policy
- Receive child protection training
- Risk assessments completed for safety

Responding to Disclosures

- Stay calm, listen, reassure child, record verbatim
- Record date, time, names, and follow procedures

Recording in the Community

- Record child details, observation, injuries, witnesses
- Share with DSL or manager
- Cooperate with relevant agencies

Legal Framework

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended)
- Freedom of Information Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Acts 1989 & 2004
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Data Protection Acts 1984, 1998, 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Police Act 1997
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Useful Contacts

Setting	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead	07530 062988
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01234 276 693
Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership	01234 718 700
Ofsted (England)	0300 123 1231
Emergency Police	999
Non-emergency Police	101
CEOP	Online contact only
DfE Counter-Extremism Helpline	020 7340 7264
Anti-terrorist Hotline	0800 789 321
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Kidscape	020 7823 5430

Setting	Contact
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Modern Slavery Helpline	08000 121 700
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
IWF	01223 203030
ICO	0303 123 1113

Acknowledgement and Acceptance (BrightHR)

All self-employed coaches and contractors engaged by Elite SF are required to read and acknowledge this Policy Breach Procedure, along with all associated policies, via the BrightHR system (or equivalent compliance platform used by the business).

Acknowledgement via BrightHR constitutes confirmation that the individual:

- **Has read and understood the contents of this procedure**
- **Agrees to adhere to all company policies and standards**
- **Understands the consequences of policy breaches as outlined**

Failure to complete policy acknowledgement may result in:

- **Suspension of work allocation**
- **Removal from scheduled sessions until compliance is confirmed**

The business reserves the right to rely on digital acknowledgement records as evidence of acceptance of terms and expectations.

Adopted on: 29th December 2025

Signed on behalf of Elite SF: J. Bartram

Date for review: 29th December 2026