

Cornish Sharks Academy of American Football



Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Reviewed November 2012



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**PLEASE NOTE THAT WHERE "CHILD" OR "CHILDREN" OR "YOUNG PERSONS" ARE MENTIONED
IT REFERS TO ALL CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS & VULNERABLE ADULTS.
TEAMS AFFILIATED TO THE CORNISH SHARKS ACADEMY ADOPT THE WELFARE POLICY OF THE ACADEMY.**

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1. Introduction

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and young people and vulnerable adults must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult is paramount;
- All children/young people/vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in the Academy teams have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working within the Academy are bound to the terms of this policy.

2. Policy statement

- The Academy has a duty of care to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in the club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The Academy will ensure the safety and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in the Clubs through adherence to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection guidelines adopted by the Clubs.

3. Policy aims

The aim of the Academy Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Academy;
- Allowing all staff / volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

4. Promoting Good Practice with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

a. Introduction

- Abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, work and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young and vulnerable people and be an important link in identifying cases where a person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a new individual enters the club having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the individual's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the individual receives the required support.

b. Good Practice Guidelines

- All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within football:



Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all children, young people, vulnerable or disabled adults equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young or vulnerable person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process.
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female member of staff should always accompany them. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and vulnerable adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.



c. Practice to be avoided

- The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

d. Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Share a room with a child;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to individuals, even in fun;
- Reduce an individual to tears as a form of bullying/control;
- Verbally or physically abuse an individual;
- Allow allegations made by an individual to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, that they can do for themselves;
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

NB. *It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.*

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a player.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.



5. Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and vulnerable sportspeople in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all clubs be vigilant with any concerns to be reported to the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

Videoining as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, athletes and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

6. Recruitment – Selecting & Training Staff, Coaches & Volunteers

The Academy recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking pre selection checks the following should be included:

- All volunteers /staff should complete an application form. The application form will include information about applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record. (Appendix A).
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau (introduced in September 2001).
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (Passport or driving licence with Photo).
- All new staff, coaches and volunteers will undergo an initial induction which will include an introduction to the Academy Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and training in its implementation. Training records will be maintained and held in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

7. Responding to Suspicions or Allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the Academy, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Academy will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

a. Poor Practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant welfare officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.



b. Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Child & Vulnerable Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Club Child & Vulnerable Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- If the Club Child & Vulnerable Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Cornwall Sports Partnership Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

c. Confidentiality

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

- The Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer;
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation;
- Social services/police;
- The Cornwall Sports Partnership Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).*

* *Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).*

d. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The relevant Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Academy Club's Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Academy Club Disciplinary committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

e. Support to Deal with the Aftermath

Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of Help Lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association of Counselling Directory (The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788562189, E-mail: bac@bac.co.uk, Internet: www.bac.co.uk) may be a useful resource.

Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.



8. Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer should be informed. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

9. Action if Bullying is Suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out in the Section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

a. Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying in Sport

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

b. Action Towards the Bully(ies)

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully (ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the coach of the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Remember:

- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Ensure the Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer follows up with social services.
- The Club Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer should also consider reporting the incident to the governing body.



10. Reporting / Recording Process

- The first point of contact within the Academy for any child protection/welfare issue will be the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officers:

Cornish Sharks - Steve Marshall Tel: 01637 852615 Mob: 07870 288275

- If there is a requirement for immediate action, for example a disclosure by a child / young person of ongoing abuse, and the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer is unavailable, staff and coaches will be empowered to contact police and social services direct.
- All Child Protection issues/incidents will be reported to the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer as soon as is practicable and recorded on a Recording Form (Appendix B) and submitted to the same within 72 hours.



11. Useful Contact Numbers

Local Area Children, Young People and Families Service Offices Contact Details

Penzance Office (Penwith)

Roscadghill Parc
Heamoor
Penzance, TR18 3QOX
(01736) 365714

Camborne Office (Kerrier)

The White House
24 Basset Road
Camborne, TR14 8SL
(01209) 714721

Liskeard Office (Caradon)

Westbourne House
West Street
Liskeard, PL14 6BY
(01579) 342919

St Austell Office (Restormel)

Penwinnick House
Trewiddle Road
St Austell, PL25 5BZ
(01726) 63582

Bodmin Office (N.Cornwall)

Priory House
Priory Road
Bodmin, PL31 2AD
(01208) 74491

Truro Office (Carrick)

Cathedral Close
Truro, TR1 2TE
(01872) 278 533

Launceston Office (N.Cornwall)

Hendra House
Dunheved Road
Launceston, PL15 7JG
(01566) 773750

Out of Hours Service

(01208) 25130
St. Lawrence's Hospital

Safeguarding Unit (Child Protection)

Contact Details
Pendragon House
Gloweth
Truro, TR1 3LS
(01872) 254549 / 254552

Multi Professional Team available to give advice, support and guidance on all Child Protection matters

Children, Young People and Families

HQ

New County Hall
Truro, TR1 3AY
(01872) 322 000

Further Useful Contact Details

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary Contact Details

Police Central Telephone Number:
0845 2777444

Family Protection Unit Contact Details

Family Protection Unit Family Protection Unit

(01209) 613083
(01209) 613082 answer phone
(01726) 222484

Family Protection Unit

Area 1 – North Cornwall
2/4 Moorland Road
Launceston, PL15 7HY
(01566) 771329 (Main Office)
(01566) 771326

Further useful sources of information:

NSPCC CPSU Tel: 0116 234 7200

(Child Protection in Sport Unit) Web: www.sportprotects.org.uk

NSPCC 24hrs Tel: 0808 800 5000

(National Society for Protection & Cruelty to Children)

Childline UK Tel: 0800 1111

www.advocateweb.org

LSCBS Details

<http://www.cornwallchildprotection.org.uk/>