

# **DOLPHIN ACADEMY**

## **Child and Adults at Risk Protection Policy**



**February 2024**

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### **DEFINITIONS**

**Adult at Risk (Previously known as Vulnerable Adult):**

Most recent thinking, including that of the Law Commission who reported in May 2011, is that it would be preferable to refer to “adults at risk”. This reflects the preference of people with disabilities that the emphasis should be on the circumstances adults find themselves in, rather than on the individual’s disability, which may or may not in itself make them “vulnerable”.

The Department of Health (2000) defines a vulnerable adult as a person who:

- is aged 18 years or over;
- may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness;
- is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**Child maltreatment** includes neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and fabricated or induced illness.

**Abuse:** Any act or failure to act, which results in a significant breach of a vulnerable person's human rights, civil liberties, bodily integrity, dignity, or general well-being, whether intended or inadvertent, including sexual relationships or financial transactions to which a person has not or cannot validly consent or which are deliberately exploitative.

(Safeguarding Adults and Children with Disabilities against abuse: Council of Europe 2002)

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Dolphin Academy has a duty to provide children and adults at risk with appropriate safety and protection. As the welfare of the child/adults at risk is paramount, we are committed to providing safe equipment and facilities so that children/adults at risk may participate in courses/programmes in a secure environment.

Additionally, we promote ethical behaviour, providing children/adults at risk with a sense of being valued. On this basis, we aim to ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed, to establish the suitability of personnel to work with children and/or adults at risk.

It is ultimately the responsibility of Dolphin Academy to ensure that this policy is published and accessible to all staff, volunteers, swimmers and any relevant third parties. Dolphin Academy are responsible for ensuring this information is fully understood by

their team of staff and volunteers and by the swimmers who use the pool.

To provide safety, protection, and security to children/vulnerable adults throughout our operations, we will adhere to our child/vulnerable adult protection policy/statement and aim to:

- Protect all children and adults at risk from abuse, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, or sexuality
- Raise awareness of child and vulnerable adult protection issues and promote good practice.
- Conduct risk assessments to minimise potential hazards to children's and vulnerable adults' welfare.
- Provide support to learners who have been abused and act proactively by preventing any similar incidents through risk assessment.
- Ensure all personnel fully understand their responsibilities and are provided with the appropriate training/regular updates of the legislation.

In achieving our policy aims and being proactive, we have developed procedures related to the recruitment of staff and volunteers (see STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT) and how allegations of child/vulnerable adult abuse should be dealt with. Considering this, we implement safe recruitment practices, in checking the suitability of personnel to work with children and vulnerable adults. In addition, we have identified GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES for all personnel to follow. These are detailed below.

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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 the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people or adults at risk in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.


When a child or adult at risk enters the swimming pool having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, Dolphin Academy can play a role in improving their self-esteem. In such instances, Dolphin Academy must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure they receive the required support.

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

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication. This includes digital environments and means we do not engage in

one-to-one emails, texts, Messenger or other private digital communications with children, young people, and adults at risk.

- Treating all children, young people, and adults at risk equally with respect and dignity.
  - Always putting the welfare of each child/young person/adult at risk first.
  - Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children, young people, and adults at risk (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with them or to share a room/changing room with them, nor should DA staff give medication or apply sunscreen to children, young people or adults at risk unless written permission has been provided by their parent or carer).
  - Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering all to share in decision making.
  - Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
  - Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child/ adult at risk is constantly moving, they should always be consulted, and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and when working with children their views should always be carefully considered.
  - Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications, and insurance.
  - Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for children/adults at risk in their care in the changing rooms. If groups must be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches, or officials work in pairs.
  - Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking, using e-cigarettes, or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people.
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- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children, young people, and adults at risk – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental or carer consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer 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.


### **Practices to be avoided:**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/carer fails to arrive to pick a child/adult at risk up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of Dolphin Academy or the adult at risk's carer or child's parents/carers.

Otherwise, avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

### **Practices 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.
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- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, young person, or adult at risk even in fun.
- Reduce anyone to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child, young person or adult at risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children, young people, or adults at risk that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children or young persons 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, 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 participants 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/adult at risk to carry out activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded:**

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 child, young person, or adult at risk.
  - If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
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- If a child, young person, or adult at risk appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

If you have concerns that you feel need addressing urgently, in the first instance:

- Contact the Dolphin Academy Protection and Welfare Officer at [safeguarding@dolphinacademy.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@dolphinacademy.co.uk).
- If they are unavailable, please contact MASH (Oldham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 0161 770 7777; [child.mash@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:child.mash@oldham.gov.uk) or [adult.mash@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:adult.mash@oldham.gov.uk), for advice.

### **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 children, young people, or adults at risk in vulnerable positions. Volunteers, Lifeguards and Staff should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Child/Adults at risk Protection Officer.

Dolphin Academy prohibits the use of video or cameras on the pool site. Filming/photography may be permissible in certain circumstances and only with the written consent of parents/guardians of children, young people and adults at risk and the pool manager.



# STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

## Summary

Where applicants will take significant responsibility for safeguarding children during activities at Dolphin Academy, they will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Staff and Volunteers are selected on their suitability to meet the job/role-related requirements and responsibilities and their ability to demonstrate that they can work safely with children and/or adults at risk. Arrangements are made for induction and any relevant training, which includes clarification of activity requirements, responsibilities and child/adult at risk protection procedures and further identification of training needs. Dolphin Academy will also make checks with the DBS in relation to any criminal record held on an applicant.

Awareness of children/adults at risk protection practice will continue to be addressed via ongoing training. All members of personnel who work with children and adults at risk are required to adhere to this policy.

Allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with as soon as practicable, in line with the Child/Adults at risk protection policy.

The Child/Adults at risk Protection Officer is also responsible for conducting any investigation and demonstrating the results if abuse is suspected to be committed by a member of staff. Throughout this procedure, records will be maintained and kept securely and confidentially.

## **Procedures**

Dolphin Academy recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children, young people, and adults at risk in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with them.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Evidence of identity should be provided in line with DBS guidelines (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo).


## **Interview and induction**

All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child/adults at risk protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.


## **Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
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- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Work safely and effectively with children, young people and adults at risk.

**Dolphin Academy requires:**

- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete an awareness training on the protection of children/adults at risk.
  - Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child, young person, or adults at risk.
  - Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training.
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## RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Dolphin Academy in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Dolphin Academy will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child, young person or adult at risk.

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

- a criminal investigation
- a child/adult at risk protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

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


### **Action**

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child/Adults at risk Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant officer, who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

### **Concerns about suspected abuse:**


- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Child/Adults at Risk 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 Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer will seek advice from Oldham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: 0161 770 7777, and if appropriate, refer the allegation to the social services department, which 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 MASH or the social services department.
  - The Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer should also notify the relevant Dolphin Academy member who will deal with any media enquiries.
  - If the Child /Adults at Risk Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to George Harrington, who will refer the allegation to MASH or social services.
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## **Concerns outside the immediate pool environment (e.g. a parent or carer):**

- Report your concerns to the Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer, who should contact MASH or social services or the police as soon as possible.
- See below for the information MASH or social services or the police will need.
- If the Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact MASH or social services or the police immediately.
- MASH or social services and the Child /Adults at Risk Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.

## **Information for MASH, or social services, or the police about suspected abuse:**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The adult at risk/child's name, age, and date of birth of the child.
  - The adult at risk/child's home address and telephone number.
  - Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
  - The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors, and other relevant information.
  - Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.
  - A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
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- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The adult at risk/child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the carers/parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the adult at risk/child was not the person who reported the incident, has the adult at risk/ child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details Where possible referral to MASH or the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague or partner, you can contact MASH or social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

## **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 Child/Adults at risk Protection Officer;
  - the parents or carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
  - the person making the allegation;
  - social services/police;
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- the alleged abuser (and parents/carer if the alleged abuser is a child/adult at risk).

Seek MASH or social services advice on who should approach the 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).

### **Internal enquiries and suspension**

Dolphin Academy's Child/Adults at Risk Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, Dolphin Academy will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can 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, Dolphin Academy 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 the child/adult at risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.

### **Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, young people, adults at risk, parents, volunteers, and members of



staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Website: www.bacp.co.uk.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made sometime 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, Dolphin Academy should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to MASH or the social services or the police. 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.

## **Declaration**

We at Dolphin Academy declare that we will oversee the implementation of the Child/Adults at Risk Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Child/Adult at Risk Protection Officer:** Hannah Parkin

**Date:** 01/02/24

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