York City Gymnastic Foundation (YCGF)

YORK CITY GYMNASTICS

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Contact List

YCGF Trustees		committee@ycgf.org.uk
Welfare Officers	Refer to Website or Gymnastics Centre Notice Board for current list of welfare officers	welfare@ycgf.org.uk
British Gymnastics Yorkshire Welfare Officer	Helen Monks	07811382153 yorkshire.rwo@british-gymnastics.org
British Gymnastics Welfare Officer	Helen Murphy	07860844160 Helen.murphy@british-gymnastics.org
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	LADO York City Council	Tel: 01904 551783 lado@york.gov.uk
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a multi-agency single point of contact for all concerns about children and to make sure that children receive the right level of support.	Tel: 01904 551900 Out of hours emergency team: 0300 131 2131 mash@york.gov.uk

York City Gymnastics Foundation is fully committed to the safeguarding and protection of all members. The welfare of every YCGF member is paramount and we recognise our responsibility to provide a safe and enjoyable environment where children can learn gymnastics without the risk of harm, abuse or exploitation.

Policy Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who is involved at YCGF has a responsibility for keeping every child safe, irrespective of their role at the club.

There is a risk that children may be harmed in any environment, including the home, at school or in a sports club. Due to the nature of gymnastics, we acknowledge that gymnastics provides significant access to children and young people and can provide opportunities for an individual to cause harm to children. It is however also recognised that individuals who have regular contact with young people play a key role in promoting their welfare and identifying early signs of abuse. It is therefore essential that individuals who have contact with children and young people are fully aware of the early signs of abuse and/or neglect and understand the appropriate steps to report these concerns.

In addition, it is important to be aware that some children may be more vulnerable than others. These may include disabled children with specific additional needs, children with special educational needs and children training at a high performance level within the sport.

We are fully committed to providing support, information and training opportunities to make certain that individuals understand their role and responsibilities and fully understand the risk factors linked to abuse within the sport.

We strive to create a fun and safe learning environment where all children can develop and achieve their potential in the sport. We recognise that as a club, as well as all members of the YCGF have a '**duty of care**' towards all members and will ensure that high standards are met with best practice being followed at all times when working with children.

Key Principles

This Policy is based upon the following fundamental principles:

- The welfare of children (anyone under the age of 18 years) is paramount and vulnerable adults
- All children, regardless of ability, age, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, race, religion or belief or socio/economic background have a right to be protected from abuse
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility: every individual as well as the club officials must play their part in ensuring the sport is safe
- Maintaining a child-centred approach: keep the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families and other agencies if necessary. Gymnastics provision will better meet the needs of children if it is informed by a clear understanding of the needs and views of children

The key objectives of the policy are as follows:

- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding
- To ensure everyone who comes into contact with children can recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- To promote positive practice and challenge poor practice
- To ensure robust systems are in place to manage any concerns or allegations
- To develop a skilled and competent safeguarding workforce
- To ensure everyone who is involved in a role with children completes training at a level appropriate to their role in the sport, which covers the above areas
- To ensure everyone who is involved in a role with children has been through appropriate pre-recruitment checks, including the appropriate level criminal record checks and personal references
- To ensure each person coaching children in the club coaches skills within their syllabus

A copy of the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures document will be made available to all staff on induction.

For the purpose of this policy 'staff' refers not only to paid staff but to all adults who regularly work in the centre – in particular this includes trustees, placement students and regular volunteers, regardless of their role.

Guidance/Legislation

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' provides the overall framework on which this policy is based. The guidance highlights the need for organisations working together, to take a coordinated approach to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements, the important role played by voluntary organisations and private sector providers in the delivery of services to children and expects such organisations to put in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Working Together also highlights that both the paid and voluntary workforce need to be aware of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the Police if necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

YCGF Trustees/committee

The committee are accountable for the policies and procedures YCGF has in place. This includes ensuring that the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures are in line with the government guidance and that of the National governing body. The policy document is available publicly.

YCGF trustees will ensure that:

- There are at least two suitably trained and competent Welfare Officer designated within the club to take the lead role in dealing with safeguarding issues
- All staff and volunteers, who are working with children receive appropriate safeguarding training, updated every three years, and have access to advice on child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children through the Club Welfare Officers
- All gymnasts, parents and staff are aware of the club codes of conduct and recognise behaviour that is not acceptable and how they can help to keep themselves and others safe
- They will support Whistle Blowing and take steps to ensure members, parents/carers, and other individuals linked to the club feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative repercussions
- Confidentiality is maintained in relation to concerns and referrals and information is only shared on a genuine 'need to know' basis in line with confidentiality and Information Sharing Guidance
- They will carry out Safe Recruitment to prevent unsuitable people from obtaining, or remaining in, positions of trust or responsibility
- Promptly identify and respond to any deficiencies or weaknesses in the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children
- Ensure any poor practice is addressed immediately and any required remedial action is taken
- Any poor practice or safeguarding issues raised where there is potential for conflict of interest will be referred confidentially to an independent welfare officer.

Welfare Officers

Although the responsibility for safeguarding falls on everyone, the designated Welfare Officers are responsible for all safeguarding matters within the club, promoting the welfare of all members, and ensuring the club has current relevant guidelines in place to handle concerns.

The Club Welfare Officer(s) must:

- Hold a valid Enhanced DBS
- Hold a valid Safeguarding and Protecting Children Certificate
- Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and best practice guidelines that relate to safeguarding children
- Be a member of N.G.B
- Hold a current time to listen certificate

Responsibilities of the Welfare Officer(s) include:

- Promoting the welfare of children and importance of safeguarding
- Ensuring that children and young people are listened to and are involved in decision making
- Ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of Safeguarding/child protection
- Responding to safeguarding/child protection and poor practice concern
- Keep confidential and secure records of child protection issues relating to individual children
- Liaising with local Statutory Agencies
- Working with other organisations as required including charity Commission and British gymnastics
- Ensure the club has current relevant guidelines in place to handle concerns

See appendix 4 welfare Officer job description

Procedure for concerns about a child

Immediate danger

If a member of staff believes that a child is in immediate danger, a referral *must be made to children social care (and police if appropriate) immediately. Staff can make a direct referral to York city council children's social care 'front door' if a welfare officer is not available.

If you make a direct referral, inform a welfare officer as soon as possible and record the events as you would with any other concern about a child.

Concerns about a child

Each member of staff has an individual responsibility to report abuse

1. Any staff member who has a concern about a child should act on their concerns by reporting this to a welfare officer
2. Any member of staff who has concerns about a child must make a written record (safeguarding form). It must be clear, precise, factual account of the concern, observation or disclosure. Where possible, when reporting what has been said, use the actual words used.

Staff are reminded that a positive attitude to reporting contributes to the safeguarding culture of YCGF. We should question behaviour and not allow the fear of damaging relationships with parents or carers to get in the way of protecting children from abuse or neglect.

Any member of staff who suspects that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, must report their concerns. This includes where a member of staff:

- has suspicion that child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play, or when the explanation given appears inconsistent with the injury;

- notes behaviours or actions, which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered abuse (this may include worrying drawings, play or language);
- is concerned that a child may be suffering from lack of care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment;
- has concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms consistent with suspicion of child abuse or neglect;
- notes significant changes to child presentation otherwise unexplained;
- receives hints or a disclosure of abuse from the child, another pupil, parent or member of the public becomes aware that a schedule 1 offender has moved into a household with children present or is in a situation where that person may pose a risk to children;
- receives an allegation of abuse against another gymnast, where the alleged behaviour goes beyond the scope of the club's behaviour policy;
- is concerned about extremism or children and families being drawn into terrorism;
- suspects that a child is at risk of FGM, but it is not known whether FGM has been carried out.

Staff have a duty to report directly to Children's Social Care if the Welfare Officers, are not available.

It is not the responsibility of the staff member to investigate or decide whether abuse has taken place.

Concerns regarding peer on peer abuse

All staff should be aware that children are capable of abusing their peers, and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up". Peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Causing physical harm and physical abuse
- Sexual violence or harassment
- Sexting
- Initiation or hazing rituals
- Ignoring
- Hiding belongings
- Being ostracised

Most incidents of children harming peers can be dealt with through the YCGF anti-bullying and behaviour policies. However, staff should be alert to the possibility that harming a peer could be a sign that a child is being abused themselves. Peer abuse also becomes a Safeguarding concern where:

- there is an allegation of a criminal offence;
- violence is reported;
- there are allegations related to drugs or alcohol; or
- there are allegations of a sexual nature.

Where a member of staff believes that peer on peer abuse is a Safeguarding concern, this should be reported to a Welfare officer in the same was as any other concern about a child and recorded on the safeguarding sheet. Where peer on peer abuse is reported to the Welfare Officer, the member of staff should not attempt to investigate further as the Welfare Officer will decide the next appropriate action.

The Welfare officer may seek the involvement of other professionals from outside agencies, such as CAMHS, as well as seeking advice from Children's Social Care. Where there is an allegation of a criminal offence the Welfare Officer may be required to make a Police report. All actions taken by the Welfare Officer will be recorded.

The Welfare officer will inform parents of any reported peer on peer abuse, what actions are being taken and what support is being put in place, unless doing so would put a child at further risk of harm.

We will minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse at YCGF by:

- having a robust anti-bullying policy in place;
- challenging inappropriate language or behaviour;
- being alert to and challenging sexualised behaviour;
- being aware of the potentially increased risk of peer on peer abuse against children with additional needs and vulnerabilities; and
- ensuring the YCGF environment promotes positive attitudes and respect.

Responding to a disclosure

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Make sure that conversations take place somewhere the conversation can't be over heard and where the child feels comfortable (whilst always insuring at least 2 adult present).
- Be sensitive and empathic.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely, at their own pace.
- Reassure the child that you will take action to keep them safe, but do not make promises about confidentiality or to 'keep a secret'.
- Explain what will happen next and who has to be told.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Keep questions to a minimum, only asking these to clarify or help a child who is finding it difficult to talk. Keep any questions 'open' e.g "can you tell me what happened" rather than "did x hurt you".
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Make a written record; accurately representing the child's words (use their actual words where possible).
- Pass to the Welfare Officer who will also decide whether it is appropriate to speak with the parent/carer.

Where there is immediate risk or the child has made a clear disclosure, referral must be made immediately – availability of a welfare office must not delay or prevent referral.

*Making a direct referral

Direct referrals can be made by calling York's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01904 551900. The out of hours number for the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) is 0300 131 2131.

Any telephone referral must be followed up by a written referral within 24 hours and copies of the appropriate form can be found at:

https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/cyscp-1/report-concern-child-young-person
A copy is enclosed as Appendix 1.

When making a telephone referral, it is helpful to have the form in front of you so that you are aware of the information you will be asked to provide.

The Local Authority are responsible for making a decision about the response required and whether the child requires immediate protection. Where a child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm, enquiries should be made under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989; children in need may be assessed under section 17. The Local Authority should let the referrer know the outcome.

If you are not satisfied with the Local Authority Children's Social Care response to a referral you have made, you should follow this up.

If your concern about a child also involves a concern about a member of staff, you must also follow the procedure for 'Concerns about a Staff Member'.

If your concern about a child also involves a concern about a person who works or has worked with children within any other organisation, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed. The LADO should be informed if you suspect that any adult who works with, or has worked with children: 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; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

Action by the Welfare Officer on concerns about a child

The Welfare Officer will decide on the next appropriate action.

Immediate consideration will be given to the need for emergency medical attention.
Advice can be sought form Children's Social Care regarding how to proceed, the Welfare Officer may also seek advice regarding whether the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The Welfare Officer actions will be based on current City of York Safeguarding Children Board/Partnership procedures.

As it is good practice to act with openness and honesty, the WO will speak to parents/carers prior to making a referral, unless to do so may place the child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation or place the member of staff or others at risk. An inability to contact parents will not cause undue delay in making a referral. The Welfare Officer will make any necessary referral even if the parents/carers disagree with this decision.

Where verbal referrals are made to Children's Social Care, the referral should also be made in writing within 24 hours. Where there is uncertainty about making a full referral, advice can be sought from the 'Front Door' service on (01904) 551900.

All referrals and subsequent actions by the Welfare Officer will be recorded and stored, with a copy of the referral form.

The Welfare Officer may consider it appropriate to signpost the parent/carer to other support. Advice may be sought by the WO from the Local Area Team.

If the WO is not satisfied with the Local Authority Children's Social Care response, this will be followed up by the WO.

The WO will only disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

If the child is a BG member the welfare officer may seek further advice or support from the lead safeguarding officer at BG, the North of England safeguarding lead or regional welfare officer.

The welfare Officer may seek 24/7 advice from NSPCC.

Copies of any referral will be sent to BG.

Procedures for concerns about a member of staff

All staff should adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct and take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child.

If you have concerns about a member of staff

1. If you have concerns about any member of staff, including volunteers and visitors to the YCGF, inform the WO.

Concerns about a member of staff could include:

- behaviour that may have harmed a child;
- a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaviour that indicates they pose a risk of harm to children.

If you have received an allegation or information about a member of staff

We understand that a child, parent or carer may make an allegation against a member of staff. All allegations will be taken seriously.

1. If an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Trustee welfare officer.

2. If a member of staff receives information which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff who is made aware of the information will immediately inform the Trustee Welfare Officer.

3. The Trustee Welfare Officer on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LADO at the earliest opportunity.

YCGF will follow the City of York Council (CYC) procedures for managing allegations against staff.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Trustee Welfare Officer, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration and the Trustee Welfare Officer will seek the advice of the LADO and Chair of Trustees in making this decision.
A risk assessment will be completed if necessary.

In the event of an allegation against the Trustee Welfare officer, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Trustees with advice.

Any allegations made against a member of staff YCGF will notify the charity Commission and British Gymnastics (if applicable).

Concerns about practices within YCGF

All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor practice, unsafe practice and any potential failures of YCGF in terms of Safeguarding and Child Protection.

1. Raise any concerns about practice with any of the following staff/volunteers:

- Chair of Trustees
- Welfare Officers
- Head Coach

2. Where staff feel they are unable to raise their concern directly with any the above people, they should follow the 'Whistleblowing Policy'.

Further advice is available at: www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

The NSPCC has a free Whistleblowing advice line: 0800 028 0285 (email help@nspcc.org.uk)

Support for those involved in a Child Protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support children, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously;
- keeping all parties informed with the Welfare officer as the central point of contact;
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, having a 'Case Manager' and separate link people for the staff member to avoid any conflict of interest;
- responding sympathetically to any request from children or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety;
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies and storing records securely;
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- following the procedures laid down in our Child Protection, Whistleblowing, Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures; and
- Co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.
- Listening to all versions of events

Prevent Strategy

Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's strategy to address terrorism.
Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our wider Safeguarding responsibility.

Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and be alert to any signs that a child may need help or protection from terrorist ideology.

All concerns relating to the Prevent duty should be reported through the welfare officers, in the same was as any other Safeguarding or Child Protection concern.

The Welfare Officer may make a referral to the Channel programme to provide support.

In an emergency, contact the Police by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases police advice can be sought by dialling 101.

The Revised Prevent Duty Guidance can be found at the following address:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e5a5bd3f69457ff1035fe2/14.258_HO_Prevent+Duty+Guidance_v5d_Final_Web_1_.pdf

YCGF we follow local practice guidance:
https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/safeguarding-information/prevent-counter-terrorism

The Government's Prevent Strategy can be found at the following address:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

Use of Technology

Staff should be aware that improper use of technology is a safeguarding concern. Staff should have particular regard to offences that include taking, making, sharing or storing indecent images and the new offence of 'upskirting'

The government released a statement on 12th April 2019 stating "upskirting" offenders can be arrested and sent to prison as a new law banning the invasive practice comes into force across England and Wales. The criminal offence of 'upskirting' was created under the Voyeurism Act when it received Royal Assent in February. Police and prosecutors have now updated their guidance to ensure the law is properly enforced - with offenders facing up to 2 years in jail and being placed on the sex offenders register.

Communication and Social Media

In the modern world where everyone, of all ages, has access to a mobile phone and the internet it is vitally important to address the correct and safe methods of communication at the club. The development of technology has many benefits, however it does provide a large platform for bullying and abuse.

YCGF expect:

• Mobile phones and other personal technology must not be used on the gym floor by members or staff, unless authorised by the head coach or club director.

• Adult members must not communicate individually with gymnasts under the age of 18 years by:
  - Text message
  - Through internet chat rooms/networking sites
  - E-mail

• All communication by the above methods must be through the parent

• Subject to parental consent, coaches can communicate with young people over the age of 16 years either by group e-mails/texts or by copying correspondence to either the child's parent, Head Coach or Welfare Officer, however this communication must be limited to work matters

• In the event of a gymnast showing a coach a text message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the coach must inform the Welfare Officer

• When contacting the club, either the Head Office or a member of staff directly, please ensure that you as the parent or guardian makes the call or sends the email and not your child. We fully appreciate that you are empowering your child to be responsible, however from a safeguarding perspective at the club we must only communicate with parents or individuals over the age of 18 years.

Social Media

• Staff must not add gymnasts on any of their social media platforms nor must they accept a friend request from a gymnast who is under the age of 18 years

• Staff who are also parents of children that are members at the club may connect with their child on social networking sites but they must:

- Inform the club welfare officers of this arrangement
- Not accept any other gymnasts as connections, even if those gymnasts are connected to their own child

• Children must not try to add a coach on their social media platforms

• If you become aware that a coach or adult member has added a child on social media or has started communicating with a child via social media then you must notify the Head Coach or Welfare Officer immediately.

• Access to club-managed social media accounts is restricted to pre-approved individuals authorised by the club. Login details must be kept secure and must not be shared under any circumstances.

Coaches/Judges/Club Officials who are aged 16/17

YCFG recognise that social networking platforms can be useful tools for coaches to share information, organise sessions and other administrative tasks. In such cases where a coach is 16/17, the following will apply:

• Consent to have such contact must be obtained from the young person's parent/guardian, naming the platforms applicable and the adult (coach) responsible for the agreement

• The named adult must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club and police group messages to ensure they remain relevant to the role

• All communication must be shared with a 3rd person (eg club welfare officer or parent/guardian)

• The young person must not contact users outside of the agreed arrangements. Any attempt at contact from others must be reported to the named adult within the agreement.

YCGF approach to LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans) Issues

YCGF has no policy regarding 'gender' statements, recognising that parents have a right to their own values regarding gender, sexuality and transgender issues. We aim to create an environment in which all children are safe and where all children feel valued as individuals.

YCGF does not tolerate and will always challenge the use of sexist, homophobic, sexual-orientation and gender-related derogatory language; recognising also that where this type of language is used by younger children it may not be fully understood. Singling individuals out for abuse is always unacceptable, this includes being singled out or being the recipient of abuse, harassment, bullying or so called 'banter' with reference to LGBT.

We recognise that as part of responding to allegations of bullying, we may also be responding to bullying related to sexuality or gender, among other individual characteristics. We also recognise that peer on peer abuse can present Safeguarding issues. We reject bullying in all forms and these values are promoted throughout YCGF policies, procedures, curriculum and the learning environment.

Where a child discloses to a member of staff that they are considering their gender identity or sexuality, or they express their own LGBT status, we will share this with parents where it is appropriate in the interest of Safeguarding, which may include consideration of the child's emotional wellbeing. We also recognise that 'gender dysphoria' may be part of a range of vulnerabilities and seeking appropriate support for the individual child will remain our priority.

Types of abuse

Recognising abuse and neglect

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect and be alert to the signs. Many children who are harmed suffer more than one type of abuse.

Definitions are taken from Working Together and the indicators of abuse are taken from 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (2018):

Abuse

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 institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

There are four main categories of abuse:

Physical abuse

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 cyberbullying), 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

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, or 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.

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.

Neglect

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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

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.

Some warning signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

The NSPCC refer to a definition of Domestic Abuse from the Home Office (2013) as
"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This abuse can encompass but is not limited to

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional"

Living with domestic abuse can have a serious impact on children. Witnessing domestic abuse is considered to be 'significant harm'.

Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery

Child trafficking is child abuse and should be reported as such. Children are reunited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for :

- Sexual abuse
- Benefit fraud
- Domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- Forced labour in factories and agriculture

- Criminal activity such as pick pocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDS, bag theft

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Further information on child trafficking can be found at:
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800306/6-1914-HO-Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf

CCTV Footage

CCTV may be reviewed to support safeguarding and security within training.

Access to CCTV footage is restricted to authorised YCGF staff only. Footage may be reviewed where there is a legitimate reason, including but not limited to safeguarding concerns, incident investigation, health and safety review.

Retention of records

Any information relating to safeguarding concerns are stored securely. Any safeguarding concerns that have been reported to YCGF will be retained as is deemed necessary to safeguard that individual. In the case of children, records will normally be retained until child reaches the age of 25.

YCGF will retain information about significant safeguarding concerns relating to members in a position of trust for a minimum of 10 years and/or any subsequent review.

Provision of Safe Environment

To effectively safeguard children it is vitally important that we provide a safe environment where all members can participate in gymnastics. To minimise the potential risk of injury or abuse while children participate at the club we will:

- Provide an opportunity to view training at all times
- Regularly check and maintain apparatus, equipment and other club property. Anything deemed unsafe for use will be removed from the gym and either repaired or replaced
- Ensure first aid provision (Qualified first aider in the gym at all times), a correctly stocked first aid kit and phone in case of emergency)
- Provide safe storage of personal and sensitive information

- Coaching within syllabus
- Safe recruitment practices

Spotting and Manual Support

Supporting and shaping the gymnast is an essential part of coaching gymnastics in that it helps the gymnast to understand shapes, movement patterns and complex skills, but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance.

When Spotting or providing Manual Support:

• Staff must ensure that support is only used when necessary and "over-handling" is avoided
• The support must follow the official training received on a British Gymnastics Course. It is the responsibility of the coach to keep up to date with the best practice guidelines for supporting gymnastic elements and only teach within their level of qualification.
• The support must not inhibit the gymnast's performance
• Physical contact must not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body.

Due to the nature of the sport, non-intentional physical contact can arise accidentally out of error on the performer or staff part. Such incidents should not occur frequently and can arise in situations where a member of staff has to quickly catch a gymnast if a skill goes wrong in order to prevent them falling and causing injury. Such situations should not be ignored and need to be acknowledged through an apology to the gymnast and reported to the Club Welfare Officer or Head Coach as well as the parents. A written report should be made of any significant incident. Gymnasts or parents who have any concerns should raise them with the Head Coach and or Club Welfare Officer.

Flexibility/Stretching Exercises

Flexibility is an essential part of gymnastics to increase the range of movement required to perform gymnastics elements and to prevent injury. To increase flexibility, gymnasts are required to stretch on a regular basis. Stretching will cause discomfort as a certain level of force needs to be applied for a prolonged period of time in order to increase flexibility. Some stretches will require the coach to assist the gymnasts and in these circumstances the coach must:

- Use slow, progressive and prolonged stretching exercises, within the "discomfort zone", rather than what might be considered to be excessive force
- Avoid exercises that place the coaches and gymnasts body in "close proximity" and might be seen as unnecessary by the less-informed parent or observer
- Be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents and children
- Consider holding a parents forum to explain the flexibility training techniques, so that the parent is more aware and therefore less likely to misinterpret the techniques being used
- Use partner exercises with more experienced gymnasts where possible.
- Gymnasts are encouraged to communicate openly during flexibility work. They may stop or refuse any stretch at any time, and coaches must respect this immediately and adjust the activity accordingly. No gymnast will be pressured or penalised for doing so
- Refer to NGB guidelines see appendix 5

Late Collection of Children

If you are delayed for any reason and will not be at the club to collect your child at the end of their session you must:
• Contact the Office, Coaches or Welfare Officer at the earliest possible opportunity via 01904 611111
• Provide clear instruction on what you wish the club to do, e.g. to keep your child in the gym until you arrive or to provide consent for another parent to transport your child home
A Staff member must never:
• Take a child home or to another location
• Ask a child to wait in a vehicle or the club with them alone
• Send a child home with another person without permission

If a parent is more than 5 minutes late, we may bring the child up into the gym where they will be able to sit and watch either a class taking place or a tidy up. At least two members of staff will be present. You will be able to collect your child from the upstairs gym if they are not waiting downstairs.

If a parent is more than 10 minutes late and has not contacted the gym, we will:
1. Attempt to contact the child's parent using the contact details stored on the system
2. Attempt to contact the child's emergency contact (If different from the parent)
3. If there is no reply from the emergency contact the child will be asked if there is another family member who may be contacted
4. Wait with the child/children at the club with at least one other member of staff
5. Respond to any instructions received from the parent
6. Make contact with a welfare officer
7. If no-one can be reached after 30 minutes, we will contact the local police or Children's Social Care Services to enquire about the best course of action

Please note: if you are more than 30 minutes late you will be liable to cover costs for additional care for your child

Persistent Failure to Collect a Child on Time

If you persistently fail to collect your child on time and do not make any effort to contact the club or provide a reasonable explanation for the delays, the Club Welfare Officer will be informed and a meeting with yourself, the Welfare Officer and another Club Official will be arranged to discuss the matter. Following a meeting, if there is no change then the Club Welfare Officer will contact the children's team at the local Children's Social Care Services to seek further advice.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Direct Referral to children's social care

https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/cyscp-1/report-concern-child-young-person

Appendix 2

Working together to safeguard document

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Appendix 3

Charity Commission documents

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-to-protect-vulnerable-groups-including-children

Appendix 4

Club Welfare Officer

About the role

The person within a sports club with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children and for putting into place procedures to safeguard children in the club.

Duties and responsibilities

- Work with others in the club to ensure a positive child-centred environment
- Assist the organisation to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children within YCGF
- Assist the organisation to implement its safeguarding polices including safer recruitment within YCGF
- Act as the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or abuse are identified
- Implement the organisation's reporting and recording procedures
- Maintain contact details for the York children's social care department, the police and York's Local Authority Designated Officer, British Gymnastics regional welfare officer and Charity Commission.
- Promote the organisation's best-practice guidance and code of conduct within the club
- Ensure that all relevant YCGF trustees, Volunteers and paid staff access appropriate safeguarding training
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality is maintained
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice

Skills and abilities

Required:

- Child-focused approach
- Basic administration and computer skills
- Basic advice and support-provision skills
- Communication skills, including use of social media
- Ability to maintain records
- Ability to provide information about local resources
- Ability to promote organisation's policy, procedures and resources

Knowledge

Required:

- YCGF role and responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of children and young people
- Boundaries of the role of club welfare officer
- Basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (children's social care, the police and the NSPCC) and Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Basic Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of British Gymnastics and Charity commission
- Local arrangements for managing safeguarding children and reporting procedures
- Poor practice and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children
- YCGF policy and procedures relating to safeguarding children and young people
- Core values and principles underpinning practice
- Awareness of equality issues and protecting children from abuse
- Basic knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and national framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- How adults groom children for abuse

Appendix 5

https://a.storyblok.com/f/83342/x/cb3217d273/safeguarding-policy-flexibility-training-oct24.pdf