



**Devon Schools Athletics Association  
Child Protection Policy  
Updated October 2026**

|                                    |                                                |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Policy Owner                       | Gary Brock                                     |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | Gary Brock                                     |
| Deputy DSLs                        | Kat Endacott<br>James Ingleby<br>Nicky Holland |
| Effective                          | 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2026                  |
| Next Review                        | July 27 or earlier if required                 |

*This policy reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026. KCSIE is statutory for schools and colleges; the organisation adopts its relevant principles as good safeguarding practice for a children's sports setting.*

### **Purpose and commitment**

Devon Schools Athletics (DSAA) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child is under 18. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: Teachers, team-managers coaches, and volunteers must maintain a child-centred approach, act in the child's best interests and remember that abuse can happen here, including online and outside the home.

We will provide a safe sporting environment, listen to children, identify concerns early, work with parents where safe to do so, share information lawfully, and cooperate with children's social care, police, health and other safeguarding partners. Children will receive equal protection regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender questioning, family circumstances or socio-economic background.

### **Guidance and linked procedures**

This policy should be read with the staff/coach code of conduct, safer recruitment, whistleblowing, complaints, online/social media, mobile phone, photography, anti-bullying, health and safety, first aid, missing child, travel, changing-room and data-protection procedures. It has regard, where relevant, to:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026; KCSIE 2026;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and Crime and Policing Act 2026;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and current Prevent duty guidance;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025; and
- local Telford & Wrekin safeguarding partnership procedures and relevant national governing-body guidance.

## Roles, training and safer-working

The DSL has overall accountability. The DSL leads safeguarding, maintains secure records, advises staff, makes referrals and liaises with agencies. The Deputy DSLs provides cover; if neither is available, staff must not delay and should contact Family Connect, the Emergency Duty Team, police or NSPCC as appropriate.

All teachers, team-managers coaches and volunteers must receive safeguarding induction before working with children, read this policy and the code of conduct, know how to report concerns, and complete role-appropriate refresher training at least annually. The DSL will complete enhanced training at least every two years and refresh knowledge regularly.

Recruitment will include identity, right-to-work, employment history and references, qualification checks and role-appropriate DBS/barred-list checks. From 1 September 2026, the supervision exemption is removed from regulated activity: anyone teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently, on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight may be in regulated activity and must receive the legally required checks. No unchecked person will be left unsupervised with children.

Adults must maintain professional boundaries, avoid favouritism and unnecessary one-to-one isolation, use approved communication channels, and follow rules for physical contact, spotting, changing areas, transport, photography and social media. Any restraint or restrictive intervention must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, recorded and reported.

## Recognising safeguarding concerns

Abuse, neglect and exploitation may be physical, emotional or sexual and may occur in person or online. Concerns often overlap. Staff must remain professionally curious and notice injuries, disclosures, unexplained changes in behaviour, mood, attendance, performance, friendships, appearance, online activity or family circumstances.

Concerns include, but are not limited to:

- neglect; domestic abuse; child-to-parent/carer abuse; physical, sexual or emotional abuse (including verbal abuse, stalking and coercive control);
- child-on-child abuse, bullying, discriminatory abuse, racism, misogyny, misandry, harassment, hazing or initiation, serious violence and harmful sexual behaviour;
- child sexual or criminal exploitation, county lines, trafficking, modern slavery, financial exploitation and children being criminalised for actions under coercion;
- making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, sexual harassment or violence - every incident requires a safeguarding response, whether described as consensual or not;
- online harms, including contact, content, conduct and commerce risks, cybercrime, grooming, livestreaming, gaming, image-based abuse and unsafe use of generative AI;
- radicalisation, extremism, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour- or faith-based abuse and fabricated or induced illness; and
- mental-health concerns, self-harm, suicide risk, substance misuse, missing episodes or homelessness where these may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Some children face additional barriers to recognition or disclosure, including children with SEND or medical conditions, young carers, children in care or kinship care, children experiencing poverty or temporary accommodation, and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their gender. Staff must listen without assumptions, address bullying and seek appropriate support.

## Responding to a concern or disclosure

Act immediately. Do not wait for proof or assume someone else will act.

1. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of immediate harm, call 999.
2. Listen calmly; take the child seriously; do not promise secrecy. Explain that information will be shared only with people who need to help.
3. Use open prompts only (for example, "Tell me what happened"). Do not investigate, ask leading questions, confront an alleged perpetrator, examine a child, take photographs of injuries or ask a child to remove clothing.
4. Reassure the child that they did the right thing and that the abuse is not their fault. Consider communication needs and the child's wishes and feelings.

5. Report verbally to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. If they are unavailable, or no action is taken and risk remains, contact children's social care or police directly. Anyone can make a referral.
6. Make a dated, timed, factual record as soon as possible using the child's own words. Record the concern, actions, decisions, reasons and outcome; sign it and pass it securely to the DSL or DDSLs. Parents/carers will normally be informed and involved unless doing so may increase risk, impede a police/social-care enquiry, or is otherwise not in the child's best interests. The DSL will take agency advice where uncertain. **The DSL must update the DSL of the child's school/college asap of any recorded concern.**

## **Referral, early help and information sharing**

It is the child's school/college DSL who will assess information against local thresholds and decide whether to provide internal support, seek universal/community-based early help, refer for targeted Family Help, refer to children's social care, contact police or make a Prevent/Channel referral. A referral does not require parental consent where a child may be at risk of significant harm.

If the School/College DSL is not available, which may be common as many DSAA events are held on a Weekend, the DSAA DSL will act on their behalf for any referral needing urgent action such as reporting to the Police.

The DSL will consider in liaison with the School/College DSL if the referral and outcome reaches the threshold of contacting the DSL of the English Schools Athletics Association

Data protection is not a barrier to safeguarding. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis when necessary and proportionate to protect a child. Consent should be sought where appropriate, but lack of consent does not prevent sharing where there is a lawful safeguarding basis. Decisions to share or not share, and the reasons, must be recorded.

## **Records and Confidentiality**

Safeguarding records will be accurate, confidential, securely stored, access-controlled and separate from routine athlete records. Each record must include a clear summary, follow-up, action taken, decisions and rationale, and outcome. Records will be retained and transferred or disclosed in line with legal requirements, safeguarding needs and DSAA's retention schedule. Personal devices must never be used to retain safeguarding information.

## **Child-on child abuse and online safety**

Online safeguarding is part of safeguarding. All adults involved with DSAA will model safe practice, use approved systems and report harmful content or contact. They must not privately message children from personal accounts, share personal social-media access, or capture/store images outside approved arrangements. Mobile phones and recording devices must not be used in toilets or changing areas. Any incident involving nudes or semi-nudes must be referred immediately to the DSL. Imagery must not be viewed, copied, printed, forwarded or deleted unless directed by police or specialist guidance.

## **Concerns or allegations about adults**

Any concern about a teacher, team-manager, coach, volunteer, or other adult - including behaviour outside of DSAA events or a low-level concern that is inconsistent with the code of conduct - must be reported promptly. Do not investigate.

- Concern about an adult (other than the DSL): report to the DSL.
- Concern about the DSL a conflict of interest, or concern not acted upon: report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Immediate risk or suspected crime: contact police/999 and the LADO without delay.

Where the school/college DSL has been unavailable to be contacted, the DSAA DSL will consider the harm threshold and consult the LADO within one working day where the adult may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm, or may be unsuitable to work with children. Low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed for patterns and managed proportionately. Suspension is not automatic and, if required, is a

neutral safeguarding measure. The organisation will make DBS and other regulatory referrals when the legal criteria are met.

## **Whistleblowing and complaints**

Adults must raise unsafe practice, failures to follow procedure or attempts to suppress concerns. Concerns may be raised with the DSL, LADO, NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line or relevant governing body. No person acting in good faith will be disadvantaged. Complaints about safeguarding practice will be handled under the complaints procedure but will never delay protective action.

## **Preventing radicalisation**

The Prevent duty is part of safeguarding. Adults should be alert to changes suggesting susceptibility to extremist influence, including isolation, identity or personal crisis, accessing extremist content, contact with recruiters, glorification of terrorist violence or pressure from peers or family. There is no single profile, and concerns must be considered in context without stereotyping. Report concerns to the DSL/SPOC, who will seek advice and refer to Prevent/Channel or police where appropriate.

## **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.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication)
- Treating all children/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with athletes and children
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process
- Making athletics fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff which should include a male and female DSL/DDSL
- Ensuring that at residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms, unless for a safeguarding reason, or invite children into their rooms
- Ensure that at residential event girls should not be allowed into boys' rooms and vice versa
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and disabled adults
- Securing parental 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.

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking a child to an event / session or taking them home afterwards [in which case parental consent must be obtained in advance]

## **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
  - Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
  - Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
  - Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

## **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 an athlete
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If an athlete misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

Copies of all recorded should be forwarded to the Devon Schools Athletic Association DSL

## **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 disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All interested parties in Devon Schools Athletic Association (including athletes, parents, teachers, team managers etc.) should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the DSAA DSL

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is happening and give their permission, and such films should be stored safely.

## **Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers**

Devon Schools Athletic Association recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Devon School Athletic Association adopts the following safe-recruitment procedure for any adult with supervisory responsibility for its athletes

Team managers will be practising or retired teachers or other adults working in schools/colleges such as a Teaching Assistant with a current DBS certificate. If this not possible in exceptional circumstances, then: Devon Schools Athletic Association requires:

- Volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection / safeguarding
- All supervising staff and volunteers to have undergone a DBS check.
- 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 young person
- Relevant personnel to gain First Aid training/qualification (where necessary)
- Attend update training when necessary.

## **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 DSAA DSL
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Headteacher/Principal of the school/college
- Social Services / Police
- The ESAA Welfare Officer/DSL
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

## **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 by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, DSAA should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to 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.

## Key Contacts and Reporting Flow

|                            |                                                                            |                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DSL                        | Any safeguarding concern                                                   | <a href="mailto:garymedusa@gmail.com">garymedusa@gmail.com</a>                                            |
| DDSLs                      | When DSL is not available<br>Names are links to DSAA website contacts page | <a href="#">Kat Endacott</a><br><a href="#">Nicky Holland</a><br><a href="#">James Ingleby</a>            |
| ESSA Child Welfare Officer | DSL reports referral if threshold is met.                                  | <a href="mailto:welfare.ESAA@gmail.com">welfare.ESAA@gmail.com</a><br><a href="#">Reporting a concern</a> |
| Family Connect             | Info Mon to Fri 10 am to 4 pm                                              | <a href="#">Devon Family Hubs</a><br>08005385458                                                          |
| Lado Devon                 | Allegation/concern about an adult working with children                    | 01392 384964<br><a href="mailto:ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk">ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk</a>      |
| Lado Plymouth              | Allegation/concern about an adult working with children                    | 01752 306758<br><a href="mailto:LADO@plymouth.gov.uk">LADO@plymouth.gov.uk</a>                            |
| Lado Torbay                | Allegation/concern about an adult working with children                    | 01803 208100<br><a href="mailto:SARS@torbay.gov.uk">SARS@torbay.gov.uk</a>                                |
| NSPCC                      | Advice and Concern                                                         | NSPCC website<br><a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/</a>                        |
| NSPCC Whistleblowing       | Safeguarding concern not addressed                                         | Mon to Fri 8am to 8pm<br>Sat & Sun 9 am to 6 pm<br>0800 028 0285                                          |
| Police                     | Immediate Danger/Reporting a crime                                         | 999<br>101                                                                                                |

## Immediate reporting flow

- Immediate danger -+ call 999 -+ notify DSL.
- Concern/disclosure -+ protect and listen -+ notify DSL/Deputy immediately -+ make a factual record.
- DSL unavailable or response inadequate -+ contact Family Connect, police or NSPCC directly.
- Concern about an adult -+ DSL; concern about DSL or conflict -+ LADO directly.