



# **SportCheer Wales**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

December 2023

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

SportCheer Wales (SCW) recognises that a safe, supportive and nurturing environment is instrumental in enabling all athletes to fulfil their potential and continue in cheerleading. SCW is committed to ensuring that each of the member clubs offers this to participants in cheerleading.

Everyone involved in the delivery and coaching of cheerleading in Wales has a duty of care to all athletes and young people, Parents and carers of these young people should be confident in the member clubs and their ability to offer a protective and productive environment for their children.

SCW has placed safety at the forefront of the vision for Welsh cheerleading, and have set conditions of membership for all Welsh Member clubs which include the adoption of a mission statement and inclusion of a welfare officer in all club activity.

### **About This policy**

This policy has been informed using the government guidance - The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) Supervision of Activity with Children (2014.) Meeting the requirements of the safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006), Protection of Freedoms act (2012) and using guidance provided by the NSPCC and CPSU.

SCW Policy translates for the Welsh cheerleading community the statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The SCW policy is also informed by other key pieces of legislation, which are highlighted in the relevant parts of the policy, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Applications**

SCW is an affiliate to SportCheer UK, the united Kingdom National Body of Cheerleading, affiliated to the International Cheer Union (ICU) and International All Star Federation (IASF.) SCW policies are based upon Welsh Legislation and guidance where it deviates from English Legislations.

The policy is applicable to all levels of the sport and provides a framework for those involved in Cheerleading to meet their duty of care towards young people. The policy, where applicable, is mandatory for all SCW staff, members and volunteers. Any individual or organisation that is providing a service to SCW must also demonstrate that they comply with these standards. Anyone who manages or has overall responsibility for a Cheerleading club or

organisation must support their Welfare Officer to fulfil their role and ensure their organisation is fully compliant with this policy. All SCW members should also read and comply with the policy.

The policy is the key source of reference for all safeguarding and protecting children related matters. The main users of these policies and procedures are likely to be Welfare Officers, as it is their role to guide their organisation to plan, prioritise and implement the various safeguarding responsibilities and activities. The policy also provides important guidance for anyone involved in Cheerleading including parents, coaches, officials and other volunteers. It offers practical guidance for those involved in providing cheerleading activities for children and relevant sections should be reproduced in an appropriate format and widely shared across the cheerleading community to increase general awareness and good practice.

### **Review of Policy**

Although the policy takes into account all relevant current legislation, the document will need to be amended as required in response to changes in cheerleading, sport, political, legal, ethical, social and technological environment in which we operate.

Any amendments will be recorded and communicated to all relevant parties. SCW will also review its Safeguarding and Protecting Children policy on an annual basis and as required by the NSPCC CPSU and Sport Wales Council. The policy may also be reviewed following introduction of any new internal or external safeguarding process and as a result of any significant child protection case within cheerleading or other sports.

### **Introduction**

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility to keep them safe regardless of their role or employment status in a club. As many environments offer situations where children may be harmed, SCW acknowledges that Cheerleading clubs can provide these environments, and cases of abuse continue to occur in sports.

However, for those who have a positive key role and involvement with children are well placed to recognise signs of abuse in a child, and able to promote positive relationships and welfare for children. It is a priority of SCW that all coaches and volunteers involved in Cheerleading are aware of the early signs of abuse and/or neglect and the appropriate steps to report these concerns.

With the growth of the Adaptive Abilities and SEN cheerleading categories, SCW is aware that some children are more vulnerable than others, and SCW is fully committed to ensuring that individuals are aware of their roles and responsibilities and how these may change when working with these athletes.

SCW aims to ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are accepted and followed by the whole Welsh Cheerleading community as part of all SCW member club activities.

## **Key Principles**

The policy is based on the principles that;

- Children's welfare is the highest priority in the sport
- 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 is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers involved in SCW and its member clubs.
- The provision of cheerleading will be child centred and meet the needs of those children.

## **SCW Responsibility**

The overall responsibility for safeguarding children in Cheerleading rests with the SCW Board, all members are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children participating in the sport. SCW has prepared a clear policy that provides a framework for any club, or individuals, working with children.

SCW will ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities to work jointly with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. SCW recognises that it has a duty to help ensure affiliated organisations and individual members understand and fulfil their responsibilities through the provision of clear guidance and support. SCW guidance has been formulated with the underlying aim of minimising risk to children and, wherever possible, avoiding situations where it is known that abuse or neglect can occur. SCW will support this duty through the development and provision of learning opportunities for members.

SCW will review and continually develop our safeguarding practice and ensure it is evidence based. SCW will provide training and development opportunities Club Welfare Officers. SCW recognises the responsibilities of Statutory Authorities and is committed to working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Local Authority Designated Officer(s) in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) The social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures

SCW, will ensure that any allegations or suspicions of abuse or significant harm to any child are reported without delay to the relevant Statutory Authorities in line with established information sharing protocols. SCW will comply with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation (2016) and Information Sharing for Practitioners (HM Government, 2018) in relation to confidentiality and information sharing. Information that is confidential in nature may be shared, without consent, where there is a legitimate and lawful reason for disclosure. In the event of an abuse allegation against a SCW member, employee or other person with an involvement in the sport, SCW will

take action to ensure young people are protected and, where appropriate, will support the prosecution of individuals accused of a criminal offence against a child/ren.

SCW will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone we believe is or has been, or might in the future be, engaged in regulated activity whose SCW membership has been revoked (or would, or might, have been withdrawn if the individual had not otherwise ceased involvement in the sport) on the grounds that they harmed a child or pose a risk of harm, or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

SCW will ensure that robust systems are in place to help prevent people who present a risk to children from becoming involved in the sport and to support the removal of anyone who is considered unsuitable.

### **Club Responsibilities**

All clubs who provide services to children have a common law duty of care to take such steps that, in the circumstances of a Cheerleading club, are reasonable to ensure the safety and welfare of these children. SCW policy and procedures set out the minimum standards that clubs should apply. SCW will provide support and guidance to help clubs to meet their responsibilities. All clubs must ensure that: -

- the overall responsibility for safeguarding sits at the most senior level of their organisation;
- there is at least one suitably trained and competent Welfare Officer designated within the club to take the lead role in dealing with safeguarding issues. The responsibilities of the individual should include:
  - promoting the welfare of children and importance of safeguarding;
  - ensuring that young people are listened to and are involved in decision making;
  - ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
  - responding to child protection and poor practice concerns;
  - liaising with Sport Cheer Wales and local Statutory Agencies;
  - working with other organisations as required;
  - acting as the designated person for criminal records checks.
- the Club Welfare Officer has attended SCW approved Safeguarding and Protecting children awareness training and the SCW Safeguarding course.
- the Club Welfare Officer holds a minimum of SCW Welfare membership and has undertaken a criminal record check in line with SCW Criminal Records Check Policy
- all staff and volunteers, who are working with children receive appropriate training, updated every three years, and have access to advice on child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children through the Club Welfare Officer;

- all children and young people, and their parents, are aware of behaviour that is not acceptable and how they can help to keep themselves safe;
- they support Whistle Blowing and take steps to ensure members, their parents/carers, and others, 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 SCW data protection guidance;
- they comply with the SCW Safe Recruitment policy to prevent unsuitable people from obtaining, or remaining in, positions of trust or responsibility;
- they comply with the all applicable supplementary policy and guidance and accept responsibility for identifying and responding to any deficiencies or weaknesses in its arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children;
- they work in partnership with SCW to ensure poor practice is addressed and any required remedial action is taken. It is not the role of Club Officials to investigate possible abuse or neglect. However, they have a key role to play by referring concerns about those issues to Children's Social Care Services and/or SCW and providing information for police investigations.