



# **SportCheer Wales**

Safe Sport Guidance Version 2

August 2023

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure a safe and positive environment for all participants in cheerleading, and should be used in conjunction with the SportCheer Wales Safe Sport Policy. This policy outlines the standards and procedures to protect athletes, coaches, officials, and other participants.

Cheerleading can, for the great majority of people, have a very positive effect on their health and wellness. To ensure safe participation, certain individuals with disabilities or medical conditions may need the activity to be modified. Additionally, there is a tiny subset of individuals for whom engaging in Cheerleading exercises may be harmful to their health. Programmes, and coaches in particular, have a responsibility to make sure that everyone is sufficiently fit and healthy before engaging in Cheerleading activities. They should also make sure that this is still the case before beginning each training session.

## **Registration and consent**

It is imperative that a Cheerleader's Programme obtains the proper personal data about them upon registration. Upon registration, the following kinds of data ought to be gathered:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Parent/Guardian/Carer information (if the participant is under-18)
- Emergency contacts
- Medical/health information – allergies, existing conditions, disability, additional needs
- Any other relevant personal information e.g. religious needs etc.
- Consent for participation in Cheerleading and any other relevant Programme activities
- Photography consent

In order to perform any required risk assessments based on medical information prior to participation, Programmes and connected organisations should make sure that this information is gathered at the participant's first session.

Before engaging in any regular Programme activity, parental or guardian authorization should always be obtained. It's also a good idea to acquire permission to take pictures or videos for training purposes at the same time. In other situations, such as the following, further consent must be obtained: -

- When a child is taking part in other activities beyond regular training
- When membership information is used for other reasons beyond those stated when it was originally collected
- Publication of images

## **Data Protection**

Any information a Programme or affiliated organisation holds will be subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 which applies to anyone holding information about individuals in electronic form and sometimes in hard copy. There are eight principles relating to data protection that must be followed. The principles state that data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed,
- Processed for specified purposes,
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive,
- Accurate and kept up to date,
- Not kept for longer than is necessary,
- Processed in line with the rights of the individual,
- Kept secure,
- Not transferred outside the European Economic area unless there is adequate protection for the data.

Any data controller (a data controller is defined as a 'person' recognised in law and may be an individual, an organisation or other corporate or unincorporated body) MUST comply with these principles. Individuals may seek damages through the courts against an organisation that fails to comply with the principles of data protection.

A further requirement of the Act is that data controllers are required to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and notify the Office about the data they hold and the purpose for which it is held, but there are some exemptions to this requirement. One of these exemptions relates to Programmes that are 'Not-for-profit' organisations who process data purely for the purposes of establishing or maintaining membership. This exempt purpose is intended for small Programmes and voluntary organisations.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is the responsibility of all SCW registered Programmes and affiliated organisations to check with the Information Commissioner's Office whether or not they are required to notify (the IOC has an on-line assessment tool that organisations can use for this purpose). Please note that failure to register when not exempt is a criminal offence punishable by a fine.

Programmes and affiliated organisations should make use of the Information Commissioner's Office self-assessment procedure to help them decide if they need to register. This procedure can be found on the ICO website.

## **Employee Welfare**

Employers are legally required to evaluate the hazards that workers may be exposed to while doing their job duties, and they are also accountable for the health and safety of their workforce. It is crucial to take into account both the type of job and the employee's suitability for the position.

Note that employers and service providers are required by the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 to provide reasonable accommodations when necessary to allow individuals to participate in or continue participating in work or recreational activities.

## **Athlete Medical concerns**

Some Athletes may indicate a medical condition or disability. Before engaging in Cheerleading, a person with a condition that may make participation dangerous has to consult their general practitioner (GP) to make sure the activity won't negatively impact their health or wellbeing.

Participation may also be contraindicated by other medical issues. In order to comprehend the nature of the ailment and its effects on the individual, the Programme/coaches should ask the participant and/or their parent/carer for more information if a medical condition is disclosed. Before attempting to design or modify a training programme, professional medical advice regarding participation must be sought.

In cases where risk is increased due to individual medical conditions, and a GP has consented to participation, the Adaptive Abilities Cheerleading rules should be used to ensure athletes are able to engage in the Sport and that suitable arrangements can be made to reduce hazards and risk for that individual.

## **Medications**

There are some athletes that may require emergency medication due to illnesses, conditions or allergies. If this situation does arise, the programme should conduct a risk assessment for the athlete and put in suitable controls to limit the need for emergency medications.

All staff that coach this athlete should be aware of the controls in place to support that athlete. These can include, but are not limited to;

- Awareness of signs and symptoms that may lead to the administration of the emergency medication.
- Awareness of the emergency plan for that athlete should it be required
- Awareness of how emergency medication is administered - including whether this should be done by coaching staff or if the nature of the medication indicates that the parent should remain close in order to administer if needed.

- Reduction of potential triggers for the individual e.g severe nut allergy in the programme
  - all nuts should be restricted from practice sessions.

## **General Health**

The health and Wellbeing of the athlete should always be the primary concern in Cheerleading Programmes. If an athlete is unwell, training and participation should stop immediately. Athletes should not be encouraged to participate in activities within a Programme when feeling unwell.

## **Returning after injury**

If an athlete has been prevented from training due to an injury or accident, ad GP should be consulted to ensure it is safe for the athlete to commence participation activities again. Should a concussion or head injury occur during a practice or competition, that athlete should be withdrawn from participation immediately, and not allowed to return to activity for either

- a. 72 hours minimum or
- b. on production of a doctors certificate

## **Spread of infectious diseases**

Any individual who sustains a blood injury must seek treatment immediately. It is the responsibility of the Cheerleader concerned and/or their Coach to ensure that all bleeding injuries and open wounds are dealt with appropriately in accordance with the following guidelines.

- For all minor bleeding injuries, the individual should stop the activity in which they are involved and attempt to stop the bleeding. A fresh sterile dressing should be applied to the wound before continuing with training or competition.
- All recent cuts or blisters should be covered.
- If the bleeding cannot be stopped, the individual should seek medical attention and should not continue with training or competition until advised otherwise.
- Any individual treating an injury should wear disposable gloves, which should be disposed of as clinical waste after use (see below). Wherever possible, the injured individual should apply pressure to a bleeding wound with his/her own hands. Anyone applying a dressing should wash their hands both before and afterwards.
- If the casualty's blood comes into contact with someone else's mouth, eyes or broken skin use clean cold water to wash the affected area and take medical advice.

- In cases where blood or other bodily fluids are clearly visible on clothing, the individual should replace clothing before continuing with any further Cheerleading activity. The contaminated clothing should be stored in a plastic bag and should be washed according to the guidelines on the label as soon as possible after contamination. Washing is enough to remove the contaminated substance even if the stain remains.
- Where contamination of equipment or very minor contamination of clothing has occurred, the area should be treated with a decontamination solution made up of one part household bleach to ten parts water. Solutions that are more than one day old should be disposed of. Diluted bleach that has passed its expiry date should not be used.

#### Clinical Waste -

- Wipe up spillage with heavy-duty paper and discard into a bag for incineration, including any soiled dressings or gloves.
- The contaminated area should be thoroughly soaked with the decontamination solution and left for two minutes. The area should then be rinsed with hot water and general-purpose detergent.
- A 0.5% solution of bleach is not considered to be hazardous, however care must be taken to ensure that the solution does not come into contact with the eyes, mouth or wounds, and should not be left on the skin for prolonged periods of time.

For spills of lower risk bodily fluids, e.g. urine and vomit, hot water and general-purpose detergent is sufficient.

Any individuals who are likely to have to deal with injuries should ideally be immunised against Hepatitis B.

### **Anti Doping**

The SportCheer Wales Anti Doping Policy was updated in 2023 and includes information on the World Anti Doping Code, along with information from the UKAD. This is available on the SportCheer Wales Website.

### **Illicit Substances**

SportCheer Wales' guidelines on substance abuse are as follows: -

- SCW members or volunteers must not use any substance while taking part in Cheerleading activity
  - No member or volunteer may use any substance (before or after working/volunteering hours) to the extent that while participating in Cheerleading it: -
- Impairs their performance; and/or

- Potentially or actually puts their or others health and safety at risk.
- The possession, sharing and dealing in some drugs is illegal. Therefore the possession or dealing in illegal drugs on British Cheerleading' or an affiliated organisation's premises will be regarded as gross misconduct and may lead to the suspension of membership and possible criminal prosecution.
- Members who are identified as having safety-critical jobs may be liable for disciplinary action for gross misconduct if they are found to be impaired while taking part in Cheerleading through any substance abuse.

## **Smoking**

The Health Act (2006) in Wales implemented a no Smoking ban in public buildings, public transport and workplaces.

No smoking signage should be clearly displayed outside entrances to facilities and smoking should actively be discouraged for athletes, coaches and parents of the programme.

## **Consumption of Alcohol**

Alcohol should not be consumed prior to participation in Cheerleading Activity. On competition weekends, where travel is involved, the consumption of alcohol should be prohibited for all athletes prior to participation.

Each programme should also make clear to parents and supporters that expectations surrounding alcohol consumption while viewing a competition. This should be in place to avoid potential disagreements between individuals and to prevent potential safeguarding concerns for vulnerable athletes.