



**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



## Safeguarding Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

Beas Cheerleading is a cheerleading club that caters to recreational and competitive athletes, Regionally, Nationally and Internationally. We host classes for athletes as young as 3 years old, up to young adults in their early 20's. Our classes are accessible for all those who wish to take part in our sport and it is only right that 'We' (Coaches, volunteers, athletes and parents) recognise the importance of our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted in our care. So that we may continue to make it a safe space for all to enjoy our sport at Beas Cheerleading.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that: All who work for and engage with Beas Cheerleading are skilled, confident, understand, and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from abuse and engage positively with them.

### **1.1 Monitoring and review of the policy and procedures**

The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Safeguarding Lead will regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to The Director.

The policy should be reviewed every year, or whenever there is a major change in the organisation, in relevant legislation or any changes in the cheerleading industry.

### **1.2 Contact details**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kayleigh Silvester  
Email: [kayleighsilvester@hotmail.com](mailto:kayleighsilvester@hotmail.com)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Kieran Mulligan  
Email: [kieran-mulligan@outlook.com](mailto:kieran-mulligan@outlook.com)

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are the first point of contact for all concerns about the safety of any and all participants.

All participants should be made aware who the Welfare Officers are.

Any concerns about the safeguarding of participants must be reported directly to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Any allegations must be written up as swiftly and accurately as possible and reported directly to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads as soon as possible after any incident.

If you are unable to reach The Designated Safeguarding Lead please contact the following for advice on next steps:

In case of emergency dial 999



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Children's Services / Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

Telephone: 0300 470 9100

Email: [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk)

Website: <https://surreyscp.org.uk/>

Text Line: 07527 182861

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Telephone: 0300 123 1650

Email: [lado@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:lado@surreycc.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/contact-childrens-services>

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (for child safeguarding support)

Telephone: 0116 366 5580

Email: [cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

Website: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/deal-with-a-concern/>

Ann Craft Trust (for adult safeguarding support)

Telephone: 0115 951 5400

Email: [ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk)

Website: [www.anncrafttrust.org](http://www.anncrafttrust.org)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection CEOP (for reporting of online or digital safeguarding concerns, such as Youth Produced Sexual Imagery or cyber bullying)

Website: [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/)



### **1.3 Mission Statement**

Beas Cheerleading is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children and young adults in our care are protected from abuse, harm & radicalisation. Everyone should be able to participate in cheerleading in a safe environment, that is why the welfare of an athlete is paramount.

The human rights of children and young people will be respected and applied to all irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law or any other aspect of their background or identity. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.

All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. We will never knowingly allow a person to engage or work with us where the person has committed crimes against children and we put Vetting and Barring processes in place that are reviewed in line with current best practices.

All staff or volunteers will be recruited with regards to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and Safeguarding procedures. We believe working in partnership with coaches, parents/carers and children/Adults at Risk is essential for the protection of children/Adults at Risk.

We will endeavour to support those affected by abuse and make links with statutory childcare authorities and other organisations if/when required.

The Groups child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

There is a Child Protection Officer (CPO) available at all times while the Club is in session. The CPO coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (e.g. Social Care, and LSCB).

The Club's designated CPO is Kayleigh Silvester.  
The Deputy CPO Kieran Mulligan

### **1.4 Scope of the Policy**

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18. Where this policy refers to children, it equally applies to Adults at Risk and athletes of all ages in the care of Beas Cheerleading as defined by the Position of Trust Law 2022

An Adult at Risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support:

Adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:



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a) Personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. and/or

b) Life circumstances which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

Adult in need of protection is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) Personal characteristics AND/OR

b) Life circumstances AND

c) Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND

d) Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed

Beas Cheerleading acknowledges that there remains an unequal power balance in the adult athlete / coach relationship regardless of the individual athletes' circumstances, and that this can create the potential for abuse to occur. Beas Cheerleading coaches take their responsibility to athlete welfare seriously and acknowledge the legal Position of Trust placed in them to protect all athletes welfare.

This policy sets out what action will be taken in various circumstances to reassure all athletes, parents, carers and coaches that all possible steps will be taken to protect children and athletes of all ages involved in any aspect of Beas Cheerleading activities.

## **2. Promoting Good Practice**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To provide everyone in the care of Beas Cheerleading with the best possible experience and opportunities, everyone must operate within the accepted ethical framework laid out in our Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of staff or participants in cheerleading to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/Adult at Risk or athlete of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading.



## **2.2 Good Practice**

All personnel including volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Make the experience of cheerleading fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying, help build positive relationships and life skills.
- Treat all Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of all ages in the care of Beas Cheerleading equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the athlete first, before winning
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with athletes (e.g. it is never appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child / a athlete of any age, or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required for spotting or safety purposes, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given, and it is for the benefit of performing or acquiring skills for the sport. Further details of Beas Cheerleading Protocols and guidance for physical contact while spotting athlete skills can be found on page 8.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where Children/Adults at Risk need to be supervised in changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents/carers, coaches etc work in pairs
- Request written parental consent if Beas Cheerleading staff or volunteers are required to transport Children/Adults at Risk (in minibuses or coaches)
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of Children/Adults at Risk
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person is important. Do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for team, programme, or personal achievements.



- Secure written parental consent for Beas Cheerleading to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given. Beas Cheerleading reporting procedure for injuries can be found on [our websites](#) policy page under our Illness and Accidents policy.
- Coaches are required to ensure that Health and Safety and Duty of Care requirements are met in the working environment during sessions.
- If during your care you accidentally hurt a Child/Adult at Risk/ athlete of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading, or they seem distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or misunderstand or misinterpret something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

## **2.3 Poor Practice**

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with Children/Adults at Risk/athletes of all ages in the care of Beas Cheerleading away from others.
- Taking Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of all ages in the care of Beas Cheerleading alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of all ages in the care of Beas Cheerleading to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a Child/Adult at Risk/ athletes of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading even in fun.
- Reducing a Child/Adult at Risk/athletes of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading to tears as a form of control





- Physical punishments of any kind
- Allow allegations made by Children/Adults at Risk/ athletes of any age in the care of Beas Cheerleading to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that the Child/Adult at Risk can do for themselves

## **Illegal and inappropriate relations**

Beas Cheerleading will not tolerate sexual relationships between any staff, contractor, volunteer and athletes, which include athletes aged 18+ who are in our care and for whom we also have a duty of care. While a relationship with an athlete over-18 may be legal, they are wholly inappropriate for the nature of our work, where athletes may be vulnerable to entering an imbalanced relationship where the person in a position of authority (coach) can abuse that position. In addition, we have a Duty of Care for all children attending Beas Cheerleading and if they were to witness such a relationship, this may raise questions and present a risk that this is considered acceptable behaviour. Upon disclosure of such a relationship a coach / the adult in position of responsibility may face disciplinary proceedings.

## **2.4 Protocols and guidance for physical contact from the coach**

While spotting athlete skills Physical contact should only ever take place in the interests of and for the benefit of the child, not for the adult involved.

There may be a number of circumstances in a cheerleading context when it is appropriate for an adult to touch (have direct physical contact with) a child. Participants and their legal guardians need to feel confident that contact between those coaching cheerleading and young people are safe and appropriate. Adults working with athletes need confidence that their actions cannot be misconstrued. Children and young people have a right to say what level of contact they are comfortable with and need to be empowered to speak out without any fear of negative reactions or punishment of any sort.

Physical contact between adult personnel and young people in cheerleading are appropriate when necessary to

- Safely support an athlete in a new skill to prevent injury
- Physical correction, such as body placement or physical alignment
- Catching from a fall (such as during a stunt or tumble) to prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- Treat an injury



Best practice guidance includes:

- Adults should always explain the nature of and reason for the physical contact to the young person or participant. This reason should be one that would be aligned with this Policy and would be justifiable to any other responsible adult.
- Unless the situation is an emergency, an adult should ask the athlete for permission, for example to aid the demonstration of a specific technique. They should include in this request where they intend to touch them. For example “To spot a walkover I will need to put my hand on your upper thigh and lower back, is this ok?”
- If the participant refuses or seems uncomfortable, do not do it. Ideally, get someone of the same gender as the participant to demonstrate the action.
- Contact must never involve touching any part of the body that might cause anyone distress or embarrassment.
- For games or physical warm-ups that require touch, avoid contexts where touch could increase risk of allegation, discomfort, misunderstanding or inappropriate contact.
- Participants will be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- 1-2-1 physical touch between personnel and participants out of sight of others must be avoided, no matter how innocent - it puts both persons at risk. Any physical touch should be in plain view of others.
- Well intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, if repeated regularly, can lead to the possibility of questions being raised by observers. As a general principle adults in positions of responsibility must be sensitive and responsive to the situation, surroundings and comfort level of the child or young person. When making physical contact, adults must always assess carefully how their actions may be interpreted both by the athlete and other observers.
- Stating that an inappropriate, suggestive or unwelcome touch is necessary for the athletes’ skill development is never an acceptable excuse and will be taken very seriously by Beas Cheerleading
- Coaches must avoid piggybacks, play fights etc. or any other such contact that could be misconstrued, make someone feel uncomfortable or blur boundaries between coaches and athletes.
- A culture of individual and collective accountability is important for encouraging people to speak out or share concerns



## 3. Defining Abuse

### 3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Additionally, it is acknowledged that children may be at risk of abuse by another young person, as well as adults.

It is NOT the responsibility of those working with or volunteering for Beas Cheerleading to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person. Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Children, young people and adults with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

It is recognised that there are additional categories of abuse that relate to adults (over 18) and that both participants over 18yrs, parents or Beas Cheerleading staff/volunteers may be at risk. Details of additional categories of abuse in over 18's are also listed below in this policy.

### 3.2 Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical child abuse.

*Examples of physical abuse in cheerleading may occur in the form of manual stretching to the point of extreme pain, forcing an athlete to train on an injury, refusing water or toilet breaks.*

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people



that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

*Examples of emotional abuse in cheerleading may occur when the young person is constantly given negative feedback or criticism, expected to perform at levels that are clearly unrealistic for their age/skill level, name calling and bullying, ignoring them.*

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages or social media posts), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Beas Cheerleading recognises that not all participants will get along with each other and from time to time this may result in bickering, arguments or bullying. It's important that athletes are aware of and adhere to the Club Code of Conduct and where there is evidence that there is a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Discipline Policy will be implemented. Where there are incidents of this nature outside of the gym (i.e. in school) we ask that their Coach is made aware of any situation that may impact their ability to train but we also respectively ask that the Coaches are not involved.

**Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

*Examples of neglect in cheerleading could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, failure to check equipment properly, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.*

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

*In cheerleading activities which involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power the coach has over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations such as grooming to develop.*



## **Additional categories of abuse in adults**

It is recognised that there are additional categories of abuse that relate to adults (over 18) and that both participants over 18yrs, parents or Beas Cheerleading staff/volunteers may be at risk of the following:

### **Domestic violence or abuse**

This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called "honour" based violence.

### **Psychological or emotional abuse**

This includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

### **Financial or material abuse**

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. It can also include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

### **Modern slavery**

This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

Discrimination is abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or any protected characteristics under UK law.

### **Organisational or institutional abuse**

This includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home.

### **Neglect or acts of omission**

This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services. It also includes the withdrawing of the necessities of life, including medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

### **Self-neglect**

This covers a wide range of behaviour, but it can be broadly defined as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health, or surroundings.



### **3.3 Indicators of Abuse**

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a Child/Adult at Risk is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a Child/Adult at Risk/athlete of any age
- Unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with others
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Losing weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- A shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions



It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. Again, it is NOT the responsibility of those working with or for Beas Cheerleading to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## 4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working with or volunteering for Beas Cheerleading, or any coach in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the child/Adult at Risk. This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

### 4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately.

If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **Stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **Reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **Listen to the child**, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **Keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Only ask questions to clarify
- **Inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **Safety of the child** is paramount. If the child is in immediate danger, call the police. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **Record** all information verbatim and pass this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Report** the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead



### 4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed written record should always be made as soon after the disclosure/concern as possible. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure
- the date and time of the report
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- the name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings) what was said or done and by whom
- any action taken to look into the matter
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- the reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

You can find a copy of the Beas Cheerleading reporting form [HERE](#)

### 4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Beas Cheerleading expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/Adult at Risk immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the Safeguarding Lead or deputy are not available for immediate help/action, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC/CPSU or Ann Craft Trust. Their details are available on the contacts page at the front of this document.





Where there is a complaint against an employee, contractor, volunteer, or another coach or individual there may be three types of investigation.

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
  - Child Protection in which case the welfare services (and possibly) the police will be involved
  - Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Beas Cheerleading will be involved
- As mentioned previously in this document, Beas Cheerleading personnel and volunteers are not child protection experts, and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection. If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

*Safety of the child is paramount. If the child is in immediate danger, call the police. If the child needs urgent medical attention, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.*

#### **4.5 Reporting a concern against a member of staff or volunteer**

An allegation may relate to a member of staff or volunteer (including guest coaches) who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may harm 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee, contractor or a volunteer should be reported to Beas Cheerleading, who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The matter will be in the first instance referred to the relevant authorities.
- Beas Cheerleading will refer the matter to either the police, Children's services or LADO
- The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the relevant authorities



- Assuming they are not themselves under suspicion, Beas Cheerleading's gym owner should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead who will refer the matter to the relevant authorities

You should keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

- what the allegations were
- how the allegations were followed up
- how things were resolved
- any action taken
- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children.

Keeping these records will enable you to give accurate information if you are ever asked for it. For example:

- in response to future requests for a reference
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of a vetting and barring check
- if allegations resurface after a period of time

#### **4.6 Reporting a non-recent allegation of abuse**

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such an allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures. This is because other children/Adults at Risk in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children. Reporting of non-recent abuse must follow the same reporting procedure as a current allegation.

#### **4.7 Reporting a child in need of support services (Not at risk of harm)**

Where a child/Adult at Risk is deemed to be in need of additional support services, but they are not at risk of harm, the same procedure of reporting is to be followed, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an assessment as to the most appropriate and effective course of action to provide the appropriate support.



## **4.8 Concerns outside the immediate athlete environment (e.g. a parent or carer)**

- Follow the same reporting procedure as above
- Report your concerns to Beas Cheerleading Designated Safeguarding Lead
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact the local social services department of the alleged victim or the police immediately
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

## **4.9 Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

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:

- Beas Cheerleading Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The parents of the child (if appropriate)
- The person/child making the allegation
- Children's Services, LADO or police
- The alleged abuser (If appropriate and necessary for the purposes of suspension).

If the alleged abuser is a child, the parents of the abuser may be informed by the appropriate authorities) Seek the NSPCC's advice on who should approach the alleged abuser, if deemed necessary for the purposes of suspension.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with GDPR.

## **Record keeping**

Beas Cheerleading will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record on a person's confidential personnel file and give a copy to the individual. The record should include details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, the decisions reached, and the action taken.



If concerns have been raised about an adult's behaviour around children, the general rule is that you should keep the records in their personnel file at least until they reach their normal retirement age or for 10 years – whichever is longer (IRMS, 2019; Department for Education, 2022). This applies to volunteers, contractors and paid staff.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on. It will provide clarification where a future background check request reveals non convicted information and will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. In this sense it may serve as a protector to the individual themselves, as well as in cases where substantiated allegations need to be known about to safeguard future children.

## **5. Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

- Beas Cheerleading Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

- Irrespective of the findings of the Children's Services, LADO or police Inquiries, Beas Cheerleading will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases Beas Cheerleading must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/Adult at Risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.

- Should an individual accused of abuse be found guilty, the staff member will be unable to return, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify any relevant organisations, including SportCheer England.

- Should an individual accused of abuse be found not guilty and able to return to work, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure they are supported in their return.

- Upon entering into a contractual agreement with Beas Cheerleading, staff and volunteers are issued a Code of Conduct. Should a staff member, contractor or volunteer be in serious breach of the code of conduct, these same procedures will apply.

Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion in all cases even if:

- The individual refuses to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations



- It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.

Compromise agreements' must not be used (i.e. where a member of staff or volunteer agrees to resign provided that disciplinary action is not taken and that a future reference is agreed). A settlement/compromise agreement which prevents the employer from making a referral to the police/welfare/governing body when the criteria are met for doing so would likely result in a criminal offence being committed for failure to comply with the duty to refer.

## **6. Social Media**

Beas Cheerleading recognises that many staff enjoy networking with friends and family via social media. However we have to balance this against our duty to maintain the confidentiality of children, young adults and parents attending our Club, as well as ensuring that our good reputation is upheld.

Staff must remember that they are ambassadors for our Club both within and outside of working hours and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly when using social media sites. This policy covers (but is not limited to) social media platforms such as:

- X
- Tik Tok
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Personal blogs and websites
- Comments posted on third party blogs or websites
- Online forums
- Whatsapp

### **Social media rules**

When using social media sites, staff must not:

- o Post anything that could damage our Club's reputation.
- o Post anything that could offend other members of staff, parents or children using our Club.
- o Publish any photographs or materials that could identify the children at our Club.
- o Discuss with parents any issues relating to their child or our Club. Instead invite the parent to raise the issue when they are next at the Club, or to contact the Director if the matter is more urgent.

It is Beas Cheerleading's policy that coaches and volunteer staff do not accept requests from athletes or their families to 'Friend' or 'Follow' them on any social media network. Any friend / follow requests made by children under the age of 18 will be rejected / blocked from coaches' personal accounts, unless they have known the parent in a private capacity before joining Beas Cheerleading.



Beas Cheerleading reserves the right to all images connected to its name, logo or image. Any images posted on social media related to or promoting Beas Cheerleading will be appropriate, with appropriate hashtags. If images are deemed to be inappropriate or in breach of safeguarding, we will ask that they be removed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Beas Cheerleading request that athletes and parents use social media in a positive and sportsmanlike manner and not engage in negative discussions on cheerleading groups or forums, which will be interpreted as bullying and dealt with as such. Any activity on social media (including activity on personal accounts) deemed to be inappropriate, alert a safeguarding concern or defamatory to Beas Cheerleading may result in removal from the club.

Beas Cheerleading will regularly remind parents and athletes to be safe on the internet and mindful of appropriateness when posting cheerleading-related images.

#### **General cautions for using social media**

When using social media in any context it is wise to bear in mind the following points:

- o No information published via the internet is ever totally secure; if you don't want information to become public, do not post it online.
- o Once an image or information is in the public domain, it is potentially there forever – Google never forgets!

## **7. Photography, CCTV and use of images on social media**

It is important that children and young people feel happy with their achievements and have photographs and films of their special moments. Family and friends also want to be able to share the successes of their children when they have been part of a special event or activity. However, some children, parents or carers may not be comfortable with images of themselves or their children being shared. For example:

- if a child and/or their family have experienced abuse they may worry about the perpetrator tracing them online
- children who choose not to have contact with some members of their family may decide to minimise their online presence
- families may have religious or cultural reasons for choosing not to be photographed.

It's important to be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when taking photos of or filming children and young people. The potential for misuse of images can be reduced if organisations are aware of the potential dangers and put appropriate measures in place.



Beas Cheerleading will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
  
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for images to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published.
  
- changing the names of children/not using names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
  
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information
  
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
  
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
- only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
- avoiding images / poses where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused.
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

Any images identified by children, parents or coaches as a misuse of images should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will report them to the police or CEOP.

We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

## **7.1 Use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

CCTV operates on the premises for the purposes of the prevention, identification, and reduction of crime and to monitor the building. It is used to provide a safe and secure environment for the public and to prevent the loss of or damage to property.

Beas Cheerleading will ensure that when they are in a venue that uses CCTV inside the gym, it is a TV system primarily for surveillance and security purposes in which signals are not publicly distributed but are monitored, and where access to their content is limited by design only to those authorised to see it.

Athletes will be made aware that CCTV is in use in the building prior to attendance.



## **7.2 Photography and/or filming for personal use**

When athletes themselves are taking photographs or filming and the images are for personal use we will:

- remind athletes that they need to give consent to take and use their images,
- ask for photos taken not to be shared on social media or ask people to gain permission before sharing photographs and videos that include them
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share
- reminding athletes who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being taken or shared.

## **7.3 Photography and/or filming as a training aid for athletes**

We recognise that Beas Cheerleading staff may use photography and filming as a training aid for athletes. However, this should only be done with Beas Cheerleading permission and using

Beas Cheerleading's equipment\*. Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming is part of Beas Cheerleading's activities as a training aid and give written consent.

## **7.4 Someone acting suspiciously with a camera or phone**

All employees, contractors and volunteer staff should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming (by other members of staff, parents, athletes or members of the public) and any concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead directly. Where possible, the person filming/taking pictures should be immediately challenged and a request to view the footage made. Should the footage be deemed inappropriate so as to raise a safeguarding concern, the device should be seized and the police called. Should it be deemed inappropriate but not raise a safeguarding concern they will be asked to delete it (and from their deleted folder).

## **7.5 Externally hired photographers/videographers**

Where Beas Cheerleading hire a photographer or videographer for an event, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- providing the photographer/videographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour





- ensuring the photographer/videographer wears identification at all times
- informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer/videographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared.
- not allowing the photographer/videographer to have unsupervised access to children.
- not allowing the photographer/videographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home.
- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.
- Have sight of the photographers/videographers' Child Protection Policy, privacy certification regarding safe storage of images.

## **7.6 Use of images for Beas Cheerleading's social media**

Beas Cheerleading will not name athletes next to their image in public spaces on social media unless express permission is given by the parent/guardian for that specific image, and with particular reason for it to appear. If an athlete's image is used on Beas Cheerleading's official public pages, for example Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram accounts for publicity purposes, parents and athletes are asked not to 'tag' or name the athlete, so as to help us keep this policy in place and keep athletes safe.

## **8. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel**

### **8.1 Introduction**

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff, freelancers and volunteers. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

### **8.2 Controlling Access to Children**

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from a DBS check, police check or other relevant background checks as applicable in the applicant's country.



- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact. If the coach is under 18, this could be a teacher/school reference
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

### **8.3 Interview and Induction**

All employees, contractors and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees, contractors and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on self-disclosures, and a DBS check if applicable to their role on staff
- All qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to Beas Cheerleading's Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures/Safeguarding is explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness, First Aid training, Concussion course training etc

### **8.4 Training**

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

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child/Adult at Risk
- Work safely and effectively with children/Adults at Risk
- All employees, contractors, volunteers, coaches and Designated Safeguarding Lead to undertake relevant training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection




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- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person

### 9. Declaration

On behalf of Beas Cheerleading, we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:   
Berenese McNeil  
(Director)

Date: 08th Aug 2024

### 10. Policy Created

Date: 08th Aug 2024

Signed: Berenese McNeil

Policy review due

Date: 07th Aug 2025

Reviewed by: