



University of  
St Andrews

## Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults

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<b>Scope (applies to)</b>	All members of Saints Sport including staff, students, contractors and visitors
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<b>Purpose</b>	This document has been drawn up in line with the University's own policy for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, but amended to reflect sport.

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## 1. Introduction

The Saints Sport Child Protection Policy has been drawn up in line with the University's own policy for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/human-resources/policies/safeguarding-children-policy.pdf>), but amended to reflect sport.

### 1.1. Scope and aims

It is recognised that associates of the University may come into contact with children and vulnerable adults, including students whilst studying or on placement; contact through Student Services or other University facilities (e.g. sports or societies); work experience; summer schools; outreach activities or other events taking place on University property.

In line with the University, this policy applies to all members of Saints Sport including staff, students, contractors and visitors. It provides a framework, which aims to:

- Ensure risk assessment is undertaken
- Aid protection through disclosure (criminal records) checks of staff
- Ensure anyone involved in an abuse case is supported appropriately
- Ensure referral to specialised agencies e.g. Police, Children First, Social Work Department where necessary
- Appoint designated persons with responsibility for children and vulnerable adult protection
- Identify an acceptable code of practice and guidance for all members of staff, students and visitors

### 1.2. Key principles

**Recognise** Know what to look for; recognise the signs and symptoms and listen to concerns. Seek help and discuss early in the course of your concerns

**Record** Keep a clear and contemporaneous record of your concerns

**Report** Know where to get help and who to report your concerns to within the University

**Refer** It is the responsibility of the Designated Officer to refer concerns on to the appropriate external agencies

## 2. Prevention

The University is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, in addition to preventing those within its community being drawn into radicalisation. As such, the following steps have been taken:

### 2.1. Staff Recruitment

The University shall take all reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. Where it has been identified that there is likely to be contact with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their work, statutory guidance will be followed to ensure that, where necessary, staff will join the PVG Scheme (Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007). Further details are provided in the University 'Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Criminal Records Check Policy and Guidance', accessible via the following link: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/policy/hr/pvgandcriminalrecords/>

### 2.2. Staff Training

All staff/coaches who work with children or vulnerable adults should receive a copy of the Department of Sport & Exercise and Athletic Union Guidance for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. As part of their induction, they should receive training in the aspects of awareness of abuse, good practice in the care of children and vulnerable adults, the "arena of safety" and the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns being raised.

## 3. Key definitions

### 3.1. Child

Legally defined as young people under the age of 18.

### 3.2. Vulnerable Adults

Defined as persons over the age of 16 who have a learning or physical disability; a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

The University's **Vulnerable Students Policy** defines a **vulnerable student** as a student of the University who as a result of age, illness, disability, or mental disorder, in the University's reasonable opinion, is unable to safeguard his or her personal welfare, property, or financial affairs or who may be unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation and is in need of support or attention.

### 3.3. Radicalisation

Defined as the 'process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist beliefs related to terror groups. It is recognised that children and vulnerable adults may be more likely to drawn in.

## **4. Definition of abuse**

Staff or students may suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, or have abuse disclosed to them.

Child abuse is the abuse of relationships. It is a misuse of power and a betrayal of trust. The results of abuse have an immediate and harmful effect on the child and the effects may remain with the child throughout later life. The consequences of the pain of child abuse are frequently more harmful than most people realise, and unresolved abuse issues follow the child into adulthood.

The Department of Health Guidelines "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015) identify four main categories of child abuse. These are *Physical Abuse*, *Emotional Abuse*, *Sexual Abuse* and *Neglect*.

### 4.1. Physical Abuse

Actual or likely physical harm, or failure to prevent physical injury. In a sports situation, for example, physical abuse might occur when the nature or intensity of training is not suitable for a child's immature body.

### 4.2. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse means using children or vulnerable adults for sexual gratification or knowingly failing to protect them from sexual harm. Sexual abuse includes sexual harassment, touching the individual in a sexual manner, encouraging the individual to touch another person in a sexual manner, the use of inappropriate sexual language, exposing the individual to sexual images, text or imagined situations or photographing children or vulnerable adults in indecent or sexual poses.

### 4.3. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse means a persistent lack of affection, continual rejection, isolation, exclusion, deliberate humiliation or threats. It may also refer to an absence of praise, encouragement and stimulation. Emotional abuse in sport might occur in situations where an individual is subjected to unrealistic pressure or bullying from a parent or coach.

#### 4.4. Neglect

Neglect means the failure to meet a child's basic needs and includes failing adequately to provide such things as food, drink, warmth, adequate clothing, and protection from danger or adequate supervision. Neglect in a sporting situation could include a teacher or coach failing to ensure a participant is safe.

The wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance within the day-to-day operation of the Department of Sport & Exercise's programmes, and in the selection and management of staff. Accordingly, this Guidance on Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection has been drawn up and will be followed by all Department of Sport and Exercise staff and Athletic Union clubs.

#### **5. Recognition of abuse/radicalisation**

Indications that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering abuse could include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns.
- Inconsistent explanations for injuries.
- The child/vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abuse act involving themselves.
- Unexplained changes of behaviour – e.g. becoming withdrawn, sudden temper outbursts.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- The child/vulnerable adult is distrustful of adults, where trust would normally be associated.
- There may be a background of threat or coercion
- The experience may have become a normal reality

(This list is not exhaustive.)

#### **6. Dealing with reported suspicions and allegations**

If a child or vulnerable adult tells you that they are being abused the following steps should be followed:

- React calmly, try not to appear shocked and show that you accept what they are saying and that you take their allegation seriously.
- Listen carefully and sympathetically and bear in mind communication in relation to age or any learning disabilities.
- Do not prompt or ask leading questions.
- Explain what action you must take i.e. immediate referral to a designated person.
- Remember: **Do not** promise confidentiality, as information on abuse must be reported.
- Make a note of the date, time, place, and people who were present and write down exactly what you have been told using the exact words if possible.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.

Individual members of staff should never deal with abuse disclosures in isolation and should always refer to the designated person. These are the only people who should deal with the case and report suspected abuse to Social Work Department or the Police.

Once the matter has been referred to the designated person, they will:

- Ensure that the child/vulnerable adult is not in any immediate danger.
- Gather the details.
- Refer the case to the Social Work Department or the Police. It should be made clear to the child/vulnerable adult that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and if the child/vulnerable adult does not wish the complaint to be taken forward, the designated person should seek advice in confidence from the Social Work Department or the Police as to what the best course of action should be.
- The designated person must update the child/vulnerable adult of a decision to report the incident and reason for the referral to the specialised agency.
- The designated person will make contact with the parents or guardian unless this may place the child/vulnerable adult in harm. All discussions should be documented and noted.
- The designated person will contact the relevant agency and make a formal referral in writing.
- Written records of all actions, discussions and decision-making rationale must be recorded and kept in a securely locked location.
- The designated person will be the point of contact for the specialist agency throughout the investigation.

It is **not** appropriate for a member of staff or coach to investigate an alleged incident themselves. **All** investigations **must** be left to Social Services / the Police. It is not up to staff to determine the seriousness of abuse. This should be considered by authorised and appropriate professionals.

## **7. Designated persons to deal with complaints and protection issues**

Department of Sport & Exercise staff and Athletic Union coaches are not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has taken place. If you believe that an individual's behaviour indicates that he or she may be being abused, then report your concerns in full to your **line manager**. It is better to raise a concern that then proves groundless than fail to recognise a genuine case.

The appropriate line manager (Director of Sport & Exercise or Chair of the Governing Board) will take a decision whether to refer the matter to the **Social Services Department** without delay.

An allegation against a member of **staff** should be reported immediately to:

- **Mairi Stewart – Director Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources will then inform the Principal's Office. All allegations of this nature will be handled in accordance with the appropriate University disciplinary procedure for staff.

An allegation against a **student** should be reported immediately to:

- **Dr Lara Meischke, Director of Student Services**

All allegations of this nature will be handled in accordance with the appropriate University procedures for students.

## **8. Allegations against staff/students**

There may be a situation in which you have concerns about the behaviour of another staff member or coach and their relationship with children or vulnerable adults. Report any concerns immediately to your **line manager**, who must closely monitor the individual, and make a decision as to whether to take the matter further. Refer to the "Code of Conduct" and information on the "Arena of Safety" for further details.

The University recognises the possibility of malicious or vexatious complaints and any complaints identified as such will be treated seriously and the University will respond with the appropriate disciplinary procedures or other appropriate action.

Any member of staff or student found, as a result of following the appropriate University Disciplinary procedure, to have committed any act of abuse towards a child or vulnerable adult will be subject to disciplinary proceedings and that person may also be subject to criminal proceedings.

## **9. Investigation process**

Once the investigation process has begun, the person against whom the allegation has been made will usually be restricted from further contact with any children attending the Sports Centre, and with anyone, other than appointed individuals, within the organisation until an investigation has been undertaken. Failure to abide by this procedure may result in accusations of "attempting to pervert the course of justice".

Prior to the investigation, the Department of Sport and Exercise and Human Resources, will consider whether the allegation is one where suspension is necessary. If the decision is made to suspend an individual, it is extremely important for all members of the organisation to understand fully that suspension

is the normal course of action taken in these cases and no guilt should be attached to the fact that a person has been suspended. Any suspension would normally be made on full pay.

The Department of Sport and Exercise is aware that there is a responsibility both to the child / vulnerable adult and to the staff member who has been accused. To be accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour is an extremely traumatic experience for all concerned. Human Resources can arrange for telephone support for staff members from an independent specialist agency.

### **10. Confidentiality**

The Department of Sport and Exercise staff and Athletic Union coaching staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and vulnerable adults. If a child / vulnerable adult confides in a member of staff / coach and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff / coach tells the child / vulnerable adult that he / she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's or vulnerable adult's own sake. Within that context, the individual should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Staff / coaches who receive information about children / vulnerable adults and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

The Department of Sport and Exercise may contact Human Resources for clarification, or to register any concerns.

### **11. Employment issues**

Any person has the potential to cause abuse to children or vulnerable adults. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working for the Department of Sport and Exercise and the Athletic Union. Full-time, part-time and casual staff and Athletic Union coaches should all be treated consistently.

Full-time staff will complete a University application form from Human Resources, and casual staff will complete a Department of Sport and Exercise contract. Athletic Union coaches will complete the appropriate Athletic Union form. Each of these forms require the individual to declare any criminal offences and will advise the applicant that further checks may be made.

At least one reference should preferably be taken up. Where the person will be employed to work directly with children, the reference should preferably be associated to previous work with children, and Enhanced



Disclosure information from Disclosure Scotland will be sought before employment or coaching activity commences.

## 12. Good practice guidance for staff

Staff and students must ensure that they take steps to prevent putting themselves in a position where an allegation of abuse can be made against them. Steps to consider preventing risk of allegations:

- 12.1. No member of staff / coach shall engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games with a child or vulnerable adult. This condition applies regardless of age and also, for example, where a child is over the age of consent, i.e. 16 years of age. *(It should be noted that a sexual relationship between an adult teacher and a 16-year-old student is in breach of professional teaching guidelines. The Government is reviewing whether it should also constitute a criminal offence.)*
- 12.2. No member of staff / coach shall engage in conduct towards a child or vulnerable adult which is intended to be oppressive, threatening, and manipulative or in any way improper with a view to causing the child or vulnerable adult physical or mental harm.
- 12.3. It is unrealistic and inappropriate for the Department of Sport and Exercise/Athletic Union to prohibit physical contact between its staff / coaches and children / vulnerable adults. Touching is an essential part of the coaching process as well as a means of directing movement, encouraging performance and providing comfort and reassurance. Where physical contact is necessary the teacher should explain the reason. However, staff / coaches must bear in mind that even innocent actions can be misconstrued. It is important for staff / coaches to be sensitive to a child's or vulnerable adult's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. No child or vulnerable adult should ever be touched on a part of his / her body in a way that is indecent. *Touch must always be related to the needs of the child or vulnerable adult rather than to those of the member of staff / coach.*
- 12.4. It is the primary duty of every member of staff / coach to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in their care or the care of the Department of sport and exercise/athletic union. Each member of staff / coach must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise risk of harm or injury to any child or vulnerable adult and must abide by the guidelines set out in this document.
- 12.5. Where there is any reason for believing that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of being abused, in any way arising as a result of that child's or vulnerable

adult's association with the Department of Sport and Exercise/Athletic Union, it shall be the duty of any person employed by the Department of sport and exercise/athletic union, to whom that information is made known, to take action at once, according to the procedures laid down in this document.

- 12.6. Any instance of inappropriate behaviour towards a child or vulnerable adult, by any person employed by the Department of sport and exercise/athletic union shall be the subject of an enquiry and report by the Director of Sport and Exercise or designated deputy, and separate from any criminal investigation. The report of such an enquiry will be presented to Human Resources who will decide what further action is necessary and whether there are sufficient grounds to institute disciplinary proceedings.
- 12.7. A member of staff / coach who finds himself / herself alone with a child or vulnerable adult must exercise particular care. There should be no apprehensiveness in the mind of either person if such a situation arises, but physical contact should be avoided whenever possible and the presence of an additional person sought as soon as reasonably practical. It is better to prevent such situations occurring at all.
- 12.8. Children and vulnerable adults must at all times be treated with respect in attitude, language and behaviour. Sexual innuendo whether by word or gesture is prohibited, even in fun. Never allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- 12.9. No person under the age of 16 years shall have the responsibility for supervising any other child or vulnerable adult. No child enrolled on a Children's Programme, of any age, shall have the responsibility for supervising any other child.
- 12.10. Never do things of a personal nature that children or vulnerable adults can do themselves.
- 12.11. Children must not be allowed to leave the premises unaccompanied during the hours of the activity session, unless consent is given to do so by a parent or responsible adult designated by the parent.
- 12.12. If required to administer First Aid, wherever possible, ensure that another member of staff is present, especially if concerned that physical contact may be misconstrued.

### 13. Coaching and working with clubs and teams

It is best to avoid one-to-one coaching sessions if at all possible. Where they occur, the coach who finds himself / herself alone with a child or vulnerable adult must exercise particular care to ensure there is no apprehension in either person. The location of that coaching should be a public place appropriate to the sport / activity.

13.1. When travelling away with clubs / teams, the coach is responsible for:

- Identifying the needs (for example medical and dietary) of individuals and making appropriate allowances.
- Providing same sex coaches or chaperones for children.
- Ensuring the appropriate player:coach ratio for that sport / activity.
- Making itinerary known to the Athletic Union / Department of Sport and Exercise and not publicly advertising the itinerary.
- Ensuring insurance cover is in place and all actions are appropriate to that cover.

### 14. Collection of children at the end of an activity session

The Department of Sport and Exercise cannot accept responsibility for the safety and security of children out with the hours of the designated activity session.

14.1. Parents must ensure that children are collected promptly or within 10 minutes of the end of the activity session.

14.2. At the start and end of each session a register will be taken. Children **must not** leave the group until their parent or guardian has spoken to the activity leader and signed their child in/out; this is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian.

14.3. Should a child not be collected promptly at the end of an activity session, the activity leader should take steps to contact the parent/guardian using all available contact details. They should continue to attempt to contact the parent/guardian for as long as is feasible. If necessary, this duty may be passed to another member of staff to continue. The child should remain at the facility during this time. If, following a reasonable period of time, the child has still not been collected, staff may inform the police of the situation.

14.4. Children who are allowed to make their own way home must have written consent to this effect from a parent or guardian.

## 15. Understanding the “arena of safety”

The “arena of safety” is a place of relationship integrity and respect for others and yourself. It is a position where morale and confidence are enhanced and where both adults and children can feel safe. It is a place of appropriate attitudes, behaviour, lifestyle, regime and cultural practice.

## 16. A violation of the “arena of safety”

A violation of the “arena of safety” concerns inappropriate attitudes and behaviour that confuses the relationship and makes the vulnerable feel unsafe. Such behaviour also gives more weight to any allegation that may be subsequently made. It is the exploitation of a trusted relationship to satisfy personal needs. Focus of concern is normally physical or sexual but it may also be emotional, financial, self-promoting, etc. It usually involves the following:

**Role reversal, dividing and ruling, ruling rather than serving, not listening and being above criticism, secret behaviour, extraneous commitments, separating out and giving special attention, bullying, manipulation, indulgence to personal privilege, unacceptable power and control issues, loyalty being used to maintain silence and control.**

## 17. Photographing and videoing children

The Department of Sport and Exercise/Athletic Union, where possible, will not permit photographs, film, video or other images of children to be taken without the consent of the child, and their parents or carers. Parents/guardians can exclude their child from photographs taken for publicity purposes by checking the ‘tick’ box on the appropriate course application form.

The use of any photography will be strictly prohibited within changing areas.

In the case of a private children’s party taking place within our facilities, the Department of Sport and Exercise recognises that the taking of photographs in this instance is appropriate. Any photographs or video footage taken at a children’s party will be at the discretion of the parent(s) hosting the party.

Individuals wishing to use photographic or video equipment in a professional capacity **must** complete the appropriate **accreditation form**. For full details and a copy of the Saints Sport’s Media & Photography Policy visit: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/sport/aboutus/termsandconditions/>

## 18. Important contact details

Stephen Stewart, Director of Sport and Exercise	scs11	01334462181
Ian Gaunt, Deputy Director of Sport and Exercise	ig21	01334462186
Duncan Caithness, Assistant Director (Sports Development)	gb50	01334462175
Scott Grant/Richard Crighton/Tara Watson, Duty Managers		01334462187
Louise Milne, PCVA contact in Human Resources	lm80	01334462557

## 19. Bibliography

- NSPCC and Sport England (2006). Strategy for Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport.
- Department for Education and Employment (2006). Working together to Safeguard Children
- **sportscotland** (2002) Children and Young People – Safe and Secure in Sport
- **sportscotland** (2002) Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

## 20. Web resources

- **sportscotland**: <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/>
- NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/home.htm>
- Children 1<sup>st</sup>: <http://www.children1st.org.uk/>
- Child Protection in Sport: <http://www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk/>
- Safeguarding people, Care Quality Commission: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/safeguarding-people>
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2010:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/12/09134441/3>

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