

Little League Baseball and Softball of the United Kingdom

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Title: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

Little League Baseball and Softball of the United Kingdom is committed to working in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure that we fulfil our legal and moral obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of all participants, and specifically young people.

We first and foremost take direction from Little League International, who have a Child Protection Programme, which we have included below, with amendments, where relevant, of the applicable definitions, agencies, resources and processes here in the UK.

LITTLE LEAGUE[®] UK

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PURPOSE

The safety and well-being of all participants in Little League[®] is paramount. Little League promotes a player-centric program where young people grow up happy, healthy, and, above all, safe. Little League strives to create an environment that is as safe as possible both on and off the field. Little League does not tolerate any type of abuse against a minor, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, mental, and emotional (as well as any type of bullying, hazing, or harassment). Little League's goal is to prevent child abuse from occurring through required screenings, mandatory training and education, awareness, and mandated reporting of abuse.

Local Little League programs should establish a zero-tolerance culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of misconduct or abuse (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual) between players, coaches, parents/guardians/caretakers, spectators, volunteers, and/or any other individual. League officials should remove an individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and must report the individual to the authorities immediately. Local Little League programs that fail to enforce the zero-tolerance culture or fail to abide by the terms of this policy could face potential revocation or termination of their Tournament eligibility and/or of their Little League charter.

APPLICABILITY

The Little League UK Safeguarding Policy applies to anyone who has any involvement in a local Little League program, as well as anyone who participates in Little League-approved programs and activities, including, but not limited to, Board of Directors members, volunteers, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators, players, or anyone who provides regular services to the league and/or has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. Anyone with questions on who the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy applies to should contact Little League International at

SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org.

IN THE UK, please contact the [District Administrator](#).

ENFORCEMENT

Local leagues must establish a culture prohibiting any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behaviour between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, and any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and must report the individual to the authorities immediately.

As part of the chartering process, local leagues agree to comply with all aspects of the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy. Any violation of the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy may result in the suspension or revocation of a local

league's tournament privileges and/or charter by action of the Charter or Tournament Committees in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Any questions regarding the interpretation of the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy should be directed to the Little League UK District Administrator. The Little League UK Safeguarding Policy will be updated and modified as necessary.

DEFINITIONS

Defining child abuse is the first step in battling it. Child abuse can take several different forms, and it is important to understand what is considered child abuse and other terms that are mentioned herein.

Abuse or Neglect: The NSPCC defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, "when a child is harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect."

Different types of Child Abuse or Neglect – from the NSPCC.

- **Bullying** is intentional behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.
- **Child sexual exploitation** is a type of [sexual abuse](#). It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection.
- **Child trafficking** is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.
- **Criminal exploitation** is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.
- **Domestic abuse** is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another. It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse.
- **Emotional abuse** is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.
- **Female genital mutilation** is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names.
- **Grooming** is the process where someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.
- **Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Non-recent child abuse**, sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18. Sometimes adults who were abused in childhood blame themselves or are made to feel it's their fault. But this is never the case: there's no excuse for abuse.
- **Online abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online.
- **Physical Abuse** is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose.
- **Emotional and Psychological Abuse** is any act that diminishes the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth by humiliation, intimidation, verbal assault, and emotional deprivation.
- **Sexual Abuse** is when a child or young person is forced, tricked or manipulated into sexual activities.

Child/Minor: Any individual who is younger than 18 years of age or who is not an emancipated minor.

League Programs and Activities: Any games, practices, tournaments, approved activities, and/or approved special games are considered Little League programs and activities.

Volunteer: Any person in the organization who provides regular service to the league and has contact with minors: coaches, managers, the Board of Directors, program workers, concession volunteers or workers, bus and carpool drivers, maintenance workers, or anyone that has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

Please refer to the NSPCC for further [definitions](#).

LOCAL LEAGUE CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

All chartered Little League programs **must** adhere to the following requirements to remain affiliated with Little League Baseball and Softball:

1. **COMPLETE BACKGROUND CHECKS**

IN THE UK, we ask volunteers to forward a DBS certificate to the [District Administrator](#). For more about DBS checks, please visit [this resource](#).

2. **MANDATORY TRAINING & CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Annually require all volunteers to complete the Little League Abuse Awareness Training.

IN THE UK, we require volunteers to complete a Safeguarding training course and send the certificate to the [District Administrator](#).

3. **MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Report Child Abuse, including sexual abuse involving a minor, to the proper authorities within 24 hours.

4. **NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING**

Adopt a policy that prohibits retaliation against “good faith” reports of child abuse.

5. **PROHIBIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

Adopt a policy that limits one-on-one contact with minors without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.

It is important that all volunteers in a league complete the training on an annual basis. Even though it may be a training the individual has completed in the past, it is important to keep the information that comes from this training fresh in everyone’s mind. The more individuals in a league or involved in a league that have the information that the Abuse Awareness Training provides, the better.

A. **Recommended Continuing Education Opportunities for Leagues:**

To help create a player-centric environment, each league should implement the following continuing education for its members:

- **Meet with Volunteers**: As Little League is a volunteer-led program, membership in local leagues changes from year to year. It is important to hold regular meetings in which both volunteers and parents can talk about child abuse and ask questions. The Little League UK Safeguarding Policy should be reviewed with participants annually. Since Little League could not exist without the time and effort from volunteers and parents, it is important to communicate directly with the volunteers. For that reason, the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy should be freely copied and distributed to

all adults in the local league. Local Leagues are encouraged to maintain a link on their local league website to the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy.

- **Make Your Position Clear:** Little League has clearly defined rules for dealing with child abuse. Make adults and minors aware that the local league will not tolerate child abuse in any form. Suspected abuse must be reported and retaliation for good faith reporting is prohibited.
- **Stress the Role of Adults in Your League:** Minors should be encouraged to take an active role in protecting themselves, but the responsibility for ensuring their safety ultimately rests with the adults. Adults can identify potentially uncomfortable situations, for themselves, as well as for children. The welfare of the players in your league is the highest priority in any situation.
- **Advise Parents of Training Opportunities for Minors:** USA Baseball also provides Abuse Awareness for Minors training at [USABase.org](https://www.usabaseball.org). Parents should be advised of this resource that is available for their children.
- **Provide Additional Resources:** Many organizations will gladly assist your efforts to protect your players, several of which are listed below. Feel free to provide the name of the below organizations and the websites to parents, volunteers, umpires, as well as minors.
 - [SafeSport](https://www.safesport.org)
 - [SafetoCompete.org](https://www.safeto Compete.org)
 - [USABase.org](https://www.usabaseball.org)
 - [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](https://www.nccm.org)
 - [American SPCC](https://www.american-spcc.org)
- **IN THE UK :** Please refer to any of the following
 - [NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)
 - [Social Care Wales](https://www.socialcarewales.org)
 - [Youth Sport Trust](https://www.youthsporttrust.org)
 - [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

B. Grooming

Grooming is a tactic used by sexual predators to methodically build a trusting relationship with victims, parents, and the community to place themselves in a position of trust, which the perpetrator then uses to draw the victim into a sexual relationship. Many times, the perpetrator becomes a family friend. Grooming can be subtle and hard to recognize. It's important to bring awareness of grooming to all individuals in the league. Understanding the grooming process and behaviours of grooming can help prevent abuse from occurring. The required Abuse Awareness training for all volunteers is one way to begin to raise awareness within the league of grooming. The more individuals in the league that are equipped with knowledge to understand and recognize grooming, the better protected the children are within the league.

Leagues can use the following resources to help educate the members of the league on grooming:

USA Center for SafeSport:

- [What Parents Need to Know: Grooming in Sport](https://www.safesport.org/parents/what-parents-need-to-know-grooming-in-sport)

Safe to Compete:

- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 5-10\)](https://www.safeto Compete.org/discussion-guide/ages-5-10)
- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 11-17\)](https://www.safeto Compete.org/discussion-guide/ages-11-17)
- [Tips for Protecting Child Athletes from Sexual Abuse](https://www.safeto Compete.org/tips-for-protecting-child-athletes-from-sexual-abuse)

C. Bullying

Any type of bullying can have serious effects on players. Anyone who engages in harassment, in any form

(verbal, physical, cyber, etc.), or commits violence or acts of intimidation shall be prohibited from participating in Little League. This applies to player-to-player, adult-to-player, player-to-adult, and adult-to-adult interactions. The League should strive to have a safe and encouraging environment for all individuals participating in the league. The following types of behaviour are not accepted in the Little League culture and should not be tolerated at the Local League:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, shoving, punching, strangling, hair-pulling, stealing, excessive tickling, or any other deliberate and inappropriate touching.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Hurtful, deliberate name-calling, banter, taunting, intimidating, threatening, gossiping, and teasing.
- **Emotional Bullying:** Rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, and peer pressure.
- **Social/Cyber Bullying:** Deliberately excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumors, impersonation, inappropriate photographs, video shaming, and hacking social media accounts.
- **Harassment:** Harassment includes bullying, and all of the actions listed above, as well as subjecting someone to unwanted sexual advances, involving physical contact or explicit written or verbal language.
- **Hazing:** An initiation, ritual process involving different types of harassment that intentionally humiliates the individual or a group.

Leagues can use the following resources to help educate members of the league on bullying: [Bullying 101: Understanding and Responding | Resources | USAB Develops](#)

IN THE UK, refer to this resource: [NSPCC](#).

D. Creating a Player-Centric Environment

Both children and adults may experience frustration at times. It is important to recognize when a person needs to take a break from activities to calm down. Adult volunteers should never escalate a situation when someone is upset. Instead, he/she should attempt to de-escalate any stressful situation.

Little League recommends that local leagues create and issue a “Code of Conduct” that is upheld by players, managers, coaches, board members, umpires, other volunteers, and parents. This should be reviewed each season to establish a safe environment for everyone involved with the local Little League season.

If an individual (player, volunteer, or parent) feels stressed out and cannot handle the situation, he/she should remove themselves from the area until the issue is de-escalated. These situations might include:

- A coach screaming at an umpire - the game should be paused until the coach and umpire can remove themselves until the issue is de-escalated.
- A player gets emotional about a bad play and starts to break down on his teammates - The coach should remove the player from the dugout until he can resolve the issue.
- A parent in the crowd that does not agree with the placement of their child in the lineup/field - A volunteer should remind the parent about respecting the game and ask them to step away or to respect the coach’s decision.

Create a positive area for players to enjoy the game and have fun by implementing a “Cheer Only Zone” at the field to remove the negativity for players. Leagues can utilize training tools for their board members on how to implement a positive coaching experience through:

- [Little League Diamond Leader Training Program](#) Focused on ensuring children have a positive, well-rounded experience on and off the field, the Little League Diamond Leader Training Program is a FREE educational resource that provides coaches with an understanding of the impact that mental, social, and emotional well-being has in youth sports through detailed information, interactive scenarios, and a variety of additional resources.

Through this course, which navigates Little League volunteers through real-life scenarios that are being faced in local leagues all around the world each year, coaches will have a better understanding of the impact he/she has on the players, both on and off the field.

- [Positive Coaching Alliance](#) (“PCA”) PCA offers resources for coaches, parents, athletes, and leaders to make better athletes and better people. As young people return to playing sports after going through the trauma of being away from school, friends, and sports due to the coronavirus, we need to make sure our coaches are equipped with the skills to deal with their social and emotional needs.

3. MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

When an allegation of abuse is made against a local Little League volunteer, the league must protect the child from any further potential abuse by keeping the alleged abuser away from all children in the program until the incident is reported to one or more of the below outlets **and** completely investigated. The Safe Sport Act extends mandatory reporting to all volunteers in the league.

IN THE UK, refer to this [resource](#) for reporting requirements.

4. NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING

A local league may not retaliate against any individual within the league who makes a good faith report of suspected abuse, even if the allegation is later determined to be unsubstantiated. Reporters of abuse cannot be afraid to come forward in cases where he/she either has firsthand knowledge of or a good faith belief that abuse has occurred, even if there is a possibility that the report is wrong. The local league should encourage all individuals in the league to be vigilant and observant in regard to the safety and protection of the children in the league. Many states provide immunity to those who report suspected child abuse in “good faith.”

5. PROHIBIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Most child sexual abuse or grooming is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between players and adult volunteers, you reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. To minimize the chance of an individual’s opportunity to groom or abuse a player, the league must adopt a one-on-one policy relating to the interactions between a player and any adult volunteer of the league during the league’s programs and activities. The League should adopt a policy prior to the start of the season and provide a copy to all volunteers within the league. At a minimum, the policy should include the following:

- Volunteers are prohibited from being alone with a minor athlete during the league’s programs and events unless:
 - There is an emergency.
 - There is written permission from the player’s parent/legal guardian.
 - The volunteer is the player’s parent/legal guardian, sibling, or personal care assistant.
- A Volunteer’s interactions with players must be observable and interruptible by another adult.
- Volunteers are prohibited from contacting players directly through social media or electronic communication unless another adult volunteer or the player’s parent/legal guardian is copied.

- Volunteers are discouraged from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of local league program and activities (such as the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).
- Players may not reside with unrelated volunteers for the purpose of participation qualification within the league.
- If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player, he/she should not leave the child so long as the volunteer has exhausted all the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise, if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary.
- Physical contact between volunteers and players should be very limited. Some examples of appropriate physical touch include high fives or administering appropriate first aid.

SUMMARY

The safety and well-being of all participants in the Little League program is paramount. The Little League UK Safeguarding Policy provides the necessary resources for local leagues to create an environment that is as safe as possible for its players. Protection begins at the local league level. Every local Little League program must place the safety and well-being of its players above all else. Each league must adhere to the requirements of the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy and utilize the additional resources provided to customize its own program to protect its participants which meets the unique needs of the league. Parents/Guardians play a critical role in assuring the safety of their players. It is critical that leagues arm parents/guardians with awareness and share the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy with everyone within the league. Little League International is available to offer assistance to local leagues regarding the Little League UK Safeguarding Policy by contacting SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org.

IN THE UK, contact the [District Administrator](#).

Additional Guidance

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is a great benefit to creating and using positive images of young people playing baseball and softball. However, there is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate images of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Here is some guidance to support best safeguarding practice:

- Request some form of identification when people are registering to take photographs or video images.
- All photography equipment will have the audible 'click' sound turned on.
- All photographs and images will reflect a positive impression of the sport and the participants, will feature appropriate sports kit and will be taken in a way that reduces the opportunities for their misinterpretation or abuse.
- If possible, encourage a focus on the activity rather than the child.

The following will NOT be permitted:

- Unsupervised access to any young person or one-to-one photo sessions.
- Unsupervised photo sessions outside of the sports' competitions.

- Photography in the changing rooms.

Videoring as a coaching aid

There is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, players and their parents should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

It is recommended that all staff and volunteers working with children should undertake:

- Basic safeguarding awareness training (e.g. the Educare for Sport/NSPCC online training programme).
- First Aid (e.g. St John or St Andrew's Ambulance First Aid qualifications).
- Training in how to work effectively with children (e.g. scUK workshops on Positive Behaviour Management and/or How to Deliver Engaging Sessions for Young People).
- The CPSU's Time to Listen workshop, adapted specifically for BaseballSoftballUK. Whilst the content is aimed at the role of the Club Safeguarding Officer, this workshop would benefit everyone involved in baseball and softball.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in baseball or softball to decide whether child abuse has taken place or is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Baseball Softball Gwalia will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports any concerns they may have about a child or an adult's behaviour towards a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff (or a volunteer), there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to a statutory agency and/or the Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer or the statutory agency.
- The Baseball Softball Gwalia Chief Executive Officer will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Baseball Softball Gwalia Chief Executive Officer who will refer the allegation to the appropriate statutory agency.

Confidentiality

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only, which would normally include only the following people:

- The Club Safeguarding Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Children's social care and/or the police.
- The Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer.
- Nominated Panel (appointed by Baseball Softball Gwalia) to provide Safeguarding Case Management Support.

Information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws, which require that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Baseball Softball Gwalia Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and children's social care inquiries.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need -- for example, signposting to helplines, support groups and open meetings. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.



Contacting the Little League Baseball and Softball of the United Kingdom's Safeguarding Officer

Safeguarding officer and contact details:

Charles Truby

[District Administrator](#)./ Safeguarding Officer

Little League Baseball and Softball of the United Kingdom