

# Preston Pride Basketball Club



St. Augustine New Avenham Centre (SANAC)  
Chairman: Brad Walker

## Child Protection Policy

### FOREWORD

It is widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. Child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. Everyone working with Preston Pride Basketball Club either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in associated affiliated organisations, have a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse.

A coach, teacher, or volunteer may have regular contact with children and be a very important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection. When establishing guidelines concerning the protection of children it is important to recognise that the organisation has both a moral and possibly a legal obligation to ensure that when it is given responsibility for children it provides them with the highest possible standard of care.

The members of the Preston Pride Basketball Club, Preston City Council and Lancashire Sports Development recognise that they have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of children with whom they are working.
- Take all reasonable practical steps to protect them from harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment.
- Respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

Child protection procedures can:

- Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work, members of staff, volunteers and those in affiliated organisations.
- Help to maintain professionalism and high standards of practice.

We recognise that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. We are committed therefore to sound recruitment, the provision of support, appropriate training and adequate supervision to all officers so that they can work together

with parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of children remain paramount.

## **PRINCIPLES**

The child's welfare is paramount. We believe all children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language; racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously; and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Any one under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

Working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of the children.

The members of Preston Pride Basketball Club recognise the statutory responsibility of the social services department to ensure the welfare of children and are committed to working together with the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and to complying with its procedures.

## **RECOGNITION 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.

The members of Preston Pride Basketball Club acknowledge that their officers, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, are not experts at such recognition. It therefore expects them to discuss any concern they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge, as follows:

Working within the club:

- If you are working within the club, you should inform the person in charge. If you are the senior teacher or coach within the club then you will need to inform the club chairman/president.

Working with schools:

- If you are working with schools as part of the school curriculum you should inform the Head Teacher of the school.

Working within a local authority scheme (or similar):

- If you are working within a recreational or play scheme you should inform the manager of the scheme.

Working with basketballers or mini-basketballers a way from home:

- If you are working with basketballers or mini-basketballers a way from home (for example at tournaments, training camps, clinics or festivals), then you should inform the team manager, senior coach or course director.

It is the responsibility of these people to ensure that appropriate advice is obtained from the local Social Services department or the NSPCC. (Also see the section 'Responding to Suspicions or Allegations of Child Abuse' on page 5, which details exactly what action to take.) If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, the person in receipt of the information will contact the Social Services direct.

Indications that a child is being abused include:

- 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 the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else - a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour - e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
- Is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive and that the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is not the responsibility of those working in basketball and mini-basketball to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

(See section 'Responding to Suspicions or Allegations of Child Abuse' on page 5).

## **THE MAIN FORMS OF ABUSE**

### **Physical Abuse**

Where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category.

In sports situations, physical abuse might occur when the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs.

This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling.

Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

Basketball and mini-basketball which might involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach or teacher over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn.

Emotional abuse also occurs when there is constant overprotection, which prevents children from socialising.

Emotional abuse in sport might include situations where children are subjected to unrealistic pressure by the parent, coach or teacher, or bullied in order to consistently perform to high expectations.

### **Neglect**

Where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs like food or warm clothing.

Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

Adults may also fail to, or refuse to, give children love and affection and this could also be seen to be emotional neglect.

Neglect in a sport situation could include a teacher or coach not ensuring children are safe, or exposing them to undue cold.

## **THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE**

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age.

The effects can be so damaging, that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult, or impossible, to maintain a stable, trusting relationship; may become involved with drugs or prostitution; may attempt suicide, or may abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies which suggest children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereo-typing, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or to adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be doubly powerless.

## **LISTENING TO THE CHILD**

If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

## **RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

It is not the responsibility of any one working under the auspices of a member of Preston Pride Basketball Club in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place.

There is, however, a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.

The social services department has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made, its staff, have a legal responsibility to investigate. This may involve talking to the child and family and gathering information from other people who know the child. Inquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

### **What to do if there are Concerns**

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children.

Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk were such concerns to be shared, e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately.

In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation, or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible, and recorded. (See section 'Recognition of Abuse' on page 2).

It is the responsibility of the person in charge to inform the social services department without delay. If a person in charge is not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the social services department or the police.

The telephone number is in the phone book. If you're not sure about what to do, you can also obtain advice by telephoning the NSPCC free phone Helpline. The number is 0800 800 5000 and it operates a 24 hour service. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.

In these circumstances the social services department, together with the person in charge, where appropriate, will decide how and when parents or carers will be informed.

### **Recording and Information**

Information passed to the social services department or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. Information should include the following:

- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The child's account, if he or she can give them, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Any times, dates, or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.

Reporting the matter to the police or social services department should not however be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the social services department should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name and designation of the social services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

## **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

(This would include any one working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. For example, volunteers in clubs, club helpers, tutor at training camps, clinics or festivals and coaches.)

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur within other settings, for example, sport or other social activities. Recent inquiries indicate\* that abuse which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in basketball and mini-basketball are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

The person in charge may be informed of situations where they are unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and are therefore unclear about what action to take.

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse but those responsible should always consult with senior colleagues, and gain advice from social services, or the NSPCC where there is any doubt.

This is because this may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern. It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be abusing a child, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers, including the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

The members of Preston Pride Basketball Club would want to assure all staff and volunteers that it would fully support and protect any one who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

1. A criminal investigation
2. A child protection investigation
3. A disciplinary

The results of the police and social services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily (see following page).

\* 'The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Multiple Abuse in Nursery Classes in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne' Published - Newcastle City Council 1994.

If, following consideration the allegation is clearly about poor practice, then the person in charge will deal with this as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the person in charge, or where the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, then this should be referred to a senior officer of the appropriate National Association. Senior officers of the relevant Association will need to decide how this will be dealt with and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer will be reported to the person in charge who will take such steps as he or she considers necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The person in charge will refer the allegation to the social services department, who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted, as soon as possible, following advice from the social services department.

The person in charge should also notify a senior officer within his or her Association, and between them decide who should deal with any media enquiries.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

If the person in charge is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to his or her Association, who is then responsible for taking the action outlined above.

The Association will make an immediate decision as to whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the Association must assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure, 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, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Association must reach a decision based upon the information that is available which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.

The welfare of the children should always remain paramount.

Consideration should be given to what support may be appropriate to, children, parents and members of staff.

### **Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some period of time after the event. For example, by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made, the organisation should follow the procedures given above and report the matter to the social services department or the police. This is

because other children, either within the sport or outside it, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

## **PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF ABUSE BY MEMBERS OF STAFF**

All children have a right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect.

False allegations of abuse are rare, but certain basic guidelines will help safeguard both children, staff, volunteers and the organisation concerned.

These are listed below:

### **Selecting Staff and Volunteers**

Any one may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. It is essential that the same procedure is used consistently whether staff is paid or unpaid in part-time or full-time occupation.

Due to the development structure within the Preston Pride Basketball club, encouragement for parental involvement is high and in this case Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are carried out. In all other cases, pre-selection checks are followed which included:

- All volunteers and staff working for a club should complete an application form.
- Application forms should be designed to elicit information about an applicants past career (including any gaps), and to establish any criminal record. (Failure to disclose information will result in exclusion from the club or organisation).
- Consent should be obtained from applicants for police and social services checks.
- At least two references should be taken up, including at least one regarding previous work with children. (The Club has effective measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of information received in relation to applicants is treated with the strictest of confidence).

There should be a check with “The Department of Health Consultancy Index” who maintain information about individuals who are deemed unsuitable to work with children.

### **Policy and Procedure**

To help prevent abuse of children, the Club has a policy which ensures that children are protected and kept safe from harm. Everyone involved in the care of children should know what to do if there are concerns about abuse and where procedures are kept.

### **Training**

It should be clearly recognised that checks are only part of the process to protect children from possible abuse by coaches and administrators.

They must be operated in conjunction with appropriate training of staff and volunteers so that they are aware of and sensitive to potentially abusive situations.

### **Supervision**

Managers should be sensitive to any concerns about abuse, and act on them at an early stage. They should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns.

### **Complaints**

The management committee of the club should ensure that there is a well established complaints procedure in operation and those parents, and their children have the relevant information that will allow easy access to this procedure.

## **GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN**

You can reduce situations for the abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers by promoting good practice.

The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within a basketball and mini-basketball context.

- Always be publicly open when working with children.
- Avoid situations where a teacher/coach and individual players are completely unobserved.
- Where any form of manual support is required, this should be provided openly.
- The teacher should also be extremely careful as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Where possible parents should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. Where classes have to be supervised in the changing rooms always ensure that teachers/coaches work in pairs. Encourage an open environment, e.g. no secrets.
- Where there are mixed teams away from home, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.

Also, everyone should be aware, that as a general rule it does not make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children a way from others.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

Where cases arise where it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation, or the child's parents.

And you should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- Have children stay at your home with you unsupervised.
- It may be sometimes necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are children with disabilities.

These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and of the children involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a child's reactions and if a child is fully dependent upon you, talk with them about what you are doing and give them choices where possible.

This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities.

If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents or carers should be informed of the incident.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

To enhance this policy a number of additional supporting documents can be utilised. Preston Pride Basketball Club has such documents in place which include:

- Code of Conduct for Club Officers and Volunteers
- Equity Policy
- Code of Conduct for Parents & Guardians
- Guidelines for Dealing with Incidents/Accidents
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- Photographic and Recorded Images Team Consent Form

## Appendix 1

### What to do if you have concerns about Child Abuse by a parent or carer

Are you concerned about abuse by a parent or carer? Report your concerns to person in charge.

- Contact immediately Social Services or Police.
- Social Services and person reporting concerns, decide on how to involve parents/carers.
- Record what child has said or what has been seen, include dates, times and, if possible, send a copy to Social Services.
- If no person in charge is available, person discovering or being told of abuse should contact Social Services or Police Direct.

## Appendix 2

### What to do if you have concerns about Child Abuse by a member of staff or volunteer

Are you concerned about abuse by a member of staff or volunteer? If yes - is it? Poor practice?

- Refer to other member of Staff or Volunteer.
- If no other person in charge is available contact Social Services or Police.
- Refer concerns to Social Services who may involve the Police.
- Arrange contact with parents/carers after advice from Social Services.
- Report to Senior Officer at the EBBA.

## Appendix 3

Useful Addresses and Contact Details:

Preston Pride Basketball Club Child Protection Officers:

Mark Baker	Jane Anthony
42 Cam Wood Fold	71 Gleneagles Drive
Clayton-Le-Woods	Fulwood
Chorley	Preston
PR6 7SD	PR2 7EU
Tel: 01772 491117	Tel: 01772 865876

Department of Health Consultancy Index  
Room 133  
133-135 Waterloo Road  
London SE1 8UG

Home Office (deals with the disclosure of criminal backgrounds)  
F2 Division  
Room 531  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9A

EBBA  
EIS – Sheffield  
Coleridge Road  
Sheffield  
S9 5DA

Mini-Basketball England  
P O Box 22  
Royston, Herts SG8 5NB  
Tel: 01223 207213 Fax: 01223 207166  
e-mail: [kgc@minibasket.u-net.com](mailto:kgc@minibasket.u-net.com)  
Website: [www.minibasketball.com](http://www.minibasketball.com)  
Mini-Basketball England:

Childline  
Freephone 0800 1111  
and Childline Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

For children and young people in trouble or danger:  
(Childline - which welcomes these new child protection procedures, operates a 24 hour free, confidential counselling service for young people, every day of the year, Tel 0800 800 5000).

Preston Social Services  
Bhailok Court  
Pole Street  
Preston  
PR1 1DX  
Tel: (01772) 533689  
Emergency Duty Team Tel: 0845 602 1034