



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Shetland Gymnastics Club is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing, safety, and protection of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in the club. The club recognises its responsibility to promote safe practice and protect all participants from harm, abuse, bullying, neglect, and exploitation.

The club believes it is important that gymnasts, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, and all individuals associated with the club show respect, care, and understanding for the welfare and rights of others at all times, helping to create a safe, positive, and inclusive environment for everyone.

Shetland Gymnastics Club operates in accordance with the safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidance provided by **Scottish Gymnastics**. This policy is aligned with the **Scottish Gymnastics Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy and Guidance**, the Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport, the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, and relevant Scottish and UK safeguarding legislation.

1. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out Shetland Gymnastics Club's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing, safety, and protection of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in club activities. This policy applies to all gymnasts, coaches, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and visitors.

2. Principles

- The wellbeing, safety, and welfare of children and young people is the club's primary concern.
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to participate in gymnastics in a safe, positive, and inclusive environment free from harm, abuse, bullying, and exploitation.
- Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility, and all staff, coaches, volunteers, members, and parents/carers are expected to promote safe practice at all times.
- Children and young people have the right to be listened to and involved in matters which affect them.
- All safeguarding concerns and incidents will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately in line with Scottish Gymnastics procedures.
- The club will work in partnership with children, parents/carers, Scottish Gymnastics, and relevant agencies to promote wellbeing and protection.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Club Management and Committee: Implement this policy, promote a safe and inclusive environment, ensure safeguarding procedures are followed, support the Club Welfare Officer, and comply with Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding requirements and relevant legislation.

Club Welfare Officer: Lead on safeguarding and child protection matters, respond to and report concerns appropriately, maintain confidential records, and support the implementation of safeguarding procedures within the club.

Coaches and Volunteers: Follow safeguarding policies and codes of conduct, maintain appropriate supervision, promote safe practice, report any concerns or incidents promptly, and complete required safeguarding training and PVG checks.

Parents/Guardians: Support the club's safeguarding procedures, share any relevant welfare or medical information, and encourage respectful and positive behaviour.

Gymnasts: Treat others with respect, follow club rules and instructions, and speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried, unsafe, or concerned.

4. Recognising Concerns and Abuse

Shetland Gymnastics Club recognises that abuse and poor practice can occur in all environments. Abuse may be carried out by adults or other children and can take place in person or online. Concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's wellbeing should always be taken seriously.

Types of abuse may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Grooming or exploitation

Possible indicators of abuse or poor practice may include:

- Unexplained injuries
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Fear of certain individuals or situations
- Inappropriate language or behaviour
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or loss of confidence

All concerns, suspicions, or disclosures will be responded to appropriately and reported in line with Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding procedures.

5. Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

Any concerns, suspicions, allegations, or disclosures relating to the welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult must be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

Anyone receiving a disclosure or concern should:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Reassure the individual they have done the right thing by speaking up
- Not promise confidentiality
- Avoid asking leading questions or investigating the concern themselves
- Record the information accurately as soon as possible
- Report the concern immediately to the Club Welfare Officer or appropriate safeguarding lead

If a child or vulnerable adult is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted by calling 999.

6. Managing Allegations Against Staff, Coaches or Volunteers

Shetland Gymnastics Club takes all allegations and concerns regarding the behaviour of staff, coaches, volunteers, or other adults involved in club activities seriously. Any allegation that an individual has harmed, may have harmed, or poses a risk to a child or vulnerable adult will be reported immediately to the Club Welfare Officer and managed in accordance with Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding procedures.

Where appropriate, Scottish Gymnastics, Police Scotland, social work services, or other relevant agencies will be informed. The club will not investigate allegations independently but will cooperate fully with any investigation carried out by the appropriate authorities.

7. Safe Practice Guidelines

All staff, coaches, and volunteers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and promote a safe and positive environment for all participants.

Safe practice includes:

- Treating all participants with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- Maintaining appropriate supervision and following Scottish Gymnastics guidance.
- Avoiding situations where an adult is alone with a child unless unavoidable and appropriately managed.
- Using appropriate and necessary physical contact only for coaching, safety, or welfare purposes.
- Maintaining professional boundaries at all times.
- Challenging and reporting poor practice or inappropriate behaviour.
- Following all club policies, procedures, and codes of conduct.

8. Online Safety and Photography

Shetland Gymnastics Club recognises the benefits of online communication and social media but also understands the potential risks to children and young people. The club is committed to promoting safe, responsible, and respectful online behaviour and protecting all participants from online harm.

All staff, coaches, volunteers, gymnasts, and parents/carers are expected to:

- Use social media, messaging services, email, and other digital platforms responsibly and respectfully.
- Communicate in a manner that reflects the club's values and standards of behaviour.

- Respect the privacy and dignity of others at all times.
- Refrain from posting, sharing, or commenting on content that may be offensive, inappropriate, discriminatory, intimidating, or harmful.
- Report any concerns relating to online safety, cyberbullying, grooming, exploitation, or inappropriate online behaviour.

Coaches, volunteers, and club officials must:

- Maintain professional boundaries when communicating with children and young people.
- Use club-approved communication channels wherever possible.
- Avoid private or personal messaging with children unless there is a legitimate club-related reason and, where appropriate, a parent/carer is included.
- Never request, share, or encourage inappropriate images, videos, or personal information.
- Not engage in online behaviour that could be perceived as grooming, favouritism, harassment, or abuse of trust.

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- Monitor their child's online activity where appropriate.
- Support safe and responsible use of social media and digital communication.
- Raise any concerns relating to online conduct with the Club Welfare Officer.

The club operates a photography and filming consent process. Photographs and videos may only be taken and used in accordance with parental consent and club procedures. Images will be used appropriately and stored securely where required.

The following are not permitted:

- Photography, filming, or live streaming in changing rooms, toilets, or other private areas.
- Sharing images or videos without the necessary permissions.
- Posting content that may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk.
- Online bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or abusive behaviour.

Any concerns relating to online safety, social media use, cyberbullying, or inappropriate online behaviour will be taken seriously and managed in line with this policy and Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding procedures.

9. Anti-Bullying

Shetland Gymnastics Club is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all participants are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is behaviour that intentionally hurts, intimidates, threatens, excludes, humiliates, or undermines another person. Bullying may occur between children, between adults, or between adults and children and can occur in person or online.

Bullying may include:

- Physical bullying, such as hitting, pushing, or damaging property.
- Verbal bullying, including insults, name-calling, teasing, or threats.
- Emotional or psychological bullying, including intimidation, exclusion, humiliation, or manipulation.
- Social bullying, such as spreading rumours or deliberately excluding someone from activities.

- Discriminatory bullying based on race, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, or any other protected characteristic.
- Cyberbullying through social media, messaging apps, online gaming, email, or other digital platforms.

All members of the club are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and consideration.
- Promote positive relationships and good sportsmanship.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so.
- Report bullying concerns promptly.

Anyone who experiences, witnesses, or becomes aware of bullying should report the matter to a coach, Club Welfare Officer, or committee member as soon as possible.

All reports of bullying will:

- Be taken seriously.
- Be dealt with fairly, sensitively, and confidentially where possible.
- Be investigated appropriately.
- Focus on the welfare of all individuals involved.
- Result in appropriate action being taken where necessary.

Actions may include:

- Informal resolution and education.
- Meetings with those involved and their parents/carers where appropriate.
- Behaviour agreements or warnings.
- Increased supervision or monitoring.
- Temporary suspension from activities.
- Further disciplinary action where required

The club will provide appropriate support to any individual affected by bullying and will work to prevent bullying through education, positive behaviour, inclusion, and the promotion of respect throughout the club.

10. Safer Recruitment and PVG Procedures

Shetland Gymnastics Club is committed to ensuring that all individuals working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are suitable, appropriately checked, and properly trained for their role. The club follows safer recruitment practices in line with Scottish Gymnastics guidance and relevant safeguarding legislation.

All staff, coaches, volunteers, and committee members in regulated roles will be subject to appropriate recruitment checks, including PVG Scheme membership where required, references, identity verification, and verification of qualifications and coaching awards where applicable.

The club will ensure that:

- All roles involving contact with children are clearly defined with appropriate role descriptions.
- PVG Scheme membership is required for all regulated roles and must be completed and cleared before an individual begins their role (“no PVG, no start”).
- PVG applications and disclosures are processed in line with Scottish Gymnastics procedures.

- PVG disclosure information is reviewed and assessed as part of the overall suitability decision.
- Where PVG information is returned, it is risk assessed in line with Scottish Gymnastics guidance and relevant safeguarding legislation.
- Where necessary, a suitability assessment will be carried out in consultation with Scottish Gymnastics before any final decision is made.
- At least two suitable references are obtained where appropriate, including one from a current or recent employer where possible.
- Applicants are assessed for their suitability to work with children and young people as part of the recruitment process.
- No individual will begin a regulated role until all required checks, PVG clearance, and recruitment approvals have been fully completed.

The club is committed to ongoing training and development to ensure that safeguarding remains central to all activities. All staff, coaches, and volunteers in regulated roles must complete the required safeguarding and wellbeing training as specified by Scottish Gymnastics.

In addition, the club will:

- Provide induction for all new staff and volunteers.
- Ensure safeguarding training is kept up to date.
- Encourage ongoing professional development for coaches and volunteers.
- Support individuals in understanding and applying safeguarding best practice in all club activities.

Further expectations are reinforced through induction, club policies, and codes of conduct.

11. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Shetland Gymnastics Club recognises the importance of handling safeguarding information responsibly, sensitively, and in line with data protection legislation.

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, reports, and related information will be treated as confidential and shared only with those who need to know in order to protect the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult or to meet legal and safeguarding obligations.

The club will ensure that:

- Safeguarding information is recorded accurately, clearly, and promptly.
- Records are stored securely and in line with data protection requirements.
- Access to safeguarding records is restricted to authorised personnel only, such as the Club Welfare Officer and relevant safeguarding authorities.
- Information is shared appropriately with Scottish Gymnastics and statutory agencies where required.
- Records are retained for an appropriate period in line with guidance and legislation.

All staff, coaches, and volunteers are expected to understand the importance of confidentiality while recognising that safeguarding concerns must always be reported and cannot be kept confidential where a child may be at risk.

12. Policy Review

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, Scottish Government guidance, Scottish Gymnastics requirements, or club practices.

The Club Manager and Welfare Officer are responsible for ensuring the policy remains up to date, effective, and in line with best practice for safeguarding and child protection.

Any updates or amendments to the policy will be communicated to all relevant members, including coaches, volunteers, staff, and committee members, to ensure continued understanding and compliance.

Last Updated: May 2026