



**HOOPSFIX FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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## HOOPSFIX FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Child Protection Policy Statement

The Hoopsfix Foundation has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its work and activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered.

The Hoopsfix Foundation will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in the Hoopsfix Foundation's work and activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Basketball England. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

### Safe Recruitment Procedures and Disclosure and Barring Service Check

Children and vulnerable adults are entitled to participate in basketball activities in a safe and welcoming environment. Whilst anyone has the potential to abuse children or vulnerable adults, safer recruitment procedures will enable clubs or Constituent Bodies (CB) to reduce this risk. When recruiting employees or volunteers all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure only suitable people are selected

### Putting this Policy into Practice: Safer Recruitment Mandatory Vetting of Volunteers and Employees

As outlined by Basketball England, the Hoopsfix Foundation approach to child protection is based on the principles recognised within UK and International legislation and Government guidance. The following has been taken into consideration:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Every Child Matters 2004
- No Secrets – Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse 2000
- Care Act 2014
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention for the Rights of a Child (1989)

- Data Protection Act 2018
- FIBA Internal Regulations Book 1, 124-127.

As such all eligible adults working with children and vulnerable adults in a voluntary or paid capacity in the organisation must have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check processed and risk assessed by Hoopsfix Foundation, in conjunction with Basketball England as the identified partner to streamline the application process.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). It provides access to an individual's criminal record through its disclosure service. Before working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults, DBS clearance is essential and vetting through DBS application must be undertaken in accordance with Basketball England Regulations.

Hoopsfix Foundation will utilise the DBS service offered by Basketball England and all appropriate information will be shared with Hoopsfix Foundation by Basketball England. All volunteers submitting their details for DBS vetting will be made aware that their details will be shared between both Basketball England and the Hoopsfix Foundation. Applications must be submitted within four weeks of submitting an interest in taking up a role with the Hoopsfix Foundation and must be renewed with Basketball England every three years.

Applicants will also have to submit references, disclose job history, complete a safeguarding self-declaration and provide proof of ID, confirm eligibility to work in the UK and lastly take part in an interview.

The below overarching principles apply:

- It is a criminal offence for a barred person to work or volunteer in work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children, or to seek or offer to do so.
- It is a criminal offence to knowingly allow a barred person to work or volunteer in work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children. The maximum penalty for either of these offences is up to five years in prison, or a fine, or both, to be decided by the court.
- If we dismiss a member of staff or volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or would have done so if they had not left, we will inform Basketball England, and refer the person to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### Appropriate Training

All coaching and staff participating in Hoopsfix Foundation activities must have received the appropriate training and must have obtained the relevant training. i.e Basketball England

coaching Level 1 for Assistant Coaches and Level 2 for Head Coaches. Any other relevant training around Safeguarding and First Aid will also be signposted or provided for all volunteers where required.

Hoopsfix Foundation will also provide mentorship and supervision to ensure volunteers are given guidance and encouragement in alignment with the Hoopsfix Foundation ethos and values, ensuring the promotion of a safe and welcoming environment for all.

### Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can provoke strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate 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 young people in order to harm young and vulnerable people.

A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where individuals need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported in accordance with the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters Hoopsfix Foundation activity having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances Hoopsfix Foundation must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

### Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.

- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving, young people should always be consulted, and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications, guidelines, legislation, and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups must be supervised in the changing rooms parents, teachers, coaches or officials will always work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will. Use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments are all examples of poor practice.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if Hoopsfix Foundation officials are required to transport young people in their cars. Having a second adult present or driving in convoy can be a way to mitigate the risks.

#### Practices to Be Avoided:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. when a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at Hoopsfix Foundation or the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

Practices never to be sanctioned:

You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

Basketball England recommends that personal care for very young or disabled children is not undertaken by coaches or other team staff. If a child is disabled to the extent that they need assistance with personal care, this should be carried out by their parent or carer.

If any of the following incidents occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- if you accidentally hurt a player.
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.

Late Collection:

It is not the responsibility of the Hoopsfix Foundation to transport children to or from sessions or events and parents should not rely on volunteers or staff in this way. All parents will be provided with a central telephone number to notify Hoopsfix Foundation volunteers/staff in the eventuality of any delays.

*In cases of late collection, staff should:*

- Attempt to contact the child's parent on their contact numbers;
- Use the alternative contact name/number if possible;
- Wait with the child at the sport facility, with other staff or parents present if possible; - if the child is not collected within 30 minutes of the end of the session, the staff member should speak to the Club Welfare Officer to decide whether it is necessary to contact Children's Social Care, for example, where the staff member has not been able to make contact with a parent/guardian;
- Remind parents of the policy relating to late collection.

*In cases of late collection, staff should not:*

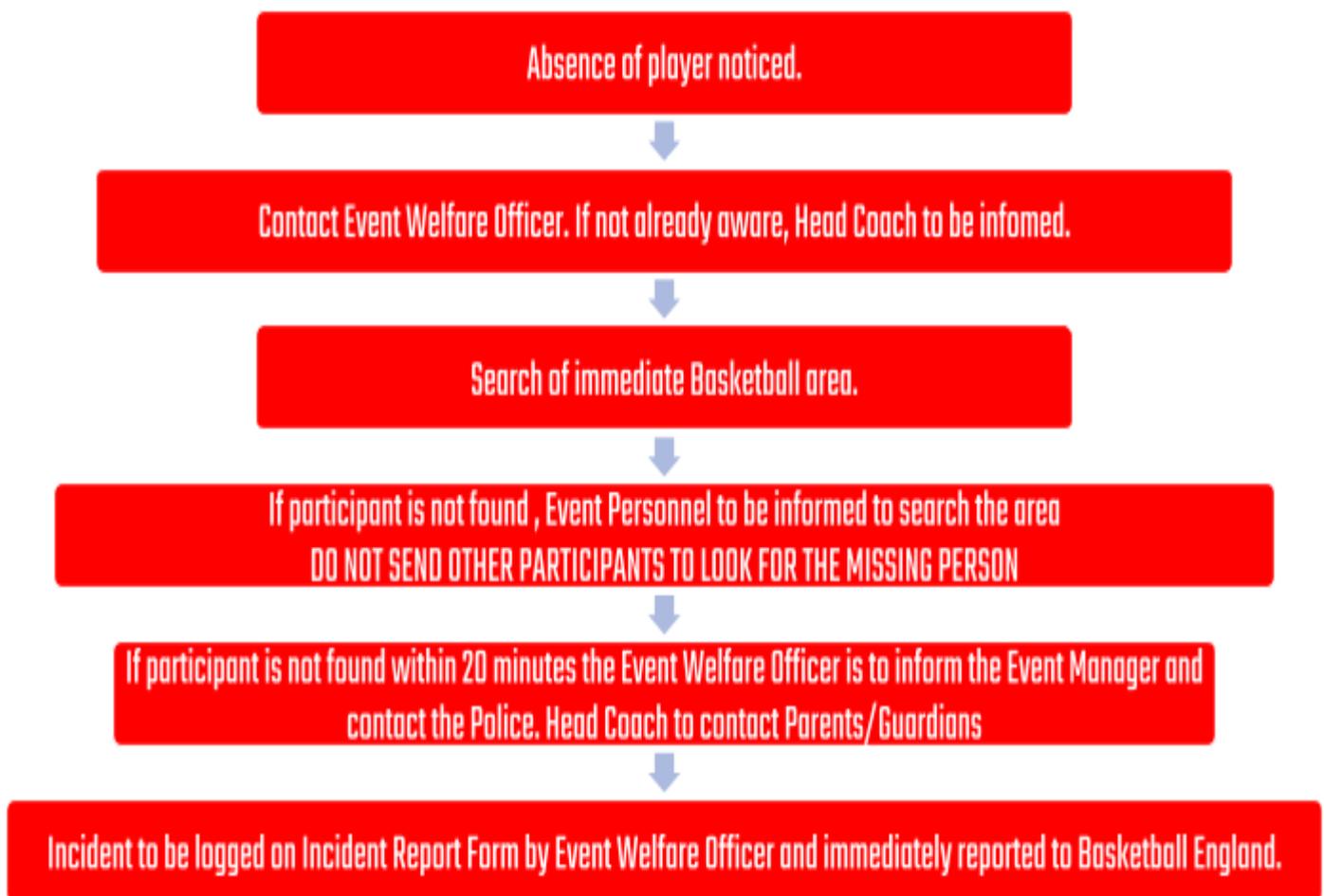
- Take the child home or to any other location without speaking to their parents;
- Send the child home with another person without permission from a parent;
- Leave the child on their own;
- Ask the child to wait in a vehicle or sport facility with you alone.

#### Missing Participants:

Team staff are responsible for supervision of players in their team. If a player is found to be missing, the procedure below should be followed. A description of the player should be completed and circulated to those involved in searching and the player's card or photograph should be used to provide identity.

Particular times can give rise to increased risk, namely arrival time and time for leaving. Team staff should ensure good communication with players and families to ensure everyone is aware of changes in arrival/collection plans (e.g. a child being collected by parents or not going on the team coach).

### Missing Participant Procedure:



### Safe Environments

A safe environment is one where the possibility of abuse is openly acknowledged; volunteers and employees are vetted and trained; and those who report suspicions and concerns are confident that these will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Communication is central to maintaining a safe environment; this includes information given to parents at the start of the season (such as the Child Safeguarding Officer's name), choosing the correct and appropriate method of providing information to children and vulnerable adults (email/phone to parents), listening to children's views on matters which affect them, as well as considering how to communicate in an emergency (mobile/landline).

Messages relating to children, sent via telephone, emails and texts, should be through their parents/guardians. Where appropriate older players may be copied in but this should always be done by blind copying in order to protect their data. Direct personal communication with children should always be avoided, unless in exceptional circumstances.

### Adult to Child Ratios

There should always be more than one suitably vetted adult in charge of any group of children or vulnerable adults.

In accordance with the Basketball England Safeguarding Policy, the Hoopsfix Foundation recommends a minimum ratio of:

- 1:10 for children between the ages of 13 – 18 years
- 1:8 for children between the ages of 9 – 12 years
- 1:6 for children between the ages of 4 – 8 years

#### Hoopsfix Foundation on the Road

The policy guidelines for general activities apply equally on road trips including overnight stays. When on tour, if an adult is solely there supporting their own child, they will not need DBS clearance, but they will if they are acting in any official capacity with other children on behalf of the Hoopsfix Foundation. This would apply to those undertaking bedtime or other supervisory duties. When on tour with a group of vulnerable adult's relevant organisations are advised to conduct a risk assessment and apply a suitable ratio based on the individuals and their companions/carers within the tour party.

#### Inappropriate Relationships with Children or Vulnerable Adults

An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a child over 16 years of age, or a vulnerable adult, is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position. Whilst it may not be a criminal offence, in a Hoopsfix Foundation setting it will be treated very seriously and may result in Basketball England disciplinary action, including suspension from attending all future Hoopsfix Foundation activity.

The Hoopsfix Foundation, in line with Basketball England has a legal duty to refer anyone removed from work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Therefore, an adult in a position of trust involved in a sexual relationship with a child over 16 years of age, or a vulnerable adult, may be referred to the ISA for consideration. This could result in the adult being barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by the ISA. No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child or vulnerable adult in their care; this is often referred to as grooming. Adults must never send children or vulnerable adults inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text, or other electronic media.

### Safeguarding Disabled Children & Vulnerable Adults

Disabled children and adults and their families may need additional information, help and support. The club's paid and volunteer workforce may require training and advice to ensure they include and safeguard them. Some children and vulnerable adults may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- Lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- Require higher degrees of physical care and support
- Have limited communication skills, find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- Have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser
- Have a history of having limited or no choice or have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

### Recognition of Poor Practice

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the guidelines set out in this Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedure or the:

- Rights – of the children and their parents/carers.
- Responsibilities – for the welfare of the child.
- Respect – for other children.

### 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. Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or a child) towards a child.

All staff have a duty to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or young person immediately with the Designated Child Protection Officer, their line manager or head of service.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child; somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. It can take many forms but is usually divided into four categories which have been adapted from Working Together 2018;

- **Physical abuse** is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Examples of physical abuse in basketball may occur when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the young person's immature and growing body or where drugs are used to enhance performance.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Emotional abuse in basketball may occur if young people are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. In sport, coaching techniques, which involve physical contact could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect in sport could

include a teacher or coach not ensuring young people were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Extremism** goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

- **Bullying and Cyberbullying** is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** 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. FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.

- **Self-Harm** can take lots of physical forms, including cutting, burning, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning and overdosing. There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. And once they start, it can become a compulsion. That's why it's so important to spot it as soon as possible and do everything you can to help. Self-harm isn't usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it's often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions. It's a way of coping. So, whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously.

### **Indicators of Abuse**

It is important to remember that a child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and that abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. There is no absolute criterion on which to rely on when judging what constitutes significant harm, the following indicators on the signs and symptoms may be consistent with abuse; but children may exhibit them for other reasons. For this reason, any concerns about a child must be raised with the designated child protection officer, line managers or head of service at the earliest opportunity.

## **Bullying**

It is important to recognise that abuse is not always carried out by an adult on a child; the abuser may be a young person, for example, in the case of bullying. Bullying may be seen to be deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. Although anyone can be a target for bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive, and perhaps anxious and insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith, or culture. Bullying can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision – on the way to and from school for example. Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of reasons and may have been bullied or abused themselves. Typically, bullies have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others.

Bullying may be:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal, e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti, gestures.
- Emotional, e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring.
- Sexual, e.g. unwanted physical contact, abusive comments. The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

There are several signs that may indicate that a child is being bullied:

- Behavioural changes, such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, erratic mood swings, reluctance to go to school, activities or sports clubs.
- A drop in performance at school or standard of play.
- Physical signs, such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching, bruising, damaged clothes, and bingeing, for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possession

Responding to Suspicions & Allegations of Abuse and Poor Practice

It is important to maintain an open culture where employees, volunteers, elected members, children or parents or carers feel able to express concern about child protection issues and issues of dealing with children and vulnerable adults.

*This procedure and guidance apply whenever there is a cause for concern. This can include when;*

- Someone has behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child

- Someone possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Someone behaved towards a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

This section outlines what to do if the alleged abuser is a staff member, volunteer, contractor, consultant or another person working on behalf of the Hoopsfix Foundation.

Any employee, child or young person reporting concerns under this policy is assured that their concerns will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

The Hoopsfix Foundation will not tolerate harassment of any employee, child or young person who raises concerns of child abuse. Such harassment will be dealt with under disciplinary procedures, and the organisation will robustly support any ensuing investigation by any recognised authority. False allegations do occur. However, if a child indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused; this should never be ignored. Any allegation of abuse must be reported to the designated child protection officer. Allegations of non-recent abuse should also be reported.

### Responding to a Young Person Making a Disclosure or Allegation

#### *Action to be taken:*

A member of staff receiving information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell.
- Not make promises of confidentiality but let them know that you will have to tell another adult.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Questions should not be leading and should consist of
  - Who...?
  - What...?
  - When...?
  - Where...?
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.

The relevant Hoopsfix Foundation lead will make a full written record of what has been said (using the child's own words), heard and/or seen as soon as possible using an Incident Report form. Noting the date and time, any names mentioned and to whom the information

was given. Such records should be signed and dated by any relevant parties and stored appropriately in line with the Hoopsfix Foundation Data Management Policy.

#### *Actions to be avoided:*

The person receiving information should not:

- Panic.
- Allow their shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Make promises to keep secrets.
- Discuss the issue with anyone other than the Designated Officer.

#### Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

It is essential that Hoopsfix Foundation employees understand that child abuse is a complex issue, and that diagnosis of the validity of an allegation is the responsibility of relevant, expert agencies. The role of Hoopsfix Foundation employees is to report and refer any concerns, not to investigate or judge.

#### Sharing Concerns with Parents

The Hoopsfix Foundation is committed to working 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 initial concerns. It is essential, therefore, that the designated Child Protection Officer undertakes this liaison.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer is the alleged abuser or is not able to respond to the situation appropriately). If there is any concern that informing a parent or carer may place the child at risk or may compromise police evidence, immediate advice must be sought from the designated Child Protection Officer.

#### Reporting Procedure

- Staff responding to a suspicion of abuse or poor practice should complete an Incident Report form.
- The incident should be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer, the line manager or head of service. The manager who was informed should inform the designated Child Protection Officer.

- The designated Child Protection Officer will assess the incident; decide what appropriate action needs to be taken and potentially contact the Police. Should the designated officer not be available, the head coach will assume this role.
- The organisation will co-operate fully with any resulting investigation carried out by external child protection agencies or the police.

### Records and Information

Information passed to the external child protection agencies or police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed report at the time of the initial disclosure/concern. Information included in this report should include:

- The nature of the allegation
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's account in their own words, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Witnesses to the incident(s)
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Date and time of record.

Reporting to the Police should not be delayed in an attempt to obtain more information.

A record should also be made of the name of the police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. A note of any crime report number should also be taken and stored appropriately in line with the Hoopsfix Foundation Data Management Policy.

All coaches and volunteers of the Hoopsfix Foundation must be prepared to attend a relevant child protection training or child in need meeting and comply with the need to complete appropriate paperwork.

Electronic and hard copies of all reports and incident information must be sent to the designated Child Protection Officer.

### Allegations Against Staff

Any person working on behalf of the organisation who suspects that a colleague may be abusing a child or young person must act on their suspicions immediately. Action should also be taken if it is felt that colleagues are not following the codes of conduct.

This action will serve not only to protect children but also colleagues from false accusations.

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their own working environment. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the organisation and that there is a possibility that their concerns are unfounded. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be a suspicion of malpractice. The Hoopsfix Foundation acknowledges that this is an extremely sensitive issue and assures all employees and persons working on its behalf that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports a concern or an allegation that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

### Types of Investigation

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

- Criminal
- Child protection
- Disciplinary (to be treated as gross misconduct)

Civil proceedings could also be instigated by the person/family of the person who alleged the abuse. The results of any Police investigation may influence a disciplinary investigation by the organisation, but not necessarily.

### Action to Be Taken

#### *Poor practice*

If, following consideration by the designated Child Protection Officer and appropriate external Child Protection agencies, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the relevant manager may wish to invoke an investigation in accordance with Hoopsfix Foundation Disciplinary Procedure.

#### *Suspected Abuse*

Where it is suspected that abuse has taken place:

- Any suspicion that a member of staff has abused a child should be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer, the line manager of the member of staff or head of service immediately. The manager informed should inform the designated Child Protection Officer.
- The designated Child Protection Officer will take such steps as they feel appropriate to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The designated Child Protection Officer will report the incident to the relevant head of service and Basketball England where consideration will be given to the next steps. These steps may include suspension on full pay (where applicable), whilst the matter is investigated further.

The designated Child Protection Officer will seek advice from the police when required.

With agreement from Basketball England, the designated Child Protection Officer will initiate an investigation in line with the organisation's Disciplinary Procedure to oversee the internal investigation. In most instances this team will include the designated Child Protection Officer.

If the designated Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to the Chair of the organisation who will assume their role in the above procedure.

### Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This is required in order to:

- Protect children.
- Facilitate enquiries.
- Avoid victimisation.
- Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected.
- Manage disciplinary/complaints aspects.

It is expected that those involved on a need-to-know basis would include the following:

- Members of the team overseeing any investigation.
- The parents of the child alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- The Child Protection Officer and the Police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is under 18 years of age).

Any information will be stored in a secure place with access limited to the investigation team and in line with data protection.

### Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- Irrespective of the findings of the police inquiries, the Hoopsfix Foundation will assess all individual cases under its own disciplinary procedures to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.
- The Hoopsfix Foundation will reach a decision based on the available information and decide on a balance of probability basis whether an allegation is true.

The welfare of children will always remain paramount.

### Notification to Social Services

A copy of the Incident Report form should be submitted to the County Duty Service (Social Care) without delay. This is the responsibility of the Designated Child Protection Officer.

Any further inquiries from the County Duty Service (Social Care) or any other interested third party should be passed immediately to the disciplinary investigation team to deal with. A written record should be kept of any such conversations.

### Support to the Subject of Allegations

Subject to the specific procedures the subject of the allegations should be:

- Advised at the outset to contact her/his Union representation if a member.
- Treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes.
- Kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation.
- Clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes.
- Provided with appropriate support (via occupational health).

### Action if Bullying is Suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out for Responding to Suspicions of Abuse above if bullying is suspected.

### Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying

- All signs of bullying should be taken seriously.
- All children should be encouraged to speak and share their concerns.
- The victim should be helped to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- An open environment should be created.
- All allegations should be investigated, and action taken to ensure the victim is safe. The victim and bully(ies) should be spoken to separately.
- Staff should reassure the victim that they can be trusted and will help them, although they cannot promise not to tell anyone else.
- Records should be kept of what is said.
- Staff should report concerns to the chair of the organisation.

### Action Towards the Bully(ies)

- The situation should be explained to the bully(ies).

- An effort should be made to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- An apology to the victim should be sought.
- The parents of the bully(ies) should be informed.
- Any borrowed items should be returned to the victim.
- Appropriate sanctions should be imposed as necessary.
- Encouragement and support for the bully(ies) to change their behaviour should be offered.
- Meetings should be held with parents to report on progress.
- All appropriate staff should be informed of action taken.
- A written record of action taken should be kept.

#### Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. 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 procedures as detailed above should be used and the matter reported to the police by the Designated Child Protection Officer. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to child abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

#### Misuse of the Procedure

Malicious complaints about an employee(s) and /or serious and/or persistent abuse of these child protection procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the disciplinary process. Employees may not discuss any allegation of child abuse, whether substantiated or not, with:

- Anyone within the Hoopsfix Foundation, other than who they consulted and the designated Child Protection Officer.
- Any member of any external agency, other than as part of the formal reporting procedure as set out in this policy or as part of the investigative process.
- Any other interested party, including parents, carers, and relatives of the child or young person without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation.

This does not exclude the employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative, Human Resources, or other bona fide legal adviser.

Any enquiries from the media concerning an allegation of child abuse must be referred to the lead investigating agencies press office. Any direct question must be answered with the phrase “No comment.”

## Whistle Blowing

Safeguarding children and young people requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. The Hoopsfix Foundation supports an environment where people feel free to raise their concerns with the knowledge that all concerns will be taken seriously.

The term 'Whistle Blowing' is often used in such circumstances to describe the raising of a concern about practices, procedures or conduct of an individual. In basketball context a whistleblower may be:

- A coach or official.
- A basketball player.
- A parent.
- A volunteer.
- A member of the public.

Concerns should be raised without delay to either the Organisation Welfare Officer or the Chair of the organisation or Basketball England Safeguarding and Compliance Officer. The earlier concerns are reported, the easier it will be to take action.

Anyone reporting a concern should provide as much information and detail as possible. This could include:

- Names of the people involved
- Other witnesses
- Dates of events
- Any other relevant documentation

Hoopsfix Foundation understands that whistleblowers are often very reluctant to report concerns. Thus, the Hoopsfix Foundation recognises that whistleblowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In these circumstances, the identity of the whistle blower will be kept confidential. Any subsequent reason why disclosure may be required will be discussed in detail with the whistleblower before any action is taken.

It must be recognised that concerns that are reported anonymously are frequently very difficult to investigate. The decision whether to investigate an anonymous allegation will be made by the police based on the seriousness of the concerns and the credibility of the referral and the likelihood of identifying others who can confirm the allegations. Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. All concerns raised under this procedure will be treated seriously and a decision made about whether or not an investigation is appropriate. Depending upon the nature of the matter it may be referred to the police. In these circumstances, the

whistleblower may be asked to provide a written statement and give evidence to the police. The Hoopsfix Foundation will provide support to the whistleblower during this process.

The Hoopsfix Foundation will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect anyone who has raised a concern in good faith. Anyone who is found to have victimised or harassed a whistle blower will face disciplinary action. Anyone who raises concerns known to be untrue may also be subject to disciplinary action.

#### Providing Information to Police or Social Services

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. As well as any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record all details.
- Where possible, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

#### Photography and Videography

The Hoopsfix Foundation adopts the photography and video guidance outlined by Basketball England, further details of which can be located [here](#).

The Hoopsfix Foundation is committed to ensuring young people are protected from the inappropriate use of their images. No images should be taken at junior games, training or

events without the necessary consent being obtained first including consent as to how the images will be used, especially if this is on websites and in other publications. There is no intention to prevent coaches using video as a legitimate coaching aid, but players and their parents should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and informed consent should be gained in writing, with care taken in the storing of such images. As Data Processors, the Hoopsfix Foundation will comply with all UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) legislation as legally obliged.

#### Travelling during the Hoopsfix Foundation Road Trips

- All staff/volunteers over 18 that are travelling must be DBS checked
- All staff/volunteers under 18 must provide signed consent from a parent or guardian with permission to travel with staff/volunteers.
- No volunteers under 16 years are permitted to travel during the National Tour.
- All rooming allocations will be made in accordance with gender and age-appropriate guidelines.

#### Covid 19 – Considerations

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented new issues and some heightened risks for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk but our safeguarding principles remain broadly the same.

- The best interests of children must always continue to come first
- All staff and volunteers must be familiar with the process of how to respond to concerns
- If anyone has a safeguarding concern about a child or adult at risk, they must continue to act and act immediately
- If anyone has a concern about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children, they must continue to follow the Safeguarding Policy and report concerns immediately.
- Safe recruitment processes must be maintained in all settings to ensure unsuitable people are not able to access roles in Basketball, even if a Basketball England license is not being applied for.

In order to be proactive in our response to the effects of Covid-19 we will;

- Ensure we promote support services such as Childline, NSPCC, Mental Health support services, Ann Craft Trust and where possible share advice for keeping safe online.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have up to date Safeguarding training
- Ensure that records are up to date. Parents and carers should be asked if there have been any changes regarding their child's welfare, health and wellbeing during their period of absence from the sport.

- Provide support where possible to low-income families whose income may have been negatively affected by the economic uncertainty.
- Continue to work with educational providers, local authorities, safeguarding leads and other welfare providers when required to do so.
- Ensure if using online platforms for training or coaching, these are safe environments for all concerned.

Child Protection Welfare Officers

<b>Darnelle Johnson</b>	07808849313	darnelle@hoopsfix.com	
<b>Sam Neter</b>	07841591550	sam@hoopsfix.com	21 Aurelia House, Sunrise Close, London, E20 1DT
NSPCC Protection Helpline - Phone 0808 800 5000 - Text 88858 <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/</a>			

APPENDIX

**Incident Report Form**

Details of Reporter of Incident:

Name:	
Club and Position:	
Contact Telephone Number(s)	

Details of Child:

Name:	
Basketball Club:	
Address:	
Parents Address (if different)	
Date of Birth:	
Ethnicity and Disability (if known):	

Date and Time of Incident(s):	
Your Observations:	

Exactly What The Child Said:	
Action Taken So Far:	
<i>Name &amp; Contact Details of Any Witness(es)</i>	

Have you?

- Reassured the young person.
- Been honest and not made promises you cannot keep.
- Explained why you may have to tell other people to stop what is happening.
- Avoided closed questions and asked as few questions as possible.
- Encouraged the child to use their own words.