

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY PATH4

Lead Safeguarding and Welfare Officer: Moinul Islam

1 Child Protection Policy

1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Path 4 is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. At Path 4 we have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, Staff, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Path 4 is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Path 4 and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

1.1 Policy Statement

Path 4 is committed to the following:

The welfare of the child is paramount.

All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in all our activities in a fun and safe environment.

Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All Path 4 employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility using our safer recruitment policy and procedure and will be provided with guidance

and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.

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

1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures.

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The welfare officer should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children and young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in a safe and fun environment.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in Our Activities to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify some good practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)

Make the experience of all lessons and activities fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront, and deal with bullying.

Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.

Always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning

Maintain 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)

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given.

Request written parental consent if Organisation officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays.

Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff.

Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for Organisation or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.

Secure written parental consent for the Organisation to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.

Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

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

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender,

race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the young person is constant criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful

behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

- Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

3.3 Indicators 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. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

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 an explanation seems inconsistent.

The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.

Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person.

Unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet,

withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
inappropriate sexual awareness.

- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
difficulty in making friends

being prevented from socialising with others

displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
losing weight for no apparent reason becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy,
depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
an unexplained drop off in performance

physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and
bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more
of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those working
in Path 4 to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take
inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. Staff should be vigilant, and any
concerns should be reported to the Organisation welfare officer.

All parents and performers should be made aware when staff/coaches use video equipment as a
coaching aid.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Path 4 in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide
whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns
through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take
necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse

occurring within Path 4 and to allegations/suspensions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspensions.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:
Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person.

Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.

Listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously.

Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.

Inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.

The safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern, and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.

Record all information.

Report the incident to the Organisation welfare officer.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can get advice from The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH Team) on the following Safeguarding referral numbers for Oldham:

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (children and Adults)	0161 770 7777
Emergency Team (out of hours)	0161 770 6936
After Care team (children 16 and over)	0161 770 6599
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	0161 770 8870
Prevent	0161 770 4196
Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also 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/injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said? Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Path 4 expects all staff members, including volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the nominated Organisations welfare officer is not available, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the duty officer from your local MASH Team or the police. Telephone numbers can be found under section 4.2 or in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved

Child protection in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Organisation will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document the Organisation are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection. Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to Path 4 welfare officer who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

Path 4 will refer the matter to the MASH TEAM

The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the MASH TEAM.

The chairperson/Director of your organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings

The Organisations welfare officer should also notify the relevant sport governing body if the Organisations welfare officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation The report must be made to the appropriate Director/Manager who will refer the matter to the MASH TEAM

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to the MASH TEAM. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.5 Concerns outside the immediate Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

Report your concerns to the Organisations welfare officer

If the Organisations welfare officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local MASH TEAM or the police immediately

MASH TEAM and the Organisations welfare officer will decide how to inform the parents/carers The Organisations welfare officer should also report the incident to the Organisations Governing Body. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly

Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis

4.6 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 includes the following people:

The Organisations Welfare Officer
The parents of the child

The person making the allegation.

The MASH TEAM /police

The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek MASH TEAM advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

Path 4 welfare officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries

Irrespective of the findings of the MASH TEAM or police inquiries the Path 4 Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases 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; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Path 4 Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

5 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children

5.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

5.2 Controlling Access to Children

All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit

information about the applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
Consent should be obtained from the applicant to conduct DBS

Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

5.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures

Their qualifications should be substantiated

The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified

- They should sign up to the organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct

Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

5.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations

Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse

Respond to concerns expressed by a child Work safely and effectively with children

Path 4 requires:

All staff and volunteers who have access to children undergo a DBS check.

All employees, volunteers, coaches, welfare officers and team managers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person. All coaches, teachers, trainee coaches, volunteers, pastoral staff and leaders should have an up to date first aid qualification.

Declaration

On behalf of Path 4 we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed: M. Islam

(n.b. One of the signatories should be the Welfare Officer)

Name: Moinul Islam
Path4, Head Teacher
Date: 10/08/2025

Name: Alaur Rahman
Path 4, Deputy Head
Date: 10/08/2025