



NORTHAMPTON **SAINTS**

Northampton Saints Safeguarding Policy

Season 2023/24

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Safeguarding Leads and Officers

Club Designated Safeguarding Lead

Connor Fleming

connorfleming@northamptonsaints.co.uk

+44 (0) 7538156076

Foundation Designated Safeguarding Lead

Jordan Letts

Jordan.letts@northamptonsaintsfoundation.org

+44 (0) 7713783505

Academy Safeguarding Officer

Alex O'Dowd

alexodowd@northamptonsaints.co.uk

+44 (0) 7491818600

Introduction

Everyone who participates in Rugby Union or any other event or activity at cinch stadium at Franklin's Gardens is entitled to do in an enjoyable and safe environment. Northampton Saints believes it has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, coaches, spectators and volunteers, it provides them with the highest possible standard of care.

Northampton Saints is committed to devising and implementing policies that accepts its responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the risk of harm and abuse. This means that Northampton Saints will follow procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults and report any concerns about their welfare to the Club Safeguarding Lead, Rugby Football Union, and local social services and/or Police where necessary.

The aim of our policy is to promote good practice, provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Northampton Saints and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. For these purposes, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

Policy Statement

Northampton Saints 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 Rugby Union 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 involved in Rugby Union and who work with children, will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, 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.
- To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in Rugby Union, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework

Northampton Saints aims to give information and guidelines to all who work with children and young people. Many may consider that only rugby coaches need help and advice, but we believe it is essential that all club officials, volunteers and any others who meet children through rugby, have clear guidelines and information to help them and, more importantly, the children whom they come into contact with through rugby.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants at Northampton Saints to start 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.

Good practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g., avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets)
- Make the experience of Rugby Union fun and enjoyable – promote fairness, and confront and deal with bullying
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the child first
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children (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 children. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child's consent has been given.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. Where children to be supervised in changing rooms, encouraging parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc. work in pairs.
- Request written parental consent if Northampton Saints officials are required to transport children 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.
- Ensure that at away events adults should not enter a child's room or invite a child into their rooms.
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking, swearing or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the development needs and capacity of the child and do not risk sacrifice welfare in a desire for Northampton Saints' or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Secure written parental consent for Northampton Saints to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises. This includes emergency contact details for parent or guardian.

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

Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a child
- Engaging in rough, or physical or sexually proactive games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that the child can do themselves

Where cases arise where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situations e.g., transporting a child in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of a parent/carer and the child involved.

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

Physical contact in Rugby

Many sports including rugby, by nature, require a degree of physical contact between adults and children. Physical contact can be used appropriately to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. The aims of guidelines relation to a physical contact are to provide adults and children with appropriate types and context for touching.

Physical contact between adults and children should only be used when the aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury
- Meet the requirements of a particular sport

Physical contact should:

- Not involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts
- Meet the need of the child and not the need of the adult
- Be fully explained to the child and with the exception of an emergency, permission should be sought
- Not take place in secret or out of sight of others

Records of injuries should be fully recorded and reported to the Club Safeguard Lead, Foundation Safeguarding Lead, Or Academy Safeguarding Officer.

Defining Child Abuse

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

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

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

Physical Abuse

Where adults physically hurt or injure a child e.g., hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would constitute as child abuse.

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

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child is likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a child to be frightened or feel 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 child is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, or expected to perform at levels that are above their capacity. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

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 different 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 child too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

Neglect

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

Refusal to give attention can also be a form of neglect.

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

Sexual Abuse

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

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

Actions required if you identify concerns or signs of abuse

Recognising signs of abuse / bullying in a child can be very difficult unless there are some signs of physical or behavioural change. However, the possibility of abuse may be suspected from something which another person says. It is important to be aware and vigilant and to deal with the facts in an objective manner.

Sometimes the child may be giving an indication that they want to talk, and it is then important to follow a number of principles. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with correctly, so Northampton Saints have created a very simple procedure:

Stay calm and assure the child. For a child to disclose and to talk takes great courage, however they are telling you because they want your help and for the abuse to stop. Don't make promises of confidentiality but explain that you will need to contact other professionals who will be able to give the help which is needed. You must listen to what the child says and not suggest ideas. Keep questions to a minimum and use open questions and record what has been said as soon as possible. It is very important to record the exact words as spoken by the child recording facts and not opinions.

You must report the concern to the Club Safeguard Lead.
It is very important that you do not tell anyone else about the complaint until you have discussed the situation with the Club Safeguarding Lead.

Matchday Safeguarding Arrangements

Northampton Saints are a family-oriented club and actively promotes the attendance of younger supporters and recognises that this comes with responsibilities. The Club has a reasonable expectation that young persons under 12 years of age (pre-senior school age) are accompanied by a responsible adult (parent/carer/teacher/rugby coach etc) inside the Ground on match days.

Toilets/washrooms

The Club recognises that toilets/washrooms are a potential risk area for younger spectators –
the signs for Stewards and Club officials to watch out for are:

- a young child going to toilets/washrooms unescorted
- an adult, who does not seem to have a connection with a child, going to the toilets/washrooms on several occasions right behind that child
- an unescorted child not using the correct toilets/washrooms (male\female) an upset child after visiting the toilets/washrooms

If a Steward or any Club official becomes suspicious of an adult, they should pass their suspicions to their supervisor and Safety Officer. Club Safeguarding Lead to be notified so appropriate action may be taken.

Child running free

If a child appears to be in distress, a Steward or Club official should approach them, try to find out what is wrong and escort them to the Control Point. If necessary, obtain the assistance of another Steward or a female Club official/spectator.

If a child climbs or stands inappropriately on equipment, chairs, barriers or fences, they should be politely asked to get down and have the reason explained to them. Stewards or Club officials should never place a hand on them or shout at them so they cannot be startled or scared, which could cause them to fall and injure themselves.

Any child playing or misbehaving (such that they are endangering their own safety, or the safety of others, or being a nuisance to other spectators) should be asked to go back to their responsible adult in attendance. If necessary, the responsible adult should be asked to keep the child closely supervised while in the Ground.

If a child appears to be on his/her own (i.e., with no adult supervision) and is causing problems, they should be politely asked to behave themselves (do not behave

threateningly or aggressively, and refrain from the use of any language that could be perceived to be foul or abusive). A Steward should be sited to keep watch of the situation, which will usually be sufficient deterrent to stop any problem behaviour. If they persist and are at least 12 years of age they may be asked to leave the Ground and should be escorted to the nearest exit by a group, including a senior Club official. If they are under 12 years old, attempts should be made to find out their name and contact a parent or guardian, particularly in hours of darkness. Children must not, under any circumstances, be manhandled; they will usually go quietly if escorted by a group of adults. The assistance of another steward, Club official or spectator may help.

If a child turns violent towards a Steward or Club official, the adult may use reasonable non-aggressive actions to protect themselves prior to a decision being made as to next steps.

Stewards and Club officials must never be alone when dealing with an unruly child or when escorting a child from the ground.

Any incident must be recorded on the Control Room Matchday Log and highlighted as child related. Where deemed appropriate a written record of the incident will be produced subsequent to the end of the match. The Club's Safeguarding Lead must be made aware of the situation and can be requested to assist if inside the Ground at the time of the incident.

Lost Child

If a Steward or Club official is approached by a child because they are lost, they must notify the Control Room immediately. The steward/club official should reassure the child, try to keep them calm and ask for their name/parent's name if appropriate.

An announcement will be made over the Stewards radio system and the club PA system to try to reunite them with their parent/guardian. A Club official may remind the parent/guardian of the dangers of letting young children run around unsupervised.

If a Steward or Club official is approached by a parent/guardian advising that they have lost their child, they must contact the Control Room immediately. The Safety Officer must be alerted immediately, and a search may be organised. If necessary, a PA announcement may be made, and the Police may be called for assistance.

Push Chairs and Prams

Push chairs and prams should not be used in the perimeter of the ground. However, they may be folded and stored at their own risk at one of the three reception areas (Carlsberg/Main Reception, Barwell Reception, South Reception).

Terracing

Young persons under the height of 1.2 metres are not permitted to be in the terraced area for their own safety. If a young person under the height of 1.2 metres attends with a valid ticket for the terraced areas, they should not be permitted to enter the ground and terracing, but a supervisor contacted via the control room and efforts made to relocate them in one of the seating areas, this will include their responsible adult if under the age of 12 years.

Small Children/Babies

During the match parents/responsible adults are not permitted to carry small children or babies around the tarmac perimeter between the stands and the advertising tobleron/LEDs.

Whistleblowing

- We strive at all times to conduct our activities with the highest standards of integrity and honesty. It is therefore expected that all employees maintain the highest standards in these areas in all of their work decisions and performance. Employees are therefore encouraged to report any wrongdoing or actions by employees that fall short of these business principles.
- Legislation exists to protect employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace, and it is the aim of this policy to ensure that, as far as possible, an employee is able to tell the company about any wrongdoing at work which it is believed has occurred is occurring or is likely to occur.
- We recognise that employees may not always feel comfortable about discussing their concerns internally, especially if they believe that the organisation itself is responsible for the wrongdoing. The aim of this policy is to ensure that employees are confident that they can raise any matter that concerns them in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously, treated as confidential and that no action will be taken against them.
- Each employee is encouraged to set out in writing to the company any concerns at all about wrongdoing at work, including any criminal offence, failure to comply with legal obligations, miscarriage of justice, health and safety danger, environmental risk or concealment of any of these situations. If appropriate, employees are encouraged to discuss the matter informally with their manager in the first instance. Any formal or informal approach to a manager will be treated as completely confidential.
- If the matter requires further investigation, such an investigation will be carried out and the employee will be informed of the outcome and what, if any, action has been taken. This may of course involve meetings with the employee and others which we encourage in order to assist any investigations.

- If the employee is unhappy about the speed or conduct of the investigation or the way in which the matter has been resolved, the matter should be referred to another senior member of staff. When the complaint has been investigated, the employee will be informed of the result and what, if any, action has been taken.
- We undertake to ensure that no employee who makes a bona fide report under this policy will be subjected to any detriment, bullying or harassment from another employee. In the event that an employee believes they are being subjected to a detriment by any person within our employment as a result of their decision to invoke the policy, the employee must inform an appropriate person immediately and appropriate action will be taken.
- The disclosure is not protected unless the employee reasonably believes that the disclosure is made in the public interest. If it should become clear that the policy has not been invoked by the employee as outlined above, for example, for malicious reasons or to pursue a personal grudge against another employee or the Company, this will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure and may in serious cases lead to the termination of employment.
- As outlined in the Safeguarding policy above, in the first instance anybody with a concern should raise it to the Club Safeguarding Lead, or any of the named Club Safeguarding contacts. If for any reason, the individual feels this is not appropriate they should contact the Club CEO. If for any reason the Individual feels this is also not appropriate, they should contact the RFU Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@RFU.com or 0208 831 6655.

Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the Club Safeguarding Lead, Venue Manager and the Chief Executive on a yearly basis to ensure it reflects best practice and remains suitable and relevant.