



August 2023

Introduction:

Wolverines Cheerleading Academy recognises the importance of its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care. We understand that all adults, including temporary staff and volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. As an organization working with children and young people, Wolverines Cheerleading Academy has a responsibility to act if safeguarding concerns to light, to protect children from harm within the programme.

Aims:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, and respected. They should feel confident that they can approach adults if they're in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all coaching and non-coaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of coaching and non-coaching staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the programme, this will be followed by all members of Wolverines Cheerleading Academy.
- To check that all adults appointed/authorised by Wolverines Cheerleading Academy have completed DBS checks and are thoroughly vetted. It is the responsibility of Wolverines Cheerleading Academy to appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to oversee the implementation of this policy. The nominated person will work in conjunction with statutory agencies and other organisations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the young person.

Designated Safeguarding email contact : safeguarding@cheerbasingstoke.co.uk

Remember – where there is an urgent and immediate need to protect a child, dial 999 to contact the Police. Alternatively if there is a worry that a child / young person may be at risk of harm, contact the relevant WCA SL or Local Authority Children’s Services as soon as possible.

Mission Statement:

As part of its mission, Wolverines Cheerleading Academy is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all staff/coaches/volunteers.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with any safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected.
- Making links with statutory childcare authorities and other organisations if and when required.

This policy covers all activities run by Wolverines Cheerleading Academy for children and young people under the age of 18 years. It sets out what action will be taken in various circumstances in order to reassure parents, carers and associated parties that all possible steps will be taken to protect children involved in any aspect of the programme’s activities. The policy is governed by legislation and statutory guidance as below;

- The Children’s Act 1989 and 2004
- The London Child Protection Procedures 2016
- Working together to Safeguard Children Procedures 2015
- Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In line with these procedures and guidelines, this policy acknowledges that:

- Child abuse exists and can present itself in any of its forms - physical, emotional, neglect, sexual - alone or in combination.

- Children may be abused and/or neglected by parents, carers, guardians or other trusted adults as well as strangers.
- Abuse may be perpetrated by individuals, groups or networks of individuals.
- Children may also be abused by other children. Wolverines Cheerleading Academy is committed to on-going child protection training for all staff/coaches/ volunteers to develop their understanding of the signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures of abuse.
- All new staff will be given a copy of our Safeguarding policy.
- Anyone in the WCA who has contact with children/young people will complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form.
- Anyone under the age of 18 years cannot be counted in the ratio as a helper and should never be left in charge of a group of children.

Responsibilities:

In undertaking our responsibility of care, Wolverines Cheerleading Academy will:

- Refer a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse and liaising with relevant agencies and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Keep written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensure all records are kept confidentially and securely. DSL to keep these.

Supporting children:

Wolverines Cheerleading Academy recognise that a child who has suffered from harm or witnessed violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. It is recognised that Wolverines Cheerleading Academy may provide important stability and consistency in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. Wolverines Cheerleading Academy will support all children by:

- Provide support to children by encouraging self-esteem and confidence, while not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a positive and caring environment in Wolverines Cheerleading Academy's premises of operation.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

Confidentiality:

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. WCA SL will not disclose any information about a child to other members of staff only on a need to know basis. All staff must be

aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise a child's safety or wellbeing. We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Services with their parents/carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or danger.

Supporting Staff:

We recognise that staff, who has become involved with a child who has suffered from harm, or appears to be suffering from harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the WCA SL and to seek further support as appropriate.

Allegations against staff:

Staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. They should always be in full view of the open door and so visible to others, i.e. not be in a room alone with a child with the door closed.

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the WCA Safeguarding Lead immediately, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The WCA Safeguarding Lead will refer the allegation to the appropriate Local Authority children's services department and contact will be made with the relevant LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), who will determine if and what further action should be taken.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from children's services department.
- The WCA Safeguarding Lead should also notify the relevant Sport Cheer UK officer, Officer, who, in turn, will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the WCA Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Programme Manager

Bullying:

Our policy on bullying is set out in the WCA Anti-Bullying Policy. Wolverines Cheerleading Academy's policy on anti-bullying acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

Conclusion:

If you have a concern about an athlete (no matter how small), it is important that this is logged and reported to WCA SL as soon as possible.

Process

- A email to be sent to safeguarding lead at safeguarding@cheerbasingstoke.co.uk with details on the concern. The case will be treated in full confidence. The WCA SL will in turn collect the associated documentation or if the matter is of an urgent nature, will come to the gym immediately

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: **1st August 2023**

Signed: Sharron Gibson

Printed: Sharron Gibson

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