

Intensity Cheer and Dance Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Introduction & Equality Statement

Intensity believes that every child, young person and adult, regardless of their background, age, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability/disability, ethnicity or religious belief, should be able to participate in a safe society without any fear, violence, abuse, bullying, discrimination or exploitation.

Intensity recognises the importance of its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of athletes entrusted to its care. We understand that all coaches, paid and voluntary, have a full and active part to play in protecting athletes in our care from harm, and that their welfare is our paramount concern. As an organisation working with children, young people and adults, Intensity Cheer and Dance has a responsibility to act if safeguarding concerns to light and to protect athletes from harm within the programme.

Aims

- To support athlete development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To provide an environment in which all athletes feel safe, valued and respected. They should feel they can approach coaches and believe they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise awareness to all coaches of the need to safeguard athletes and of their responsibility in identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- To ensure all coaches over 16 have completed a DBS check.
- To ensure a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed. It is the responsibility of the Director of Intensity Cheer and Dance to appoint a DSL to deal with all safeguarding matters. If and when required, the named nominated person will work in conjunction with statutory agencies and other organisations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the young person/athlete.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL):

Elle Lyon
elle.bamford@live.com
FAO: DSL/ Safeguarding

The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be clearly displayed in the gym, with information on how to contact them.

Mission Statement

As part of its mission, Intensity Cheer and Dance is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting athletes as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all coaches/volunteers.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with any safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Supporting those affected.
- Making links with Sport Cheer England (SCE), statutory childcare authorities and other organisations if and when required.

This policy covers all activities run by Intensity Cheer and Dance. 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 athletes involved in any aspect of the programme's activities.

The policy is consistent with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Councils Procedures and guidance. In line with these procedures and guidelines, this policy acknowledges that:

- Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should also look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm.
- Abuse exists and can present itself in any of its forms, including but not limited to; physical, emotional, neglect, sexual - alone or in combination.
- Athletes 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.
- Athletes may also be abused by other athletes. Intensity Cheer and Dance is committed to on-going safeguarding training for all coaches/ volunteers to develop their understanding of the signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures of abuse.
- All new coaches will be given a copy of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
- Anyone in leadership who has contact with athletes will complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form.
- Anyone under the age of 16 years should never be left in charge of a group of children.

Supporting Athletes

Intensity Cheer and Dance recognise that an athlete 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 Intensity Cheer and Dance may provide important stability and consistency in the lives of athletes who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. Intensity Cheer and Dance will support all athletes by:

- Providing support to athletes by encouraging self-esteem and confidence, while not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a positive and caring environment in Intensity Cheer and Dance's premises of operation.

- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of athletes, where necessary.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection/Safeguarding are confidential. The DSL will disclose any information about an athlete to other coaches only on a need to know basis. The DSL will keep a written record of all concerns. All coaches must be aware that they cannot promise an athlete to keep secrets which might compromise an athlete's safety or wellbeing. All coaches must recognise it may be necessary to share information with a professional agency in order to safeguard an athlete. We will always 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 Coaches

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

Allegations against coaches

Intensity Cheer and Dance understands its coaches should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with an athlete.

- Any suspicion that an athlete has been abused by either a coach or a volunteer should be reported to the DSL immediately, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the athlete in question and any other athlete who may be at risk.
- The DSL will decide whether or not to refer the allegation to the appropriate Local Authority Contact, 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 LA.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should also notify Sport Cheer England.
- If the allegations relate to poor practice as opposed to abuse, the allegation will be dealt with by the club's Welfare Officer.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Laura Davies-Maw via email

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in our Anti-Bullying Policy. Intensity Cheer and Dance's policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and 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. All coaches are aware that athletes with SEN and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of abuse.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard athletes and families from violent extremism.

There have been several occasions nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children, young people and adults to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation. When any coach has concerns that an athlete may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures. If the matter is urgent then local police must be contacted by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases, where police advice is sought, then dial 101.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of abuse and violence against women. A mandatory reporting duty requires coaches to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police. If an adult is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or another adult observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, they should call 101 and make a report to the police force in which the girl resides. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, the DSL should be informed and a report to the police should be made by the close of the next working day. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the adult should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate. There are no circumstances in which coaches should examine a girl.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at events and training sessions

Intensity Cheer and Dance does not allow photography or video with mobile devices such as mobile phones or I-Pads by friends and family of athletes unless permission is given by a Coach. The use of long lens cameras are strictly prohibited, except when instructed by the Director for an event. Sale of photos taken at Intensity Cheer and Dance events is strictly prohibited unless you are the hired photo vendor for the given event. Where Intensity Cheer and Dance work regularly with a photographer, a current DBS check is in place. All clubs, athletes, and spectators of cheerleading and dance should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming and any concerns should be reported immediately to security, Intensity Cheer and Dance coaches, or the DSL directly.

Use of athlete's images for publicity

From time to time Intensity Cheer and Dance may use images of athletes to promote its activities through, but not limited to their website, social media, promotional materials such as posters/flyers and press releases. Parents/guardians are asked to sign written consent forms. When a form is signed, the parents/guardian gives consent for photographs to be taken, and/or footage filmed during practices and performances for promotional materials relating to Intensity Cheer and Dance (including, but not limited to the Intensity Cheer and Dance Website, Facebook page and Instagram account). Full names will not be placed next to images online.

Covid-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presents new safeguarding challenges for all those working with children, young people and adults. Intensity Cheer and Dance recognises it must keep its athletes safe during and throughout the return to the sport. Following government guidelines, we have implemented the following:

- cleaning equipment
- not sharing equipment until cleaned
- using personal protective equipment (PPE), if individuals wish to do so
- social distancing
- restricting group sizes

It is absolutely vital that we do not ignore, abandon or otherwise dilute established practices, rules and regulations designed to safeguard athletes and provide the safest environment possible. While ensuring we follow government and SCE guidelines, Intensity Cheer and Dance will endeavour to:

- Not compromise on safeguarding practice to meet coronavirus measures
- Postpone any planned activity until it can be provided safely, both in terms of coronavirus measures and safeguarding
- Continue to risk assess safeguarding practice as before
- Make sure all adults working with children are assessed for their suitability
- Make sure all coaches and volunteers maintain some level of safeguarding training and continue to refresh their safeguarding knowledge

We understand customers have a right to expect that athlete's safeguarding and wellbeing is not compromised by the desire to restart activities.

Definitions of Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse - Where a young person is physically hurt from for example, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.
- Emotional Abuse - the persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the athlete's emotional development. It may involve telling an athlete they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or not valued. 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 constantly given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are clearly unrealistic for their age/skill level.
- 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.

- 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.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with children, 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 an athlete is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- An unexplained or suspicious injury, 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
- A 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
- An unexplained change in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Sexual awareness deemed inappropriate for their age
- A young person engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- A distrust of adults, 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 with no explanation
- Cutting or self-harm

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 with or for Intensity Cheer and Dance to decide that child abuse is occurring. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns and involve the appropriate authorities, such as the MASSH team at the local council.

Prevention

We recognise that the programme plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our athletes by providing athletes with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Intensity Cheer and Dance will therefore:

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos where athletes feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all athletes know there is an adult in the club whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Ensure all coaches are aware of Intensity Cheer and Dance guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

Whistleblowing

If a person is worried any organisation is not responding to or sharing child protection information appropriately, it's vital that you share your concerns to keep children safe. Legislation across the UK ensures that you shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle' (Gov.uk, 2018). In England, Scotland and Wales, whistleblowers are protected by law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. If you have concerns, you can contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285.

Disclosure Procedures

Responding to allegations of abuse under no circumstances should coaches/volunteers carry out their own investigation into the allegations or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of the information should do the following:

- Write down what you have been told or seen as quickly as possible after the incident, Sign and date. Do not add your thoughts or feelings. This record must be factual and as accurate as possible.
- Use the words expressed by the individual.
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- If an allegation is made against anyone in the programme (including the Directors) do not speak to this person about the allegation.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than the nominated DSL/Directors
- If a referral needs to be made to Social Services or police, do not delay if the nominated person is not available.
- Where the level of risk or concern remains unclear, consultation should be sought from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub at your local council on numbers below who will seek to clarify the nature of the concern and whether immediate action is needed to keep the athlete safe from harm or whether a referral is appropriate.
- Do not question the athlete to enable you to obtain more information.
- Concerns should be discussed with the parent or carer and, where possible their agreement should be sought before making referrals to Children's Services, unless this places a child at increased risk of immediate or significant harm. The role of the nominated person is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information to Children's Services.

Guidelines for responding to an allegation of harm from an athlete

- Keep calm, do not appear shocked or disgusted; do not tell them you are shocked
- Accept what the athlete says without passing judgement (however unlikely the disclosure may sound)

- Look directly at the athlete
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else; don't promise confidentiality
- Be aware that the athlete may have been threatened and fear reprisals for having spoken to you
- Never push for more information as this may undermine any subsequent investigation

An athlete may volunteer information about abuse to an individual whom they trust. An athlete is likely to be under severe emotional stress and will need to be treated with great sensitivity. If, however, information is offered in confidence, it is important to make it clear that it will be necessary to pass on the information to other adults in order to be able to help. If the athlete does not agree to this then the conversation should be stopped. The concern must still be related to the DSL.

Referral, Intervention and Advice Services

Multi Agency Safeguarding Support Hub at Rotherham Council

They can discuss concerns and help decide if you need to make a referral.
01709 336080

Multi Agency Safeguarding Support Hub at Stockport Council

They can discuss concerns and help decide if you need to make a referral.
0161 217 6028

Children's First Response Team at Trafford Council

They can discuss concerns and help decide if you need to make a referral
0161 912 5125

NSPCC

Contact the NSPCC if you want to discuss your concerns and get advice.
NSPCC - Telephone: 0808 800 5000 (free service, lines open 24 hours a day).
For further information or to report your concerns online, visit:
www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/reportabuse/

Child Line

Child Line is a service for young people to ring for advice and support.
Child Line Telephone: 0800 1111 (free)
The ChildLine number won't show up on your phone bill if you call from a landline or from most mobile networks.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Elle Lyon

elle.bamford@live.com

FAO: DSL/ Safeguarding

The Welfare Officer is:

Sophie Leesley
sophie.leesley@hotmail.co.uk
FAO: Welfare Officer

Intensity Cheer and Dance recognises the importance of its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the athletes entrusted to its care. We understand that all adults, including temporary coaches and volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our athletes from harm, and that the athlete's welfare is our paramount concern.

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults, Intensity Cheer and Dance has a responsibility to act if safeguarding concerns comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect athletes from the risk of harm within the programme.

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