



Lincolnshire Bombers American Football Club
www.lincolnshirebombers.co.uk



Safeguarding & Welfare Policy

Policy Review Date: November 2024
Reviewed By: Sally Milford - Team Safeguarding/Welfare Officer
Signed off by: (Name) - Club President



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Lincolnshire Bombers American Football Club (LBAFC) acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. The LBAFC is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with the British American Football Association (BAFA) best practice and requirements.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all members

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport at LBAFC in a safe and person-centred environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in Youth American Football or outside of the activity.

LBAFC acknowledges that some children and adults, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy LBAFC will.

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in the Club. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Local Adult Safeguarding Board, UK Sport and/or Home Country Sports Councils and BAFA
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

Essential Contacts



Lincolnshire Bombers	Sally Milford – Club Welfare Officer Lou Viner – Deputy Club Welfare Officer	lbafcsafeguarding@gmail.com
British American Football Association	Richard Watson – Non-Executive Director and Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org
Lincolnshire County Council	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Children’s Social Care	01522 554674 01522 782111
Lincolnshire Police	Protecting Vulnerable Person’s Unit (PVPU)	(01522) 947590 for the Central Referral Unit (CRU) or 999 for emergencies
Active Lincolnshire	Richard Bell – Sports Welfare Manager	01522 730 325 Richard.Bell@activelincolnshire.com
NSPCC	NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Childline	www.childline.org.uk/	0800 1111
Anti-Bullying Alliance	anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk	
Kidscape	www.kidscape.org.uk	Parent Advice Line: 0300 102 4481 Email: parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk



It is the policy of the Club to ensure that every member can participate in a fun and safe environment and be protected from neglect and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse whilst in our care.

The key principles that underwrite our policies are:

- Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child for the purposes of our policies.
- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness.
- Anyone over the age of 18, not living at home or have immediate family support, is also considered a Vulnerable Adult.
- All people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and harassment.
- It is the responsibility of welfare experts to determine whether abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- All suspicious incidents and allegations of poor practice or abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is essential for the protection of young people and vulnerable adults.
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with Data Protection Act 1994, GDPR and the Human Rights Act 2000.
- All Coaches of the Youth and Junior team, Team Safeguarding/Welfare Officer and any persons involved in the coaching of young persons or vulnerable adults will obtain an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS).

Types of Abuse

There are four main types of child abuse, though a child may experience more than one kind at any one time in their life.

Physical abuse

When parents, adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly do not prevent injuries. Injuries include, but are not limited to, hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, using excessive force, giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs, or poison, and attempts to suffocate or drown them. In the case of sport, physical abuse can also be if children are directed to activities which disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body, or causes injury to the child through fatigue, overuse, or misdirection.

Emotional abuse

When adults fail to show children due care or attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt, or shout at a child, causing them to lose self-confidence or self-esteem and become nervous or withdrawn. These may also occur when an adult fails to recognise, ignores, or does not respond to a child's effort or progress, or places the child under unrealistic pressure to perform to grand expectations constantly.

Neglect

Occasions where adults fail to meet the essential needs of a child, such as adequate clothing, food, drink, warmth, and medical care. It also includes occasions where an adult leaves a child alone without proper supervision, or does not ensure that the child is safe, or exposes them to undue extremes of temperature or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse



Occurs when males and females use children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling or exposure to pornographic material. This also includes suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal can hinder) a player's position within the team.

We must also be aware of abuse of trust, where children are coached with attitudes to training, drugs and cheating, or social, political, and religious views which are unacceptable to the child's family, community or rules of the sport/club.

The inappropriate use of photographic material taken at sporting events is an area of abuse that has been increasing and all those involved within the sport should be aware of this.

All forms of bullying, both verbal and physical, from other children is also a form of abuse, and there is a requirement for all within the sport to ensure that there are opportunities for children to report any incidents of bullying. This includes any behaviour which belittles a player or makes them feel that their contribution to the team is not worthwhile.

Identifying Abuse

It can be extremely difficult to identify abuse as the signs are not often clear cut. Sometimes a child may demonstrate disturbed behaviour or may have an injury which suggests some form of abuse, however in many situations it will not be as obvious, and it can be difficult to decide on the action to take.

Signs include:

- Uncharacteristic changes in the child's behaviour, attitude, and commitment. E.G., becoming quiet and withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Side-line Gossip.
- Bruises and injuries not typical of the sport or injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Signs of discomfort or pain.
- Reluctance to remove tracksuit, or shower.
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- The child loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Nervousness when approached or touches.
- Fear of adults – especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- The child wishes to switch to another coach without a reasonable explanation.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Children who are always alone and unaccompanied and / or are prevented from socialising with other children.
- Children who are reluctant to go home.

The list above is not exhaustive; there may be other symptoms where those adults in charge must use their own discretion to decide whether there is a possibility of abuse. It should also be remembered that the presence of any of the above does not prove abuse.

It is not the responsibility of those working in the Club to decide whether abuse may be occurring, however, it is everyone's individual responsibility to report any concerns to the Team Safeguarding/Welfare Officer in a timely manner (if the Team Safeguarding/Welfare Officer is not in attendance, the General Manager).

Abuse may become apparent in several ways:

- A child may tell you.
- A third party may have reported an incident or may have a strong suspicion.
- You may have a suspicion.



For more information on spotting the signs of abuse, you can access more information through NSPCC's [Definitions and signs of child abuse](#) document.

Promoting Good Practice

By promoting good practice within the club, we aim to reduce situations where abuse may occur. Everyone should have access to and should have read this policy so that they are aware of the procedures which they need to follow.

The appointment of a Club Safeguarding/Welfare Officer is a key part of this process. This individual will oversee the implementation of this policy and will promote good practice within the club by ensuring that everyone is aware of their responsibilities as outlined within this policy.

All coaches are expected to either hold a Level 1 Coaching Qualification or be working in partnership with a coach that does. Coaches should also make sure that they are up to date with any changes and continually develop their coaching in their own time.

In addition to the procedures listed above, it is the responsibility of the Team Safeguarding/Welfare Officer to ensure that everyone is subjected to Disclosure and Barring Service vetting.

It is inappropriate for adults to communicate on a one-to-one basis with children and young people: By text message, through social networking sites, by email (group email; not from a personal email address) and by instant messaging. It is advisable to always send a group message rather than individual messages to one young person. Parental consent is required for communication between the adult and young person. All staff, volunteers and parents should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. They should not post or discuss unfavourable comments about coaches, players, any helper or volunteer, parent or club.

Use of photographic & recorded images

Children should always be consulted about the use of their photo or video and give consent to it being taken, used or shared. For young people under 16, you should obtain parental consent before taking a photo or video. Our photographic and recording consent form can be found in Appendix B.

Parents and young people have a right to decide whether images are to be taken and how those images may be used. Parents and young people must provide written consent for images to be taken and used. There may be legitimate and/or legal reasons for denying consent. Images should reflect the positive aspects of sport such as, competition, fair play and fun. While care should be taken to ensure that images are not sexual or exploitive in nature, nor open to obvious misinterpretation and misuse.

All images of young people should be securely stored to avoid inappropriate misuse and when published, particular care should be taken to ensure that no identifying details facilitate contact with a young person.

Please refer to our Social Media Policy for more details on use of images as well as advice from Child Protection in Sport Unit [Advice on Photography](#).

Safer Recruitment

Lincolnshire Bombers are committed to a robust recruitment process to reduce the risk to all children and adults at risk from anybody who they may recruit.



This includes paid staff, agency staff, consultants or volunteers. As part of BAFA's safer recruitment and selection process, offers of either paid or volunteer positions which involve 'regulated activity' when working with children and adults at risk are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check and appropriate references.

All offers of work are subject to a satisfactory outcome of the screening process and until a satisfactory disclosure has been confirmed, the individual concerned will not be permitted to commence their position within the club.

All employees, workers, consultants, agency staff and volunteers engaged in 'regulated activity' within Lincolnshire Bombers will be required to undergo regular DBS disclosure clearances, normally every three years or earlier if requested.

Pending DBS clearance and obtaining satisfactory references, they must not have unsupervised access to children and adults at risk. Should an individual's DBS check reveal any convictions regardless of content, Lincolnshire Bombers must immediately refer this information to BAFA Safeguarding team by email for advice. The BAFA Safeguarding team will then consider whether the nature of the offence/ offences renders the person concerned unsuitable for working with children and adults at risk. In these circumstances, where the nature of any disclosure must be considered, a risk assessment will be carried out to assess the information contained within the disclosure certificate.

Roles and Responsibilities

For this policy to be implemented successfully, each member of the Club needs to be aware of their individual role and work in partnership with each other, to ensure the protection of the children in their care.

Role of the Club and General Manager

- To appoint one Club Welfare Officer
- To appoint a secondary member to report to in the absence of the Welfare Officer
- To accept that all Officers and Committee members have responsibilities in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of abuse.
- To be ready to amend bad practice.
- To maintain confidentiality of the child and the accused.
- To ensure that all adults are appropriately trained and have read all the LBA policies.

Role of the Club Safeguarding/Welfare Officer

- To ensure that all adults who have access to or responsibility for children have a DBS through BAFA.
- To ensure this Welfare Policy is kept up to date and propose to all involved members and necessary changes required.
- To receive and advise on reports from other club members.
- To initiate actions, ensuring all appropriate persons have been contacted.
- Make a full report of any allegations or suspicions.
- Report any allegations or concerns to the Local Children's Services Departmental immediately (Lincolnshire) and make a record of this.
- Strict confidentiality must be maintained.

If the allegation related to poor practice, make a record of the allegations, and then ensure provisions are in place to improve this practice.

Role of the Head Coach

- To ensure that all the coaches have been suitably trained or are accompanied by someone who has the relevant qualifications.
- To ensure that all coaches are aware of their roles within each session.



- To ensure that all coaches are teaching the same way.
- To ensure that all coaches are working safely.
- To ensure that they are aware of what every player is doing whilst they are in charge.

Role of the Coaches

- To ensure that they always demonstrate safe practice.
- To ensure that they understand their role as set out by the Head Coach.
- To ensure that they are always acting within the Coaching Code of Conduct.
- To ensure they report any concerns to the Club Welfare Officer as set out within this Policy.

Education & Training

Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. They can only do so confidently and effectively if they are aware and have the necessary understanding and skills. Lincolnshire Bombers provide sporting activities for children and therefore have a responsibility to provide learning, training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers.

All new volunteers must go through an induction process. Club Welfare Officers must attend formal safeguarding training and regularly maintain up to date with local and national legislation and guidance on safeguarding and welfare.

Processes and Procedures

Responding to Disclosure, Incidents, Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

If a child, young person or any other member discloses that he/she is being abused, an incident occurs, you suspect abuse or poor practice or receive an allegation of poor practice or abuse, you should report this immediately to the Club Welfare Officer as indicated in appendices A and B – 'Procedures for Reporting Concerns'.

If you are not able to contact the Club Welfare Officer, advice can be sought from Children's Services, the Police or the NSPCC, contact details can be found on Page 4 of this Policy.

Records and Information

Information passed to Children's Services or the Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern

Reporting the matter to the Police or Children's Services should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the social services department should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

A record should also be made of the name and designation of the Children's Services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

Remember the welfare of the young person is paramount Information must be shared on a need-to-know basis. This includes sharing the information with the Club Welfare Officer, the police or children's services and relevant people within the National Governing Body. If the matter is one concerning an allegation of abuse, the police or children's services will take the lead in advising if others (including parents) can be informed.



Remember there is a difference between information sharing and gossip. The latter should be avoided at all costs and could be unlawful according to the Data Protection Act.

Specific Advice for Responding to Disclosure from a Young Person

Actions to Take

Step 1 – Listen and Reassure

DO

- Stay calm – do not rush into any inappropriate action.
- Reassure the child – make sure that they understand that it is not their fault, you want them to confide in you and you understand how difficult it is for them to share this information, but it is the right thing to do.
- Listen and believe – make sure that the child can see that you are taking them seriously and listening to what they have to say. You want them to feel that they can confide in you, so the situation needs to be taken further.
- Allow on one adult to talk to the child – this way there can be no discrepancies in statements if the situation needs to be taken further.
- Keep questions to a minimum – if there is an instance of abuse and it goes to court, the case can be thrown out if it is through that the child was led in a particular direction by questioning. Where possible do not ask any questions – let them talk.
- When writing down what you have been told, use the child's exact words, and do not assume understanding. Your written statement should be done as soon as possible to ensure that the facts are still clear.
- Consult with the welfare officer ensuring that you communicate all the information quickly and accurately – please make sure that the initial contact with the Welfare Officer is either face to face or on the phone so that there is an immediate response.
- Maintain confidentiality – only disclose the information to the Welfare Officer (or General Manager in their absence) and the appropriate authorities.

DO NOT

- Panic
- Make promises you cannot keep – you want the child to feel that they can trust you however they need to understand that you need to share the information with appropriate people, whilst still maintaining maximum confidentiality.
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Delay.
- Take sole responsibility for further action.

NB - Not all young people are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties may mean that it is hard for them to complain or be understood. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some disabilities or conditions, in relation to the nature of an individual's impairment. However, where there are concerns about the safety of a young person, record what has been observed in detail and follow the procedures to report these concerns.

Step 2 – Record

Record what the child has said to you and/or your concerns as soon as possible accurately, legibly, and safely using any unusual/slang words or descriptions verbatim.



Please note that when a disclosure is made, it is the person to whom the disclosure is made that the authorities (police and/or social services) will come to for an account of what was said. The importance of the first-hand account is paramount.

Step 3 – Involve the appropriate people

Once you have completed your statement, you must ensure that the Team/Safeguarding/Welfare Officer in your club is informed so that a decision can be made about the next course of action.

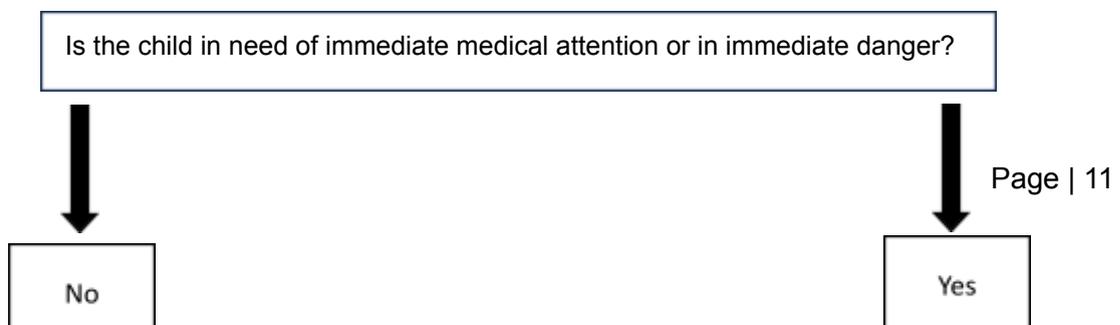
If you are unhappy with how the Club Welfare Officer deals with the incident or if allegations are made specifically against this individual, you should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer and make a record of this.

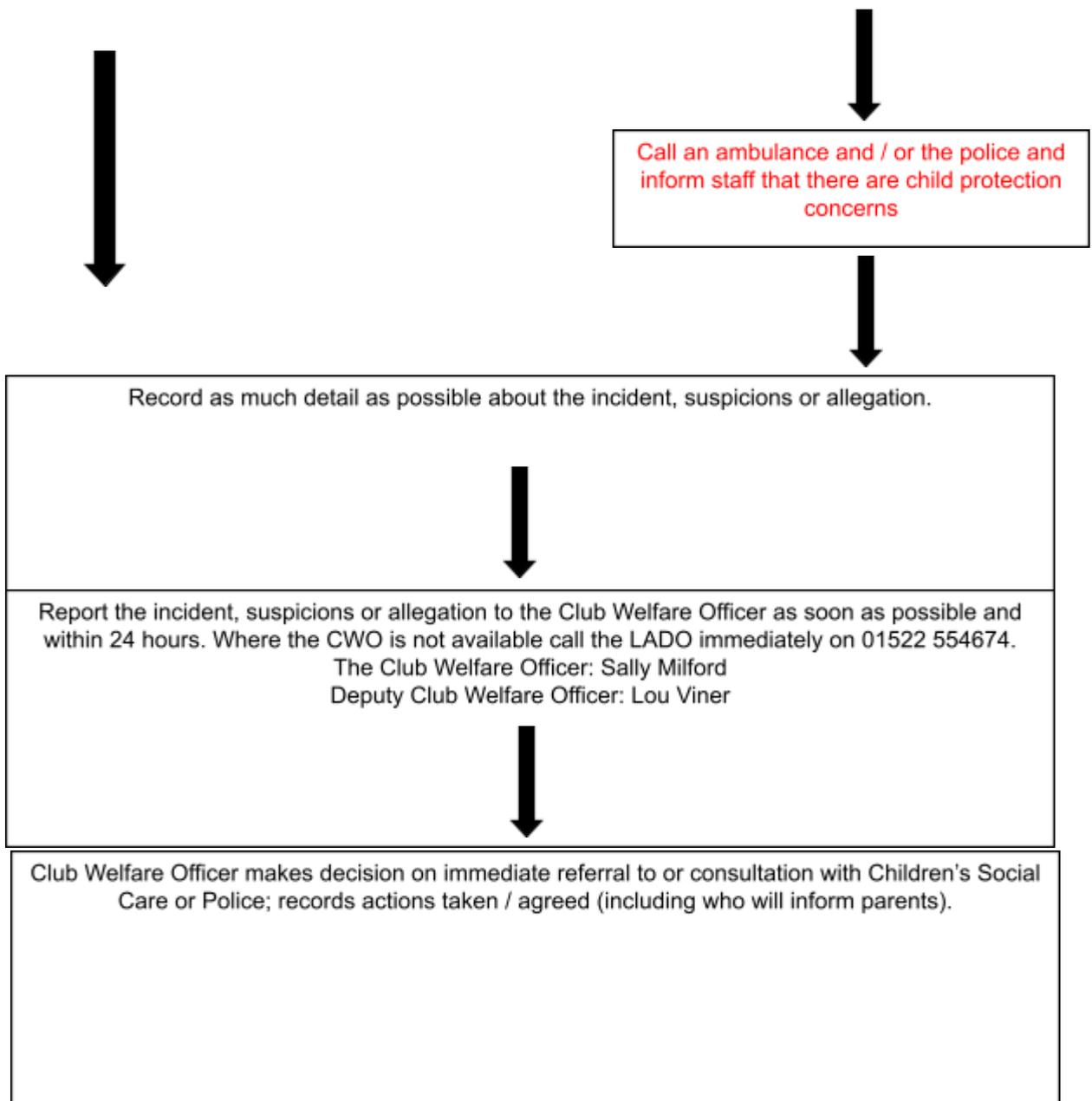
In all cases – do not delay. If you cannot contact the Club Welfare Officer you must contact the authorities (police and/or social services). Anyone can do this whenever they are concerned about a child.

If you are unsure of what to do, advice can be obtained from the NSPCC Freephone helpline 0800 800 500 or contact Lincolnshire Children’s Social Care on 01522 782111 (8am – 6pm Monday – Friday) or 01522 782333 (Out of Hours Emergency).

Appendix A

Procedure for Reporting Concerns Flow Chart





Appendix B

Photographic and Filming Consent Form

Please refer to our Social Media Policy. This form should be issued by the photographer / cameraperson and completed before any photographs or film is taken. Return promptly to the commissioning representative.



Section One: To be completed by the photographer / cameraperson

Name:	
Company:	
Location of Photoshoot:	Date of Photoshoot:
Work Phone	Mobile Phone:
Please sign this statement: I have fully discussed the contents of this form with the subject mentioned below. Signature: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____	

Section Two: To be completed by an appropriate representative of the subject in the photograph / film, if permission has been granted by the subject's parents / guardians:

Name:
Phone Number:
Address:
Please sign this statement: I hereby grant _____ and any assignees or licensees the absolute right to use the images resulting from this photo / film shoot. This includes any reproductions or adaptations of the images for all general purposes, and at any time, in relation to the work of _____. Signature: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Section Three: To be completed by a parent / guardian of person to be photographed:

Name (Please Print):
Address:
Please sign this statement: I hereby grant _____ and any assignees or licensees the absolute right to use the images resulting from the above-mentioned photo / film shoot. This includes any reproductions or adaptations of the images for all general purposes, and at any time, in relation to their work. Signature: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____