SAFEGUARDING POLICY

South Durham Gymnastics Club
Spennymoor Leisure Centre
High Street
Spennymoor
Co.Durham
DL16 6DB

Tel: 01388 811877
Email: gym@southdurhamgym.co.uk

REVIEW PERIOD	REVIEW DATE	SIGNED
Issue Date	April 2023	Management
Reviewed	October 2023	Management
Reviewed	September 2024	Management
Reviewed	September 2025	Management
Reviewed	September 2026	Management
External Review	28th October 2026	Shore Safeguarding

1. The purpose and scope of this policy statement

South Durham Gymnastics Club (SDGC) is committed to supporting all children and young people to enjoy and participate in gymnastics in a safe, protective and nurturing environment.

Children and young people: Anyone under the age of 18 years.

We recognise that children and young people need to feel safe, respected, listened to and supported if they are to enjoy sport, fulfil their potential and remain involved in gymnastics.

SDGC is committed to achieving a high standard of safeguarding across all areas of the club and recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people must be a fundamental consideration in everything we do.

We recognise our responsibility to safeguard children and young people in our care and to provide an environment in which children can participate in gymnastics safely and parents and carers can have confidence in the arrangements we have in place.

This policy applies to all SDGC activities and services involving children and young people, including:

- Recreational gymnastics classes
- Squad training sessions
- Baby and toddler sessions
- Birthday parties
- Holiday clubs
- Workshops
- Private lessons
- Competitions
- Events and other activities organised or delivered by SDGC.

This policy applies to all staff, coaches, volunteers, officials, management, children, young people, parents and carers involved with SDGC.

2. Our Safeguarding Commitment

SDGC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who participate in our activities.

Our safeguarding arrangements are informed by relevant legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice, including Working Together to Safeguard Children, relevant safeguarding guidance for sport and physical activity, and guidance provided by the NSPCC and other appropriate safeguarding organisations. (GOV.UK)

SDGC will maintain appropriate policies, procedures and arrangements to prevent harm, recognise concerns, respond appropriately and promote the welfare of children and young people.

We will regularly review our safeguarding arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate to the activities and circumstances of the club.

South Durham Gymnastics will:

- put the welfare and best interests of children and young people at the centre of our activities;
- promote a culture in which children and young people are valued, listened to and respected;
- provide appropriately trained and supported staff, coaches and volunteers;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are taken seriously, recorded appropriately and referred to the relevant statutory or safeguarding agencies where necessary;
- maintain appropriate arrangements for safer recruitment and safeguarding training;
- provide clear routes for children, young people, parents, carers, staff and volunteers to raise safeguarding concerns;
- promote an environment free from abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination and poor practice;

- work in partnership with parents, carers, children, young people and relevant external agencies;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality and share information where necessary to safeguard a child;
- provide a safe environment for children and young people participating in gymnastics;
- review our safeguarding arrangements regularly and make improvements where required.

3. We believe:

SDGC believes that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying or other forms of harm.
- Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, respected and valued.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Children and young people should be listened to and their views, wishes and feelings considered in decisions affecting them, in an age- and developmentally appropriate way.
- Staff, coaches and volunteers have a responsibility to act when they have concerns about the welfare of a child or young person.
- Effective safeguarding requires partnership working between children, young people, parents, carers, staff, volunteers, management and relevant external agencies.

4. We recognise that:

SDGC recognises that:

- All children and young people have the right to equal protection from harm and abuse.
- Safeguarding concerns can affect any child, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Some children may be particularly vulnerable because of previous experiences, disability, additional needs, communication difficulties, dependency, family circumstances or other factors.
- Children may experience harm in different environments, including at home, within the community, online or within sporting environments.
- Abuse may be physical, emotional or sexual and may include neglect, exploitation, bullying, grooming, discriminatory abuse and other forms of harm.
- Safeguarding concerns may arise from the behaviour of adults, other children or young people, or from circumstances outside the club.
- Children and young people may find it difficult to disclose concerns or may communicate them indirectly.
- A safeguarding concern should always be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

5. Keeping Children and Young People Safe

SDGC will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people.
- Promoting a child-centred approach to safeguarding.
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place across all club activities.
- Appointing trained Club Welfare Officers with designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ensuring staff, coaches and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate training.
- Ensuring appropriate safer recruitment, vetting and supervision arrangements are in place.
- Maintaining clear procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations.
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are appropriately recorded, reported and referred.
- Sharing safeguarding information appropriately with those who need to know, including statutory agencies where necessary.
- Working with children, young people, parents, carers and relevant external organisations to promote safeguarding.
- Reviewing safeguarding practice and taking action where improvements are identified.

NSPCC Sport identifies effective policies and procedures, safe recruitment, training and appropriate codes of conduct as key elements of safeguarding within sport. (NSPCC Learning)

The club will not knowingly permit a barred person to undertake regulated activity. The club will make a DBS referral where it withdraws permission to undertake regulated activity, or would have done so had the person left, and the relevant conduct, harm test or relevant offence condition is met. A referral to the LADO or police does not replace this duty.

6. Club Welfare Officers

Management retains overall safeguarding accountability at SDGC, however, we have three trained Club Welfare Officers who have designated responsibility for safeguarding within the club.
The Welfare Officers play an important role in supporting child-centred practice and ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are maintained across the club.
SDGC remains committed to continually reviewing and improving its safeguarding practice and providing appropriate support to help ensure gymnastics has a positive impact on all children and young people involved in the club.

The role of the Club Welfare Officers includes:

- Supporting SDGC to develop, implement and review safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Acting as a first point of contact for staff, coaches, volunteers, children, young people, parents and carers regarding safeguarding concerns, poor practice or potential abuse.
- Ensuring children, young people, parents and carers know who they can speak to if they have a safeguarding or welfare concern.
- Ensuring concerns and incidents are recorded and reported appropriately in accordance with SDGC procedures.
- Supporting appropriate referrals to statutory or other relevant agencies where required.
- Ensuring relevant staff, coaches and volunteers access appropriate safeguarding training.
- Supporting the implementation of the Safer Recruitment Policy and ensuring appropriate recruitment and vetting arrangements are followed.
- Ensuring appropriate DBS checks are undertaken where required for the role and in accordance with the requirements for regulated activity.
- Maintaining appropriate contact details for Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and other relevant safeguarding services.
- Taking the lead in responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern.
- Assessing and clarifying information where appropriate while ensuring that concerns are not unnecessarily delayed.
- Making referrals to statutory organisations where appropriate.
- Consulting with and informing relevant members of club management in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Ensuring appropriate codes of conduct are in place and promoted.
- Advising club management on safeguarding matters.
- Ensuring safeguarding information is handled sensitively and shared appropriately.
- Providing safeguarding updates to club management.
- Escalating concerns to the LADO and/or relevant statutory agencies where required, particularly where concerns relate to an adult working with children.
- Supporting the club to learn from safeguarding concerns, incidents and reviews and implement improvements.

7. Club Welfare Officers – Contact Details

Club Welfare Officers:
Becca Armstrong
Melissa Spence
Alison Gargan

Email: welfare@southdurhamgym.co.uk
Becca: 07795095407
Melissa: 07930119288

Gym Main Office: 01388 811877

EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICE

NSPCC Helpline:
0808 800 5000 / help@nspcc.org.uk

Rise Northeast Safeguarding Team:
Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer: Becks Lippe – becks.lippe@risenortheast.co.uk
Sport Welfare Coordinator: Rowena Carr – rowena.carr@risenortheast.co.uk

County Durham Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
For concerns about a person working or volunteering with children.
Telephone: 03000 268835

First Contact - Durham County Council
For concerns about the welfare or safety of a child.
Telephone: 03000 267979
Professionals email: firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

Emergency
If a child is in immediate danger, always contact the Police on **999**.

8. Reporting, Recording & Escalation Procedures

Where a child discloses abuse, neglect, exploitation or any other safeguarding concern, or where concerns arise from observation or information received from another person, the recipient must:

- Listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking up.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Avoid asking leading questions or investigating the matter yourself.
- Make an accurate record as soon as possible.
- Record the facts clearly and objectively.
- Wherever possible, record the child's own words verbatim.
- Include dates, times, locations, persons present, observations, and any actions taken.
- Distinguish clearly between fact, observation, and opinion.
- Report immediately to a Welfare Officer (WO).
- Follow SDGC's Safeguarding, Reporting & Escalation Procedure document.

If a WO is unavailable or action is delayed: Any individual may make a direct referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if a WO cannot be contacted promptly, is unavailable, or if they believe appropriate action is not being taken.
Concern for the welfare of the child must always take precedence over organisational procedures.

Immediate danger: If a child is at immediate risk of harm, requires emergency protection, or a crime is in progress, call 999 immediately and then inform a WO as soon as it is safe to do so.

Allegations and Low-Level Concerns: Any concern that an adult has harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, poses a risk of harm to children, or may be unsuitable to work with children must be reported immediately to the Welfare Officer and an identified unconflicted senior safeguarding lead. Concerns about a Welfare Officer or member of management must be reported through an alternative reporting route to the unconflicted senior lead or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO must be informed within **72 hours** of any allegation meeting these criteria. Staff must not investigate suspected abuse; any initial assessment should be limited to receiving information, recording facts and clarifying immediate safeguarding

needs. Advice from the LADO and/or Police must be obtained before undertaking internal enquiries. Lower-level conduct concerns must be recorded, monitored and reviewed to identify patterns or emerging risk, and escalated promptly where the threshold for an allegation or child protection concern is met.

9. Safeguarding Records & Information Sharing

- Safeguarding records will be accurate, securely stored, accessible only to authorised individuals, and retained in line with the Club's retention arrangements.
- Information will be shared lawfully, necessarily and proportionately to safeguard children; consent is not always required.
- The Club will record the lawful basis for processing, any additional conditions for special category or criminal offence data.
- The Club will record decisions to share or not share information.
- Where applicable, the Club will comply with statutory information-sharing duties including section 16LA of the Children Act 2004.

10. Supporting documents

Safeguarding at South Durham Gymnastics is supported by a range of complementary policies, procedures and guidance. These documents set out the detailed arrangements and responsibilities for specific areas of practice and should be read alongside this policy.
These include, but are not limited to:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff, Coaches & Volunteers Code of Conduct and Phone Use Policy
- Codes of Conduct for Parents, Carers, Children and Young People
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Photography Policy
- Health, Safety & Welfare Policy
- Safeguarding reporting and escalation procedure

Where a safeguarding concern relates to an area covered by another organisational policy or procedure, the relevant policy should be followed alongside this Safeguarding Policy.

Suggested Review Date: After significant changes, or annually
Annual Review Date: 1st October 2026

Reviewed By:	Becca Armstrong
External Review By:	Julie Shore – Shore Safeguarding
Date:	28.10.2026
Comments:	Full document reviewed & updated in line with relevant statutory guidance as of October 2026 including Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2026, DBS Referral Guidance and ICO information sharing.
Next Suggested Review Date:	October 2026