



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics

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Policy and Procedures on Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk

Name of Gym: Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics

Name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer: Olivia Bolsher / Holly Smith

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Name of the Designated Welfare Officer: Holly Smith

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Purpose and scope of policy

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics has a 'duty of care' to provide a safe environment for and to promote the health and well-being of children under the age of 18 years and adults at risk. Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics will take all reasonable steps to



ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk is embedded in our contact with them through the training and activities we provide.

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics believes that the welfare of the child is paramount, and that all children and adults at risk regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or identity, or religious belief have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is:

- to facilitate protection for children under the age of 18 years and adults at risk during any activity provided by Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics
- to protect children and adults at risk where there is a concern about the behaviour of an adult, including a Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics employee
- to assist all individuals at Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics to meet their duty of care to safeguard all children and adults at risk who take part in Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics activities
- to ensure that where Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics staff, students or visitors have concerns about the welfare of children or adults at risk, they are in a position to take appropriate steps to address them

Statutory and legislative frameworks

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of UK law and guidance.

Under the Children Act 1989, which applies to England and Wales, a child is a person up to the age of 18 years. For child protection purposes, all four nations in the UK use an age band up to 18 years old. This can also be up to the age of 25 years in the case of someone who is receiving help from Social Services or Education. Other relevant legislation includes the Children Act 2004 and the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010.

There is also a common law duty of care applicable to organisations not to be negligent and to avoid causing harm or injury.

Responsibilities

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics will ensure that the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times and take account of statutory guidance. Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding and child protection arrangements that are brought to their attention without delay.

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics will safeguard children and adults at risk by:



- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection procedures
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, adults at risk, Parents, carers, Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics staff and the companies and organisations with which we work sharing information about concerns with the appropriate agencies
- implementing and adhering to a Code of behaviour and good practice ensuring to the best of our ability, the security of Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics premises (owned or rented) where activities involving Children and adults at risk take place

No single professional, including those at Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics, can have a full picture of a child or adult at risk's needs and circumstances. If children, carers and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

The Policy is reviewed biannually or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance or in the event of an incident.

Terminology and Definitions

There are four main recognised categories of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse; in addition, Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics is aware of other considerations and practices that effect children and young people such as self-harm, eating disorders, bullying (including cyber- bullying), peer on peer abuse, serious youth violence, violence in the name of honour, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics also works with adults at risk who are protected by different legislation. The main forms of abuse in relation to an adult at risk include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial or material abuse, neglect, acts of omission and discriminatory abuse.

Overview and responsibilities

These procedures aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children and adults at risk from abuse and the need to protect Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics staff, volunteers and visitors from false allegations.

It is not the responsibility of Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics staff to decide whether a child or adult at risk has been abused in the past, is being abused, or might be abused. However, there is a responsibility to act on concerns in order that children and



adults at risk can be supported and protected in the short term, and that appropriate agencies can make enquiries and take necessary action to protect them.

It is the remit of the appropriate authority and not anyone connected with Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics to investigate incidents that require referral.

Abuse of children and adults at risk can be perpetrated by another child or adult at risk and where this occurs the age and understanding of the alleged perpetrator must be taken into consideration. The circumstances of the alleged abuser must be assessed separately from those of the alleged victim and must include exploration of why the behaviour has occurred.

Where Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics receives reports of concerns regarding safe practice, they will carry out all possible and appropriate investigations as the expert in the cheer/gymnastics education field. In the event of the investigation substantiating such concerns, a safeguarding referral may then be made to the appropriate authority. In this context it should be noted that complaints cannot be assumed to be substantiated until appropriate processes have been completed, and in some circumstances may be rejected or may not be able to be investigated (e.g. in the case of anonymous complaints).

Responding to a safeguarding incident or concern involving a child or adult at risk

If an incident, allegation or suspicion of abuse or any other matter which calls the wellbeing of a child or adult at risk into question Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics should follow the procedure below:

- stop other activity and focus on what you are being told or seeing – responding to the incident being reported should take immediate priority
- react in a calm and considered way but show concern
- tell the child, adult at risk or third party that it is right for them to share this information
- take what the child, adult at risk or third party has said seriously and allow extra time where there is a speech or language difficulty
- keep questions to an absolute minimum necessary to gain a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said, and do not interrogate the child, adult at risk or third party
- offer reassurance
- do not give assurances of confidentiality, but explain you will need to pass on this information to those that need to know; and
- consider whether immediate action is needed to protect a child or adult at risk who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm – think about the child or adult at risk who is the immediate concern and any others who may have been harmed or be at risk of harm, in light of what you have been told or seen



- safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors that occur outside of Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics (such as family matters, and/or issues between children or adults at risk outside of Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics) and so when dealing with a concern the full context should be considered

In cases where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or adult at risk and it is unsafe to wait until the next working day, the appropriate authorities should be contacted immediately and you should stay with those you think are at immediate risk until they can be transferred to safe care, where practical.

Reporting a safeguarding incident or concern

Make a comprehensive record of what is said or seen and actions taken at the earliest possible opportunity. The record should include the following:

- a detailed record of the incident in the child or adult at risk's own words or the words of the third party reporting it. You should note that there may be occasions when this record may be used later in a criminal trial and therefore needs to be as full and accurate as possible
- details of the nature of the incident
- a description of any injury (please note that you must not remove the clothing of a child or adult at risk to inspect injuries)
- dates, times or places and any other information that may be useful such as the names and addresses of potential witnesses; and written records including emails and letters.

The report should be submitted to the appropriate authority immediately but if this is not possible, certainly within 24 hours.

All Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics staff handling cases involving allegations against other coaches, students or visitors will recognise the need for absolute confidentiality in these circumstances.

There may be occasions when it is appropriate for the child(ren)'s main school to be contacted, where these details are known.

Further advice and guidance

Anyone who wishes to seek guidance from an external agency may contact the Police or Social Services Department. Guidance and advice is also available from the NSPCC Adult Child Protection Helpline or Childline for children and young people.



Definitions of abuse:

These definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Home Office, Department for Education and Employment, 1999)

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children or "Munchausen Syndrome by proxy" after the person who first identified this situation.

A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also classed as physical abuse. FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

Note

Recent guidance notes other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organisation caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

Recognising and Responding to Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.



Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour Running away from home

Emotional signs of abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour



Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised



Code of Behaviour and Good Practice

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics believes that the Code of Behaviour and Good Practice will assist everyone in protecting children and adults at risk. Anyone organising activities on behalf of Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics, involving children and/or adults at risk, must adhere to this code as set out below:

- All children and adults at risk should be treated with respect
- All children and adults at risk (including those with special educational needs) should be provided with an environment in which they can feel confident and able to discuss their concerns and have support with communication difficulties where needed
- All activities (including examinations) involving children and adults at risk should include a ratio of one adult to every 10 children/adults at risk. For younger children under the age of nine, there should always be at least one additional adult (e.g. an assistant coach). Where this is not possible, Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics will ensure that activities take place within sight or hearing of other adults
- Respect should be given to a child's or adult at risk's rights to personal privacy
- Physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted and should be avoided. Where any physical touching is required for purposes of instruction, it should be provided openly in front of other students. Parents, guardians and students will be warned in advance that physical touching may be required for correctional or manual support of skill purposes only
- Feedback should always be constructive rather than negative, and language used should never be threatening or upsetting
- Private or unobserved contact with a young person or adult at risk should be avoided wherever possible unless authorisation is given by the appropriate parent or guardian
- Children with special educational needs/disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse and extra care should be taken to interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect. They may be disproportionately impacted by behaviour such as abuse or bullying without outwardly showing any signs through communication barriers
- Assumptions should not be made that indicators of abuse (e.g. behaviour, mood and Injury) relate to a child's disability or learning difficulty without further exploration
- If first aid is required, where possible, it should be administered by a trained first aider in the presence of another adult. Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics First Aiders are outlined at the top of this policy.
- A First Aider will complete a report if they have any safeguarding concerns as a result of administering the first aid
- Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics has changing room guidelines which are designed to provide a safe environment in which children and adults at risk can use Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics facilities. Coaches should encourage children, young people, parents, guardians and carers to follow this guidance



- The changing room guidelines prohibit the use of telephones, cameras or other photographic or filming devices being used in changing rooms or toilet facilities
- Written parental or guardian consent should always be obtained by Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics for the use of any photographs, film or videos involving children and adults at risk. This should clearly indicate the uses to which the photographs, film or videos will be put
- Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics coaches, staff, students, volunteers and visitors where appropriate, should challenge unacceptable behaviour in accordance with the provisions of this code of conduct and good practice
- Any incidents, allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported immediately

In all dealings with children and adults at risk, Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics coaches, staff, students, volunteers and visitors to Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics where appropriate, should never:

- leave children who are in their care unsupervised on Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics premises
- play rough, physical or sexually provocative games, involving or observed by children or adults at risk whether based on talking or touching
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical activity involving children or adults at risk, or any bullying of a child by an adult or another child
- allow children or adults at risk to use inappropriate language without challenging it
- use any physical punishment as part of disciplining a child or adult at risk
- give their personal contact details to a child or adult at risk whom they have met through work including via social networking sites
- allow allegations by a child or adult at risk to go unrecorded or not acted upon in accordance with these or other Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics procedures

Any incidents which cause concern in respect of a child or an adult at risk must be reported immediately. Below are examples of incidents which are to be reported. When...

- a child or adult at risk is hurt accidentally
- you think a child or adult at risk has misunderstood or misinterpreted something you have done you have been required to take action to prevent a child or adult at risk from harming themselves or another, or from causing significant damage to property. Unless you have received specific training on how to restrain a child or adult at risk, this should only be done as a last resort. Try not to do it alone, call for assistance.
- you see any suspicious marks on a child or adult at risk
- you hear any allegations made by a child or adult at risk or any other person relating to events giving rise to a safeguarding concern either inside or outside of



Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics which have happened recently or in the past

- you are concerned that a child or adult at risk or older is being subjected to violence in the name of honour
- a child or adult at risk discloses that they have been a victim or are involved in serious violent crime

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics Coaches, Staff & Volunteers

Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in the UK for criminal record checks and follows its advice with regard to requirements in relation to vetting and checking any Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics Faculty.

People and organisations that hire Bloom Elite Cheerleading & Gymnastics premises to run their own activities will be required to have their own necessary disclosure and barring checks done for any employees and volunteers. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that anyone who will be working with participants below the age of 18 or adults at risk in any capacity must hold an appropriate Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring service. This requirement applies whether parents, guardians and/or carers are present during the activities or not.

Appropriate Physical Contact in Cheerleading & Gymnastics

Coaching cheerleading & gymnastics is a physical activity and a teacher will sometimes need to make physical contact with an athlete to support them through a skill, show an idea or to correct the athlete's position. This can include:

- Lifting
- Catching
- Physically moving the athlete through a skill
- Adjusting arms, legs, rib cage, hips, feet, hands
- Moving one athlete in relation to another

Where contact is needed, we will remain sensitive to the athlete's wishes and put their welfare first. In all cases, we will say why and how we will be correcting the athlete's position before making any contact.

We encourage athletes to report any concerns.

Chaperoning Children at Events

When chaperoning athletes to or at an event, we will:



- Provide parents and athletes with information about what the event is for
- Ensure that there is a trained First Aider
- Provide parents and athletes with the full address of the event
- In cases where the event is taking place in a large building, we will also give the room number or more specific area where possible
- Have a planned journey route that is shared with parents, athletes and chaperones
- Make sure that athletes are aware of what they should do if they get lost
- Ask parents and athletes for their contact details in case of emergency
- Have a clear idea of how athletes will be cared for while at the event

We will ensure that chaperones hold all required checks and licences and are aware of our Child Protection Policy.

Photography and filming of children and/or adults at risk

No filming or photography of children or adults at risk should take place without gaining written permission from the appropriate parent, guardian or carer. The purposes for which any photographic images or film will be used should be clearly explained.

There is evidence that some people do use activities and events as an opportunity to take photographs or footage of children and/or adults at risk, including those with disabilities, with the intention to use them inappropriately or manipulate them.

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