



Code of Conduct

Policy Lead: **Mr Arjun Purewal**

Review Date: **July 2026**

Policy Lead Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arjun Purewal', is written over a horizontal line.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

Most NGB's and coaching organisations require staff/volunteers to sign up to their code of conduct or code of behaviour. Many also have a code of ethics. The code of conduct outlines good practice when working with children/young people. An environment which allows bullying, shouting, racism, or sexism, is not acceptable. There should be clear guidance about what behaviour is inappropriate in a relationship between adults and young people. Specific guidance should be given where personal or intimate care tasks are carried out; for example, with very young or disabled children. Coaches will be advised to abide by the code of conduct and ethics for their relevant NGB in addition to the generic codes stated in this policy.

Guidelines for the use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

All unauthorised photography at any coaching or related activity organised, delivered or supported AP Coaching Sunderland is strictly prohibited.

Supervision of Children and Young People

Prevention is the most important aspect of supervision of children and young people. From the moment children and young people arrive at a AP Coaching Sunderland venue, staff and volunteers are acting in loco parentis and have a duty of care towards them.

Appropriate supervision ratios (Aged 5-8 years at a ratio of one adult to eight children and children aged 8-16 years at a ratio of 1 adult to 12 children) and systems for monitoring the whereabouts of children are essential. It must be clear at all times, who in the team is responsible for supervision. This is particularly important where events are held on large sites.

Poor Practice

Poor Practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the Partnership "Code of Conduct", and the Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport as well as the Policies and Procedures provided by AP Coaching Sunderland, which is constituted around the following:

- **Rights** – for example of the player/participant, the parent, the coach, the official etc.
- **Responsibilities** – for example responsibility for the welfare of the players/participants, the sport, the profession of coaching, their own development.
- **Respect** – for example of other players, officials and their decisions, coaches, the rules.

Abuse

Abuse can happen wherever there are young people. The effects of abuse can be so damaging and if untreated, they may follow a person into adulthood. For example, a person who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain stable, trusting relationships, may become involved in drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future. AP Coaching Sunderland will seek appropriate training to assist coaches and staff in identifying vulnerabilities in groups and enable them to act accordingly.

Disabled People

There have been a number of studies which suggest children (or adults) with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse. Various factors contribute to this, such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

Race and Racism

Children from black and minority ethnic groups (and their parents) are likely to have experienced harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism at some time throughout their lives. Although racism causes significant harm it is not, in itself, a category of abuse. However, this may be categorised as emotional abuse, under this Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. AP Coaching Sunderland has a policy of equal opportunity delivery and encourages the equal and fair participation of all.

Neglect

Where adults fail 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, (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment). It may also include refusal to give a child love, affection and attention. Neglect in sport could also include a teacher or coach not ensuring children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

Physical Abuse

Where someone physically hurts or injures children and young people, by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and biting, burning or scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical 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. Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; where drugs are used to enhance performance or delay puberty.

Sexual Abuse

Where children, young people or vulnerable adults are abused by adults or other children (both male and female), who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse. In sport, coaching techniques, which involve physical contact with children, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of a coach over a young performer, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

Emotional Abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill treatment of children, young people or vulnerable adults which causes severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them. It may involve causing them to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adults. Emotional abuse in sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

The above definitions are adapted from the HM Government (2006) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Bullying

It is important to recognise that in some cases of abuse, it may not always be an adult abusing a young person. It can occur that the abuser may be a young person, for example in the case of bullying.

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms; the three main types are:

Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft),

Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and

Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities and social acceptance of the peer group)

Although anyone can be the target for bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Both girls and boys can be bullies, although it seems to be more conspicuous in boys. Although bullying often takes place in schools research shows it can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision e.g. on the way to and from school, at a sporting event, in the playground and changing rooms.

Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of different reasons and may even have been abused. Typically, bullies can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others and there is increasing evidence to suggest that this abuse of power can lead to crime.

The competitive nature of sport makes it an ideal environment for the bully. The bully in sport can be:

- A parent who pushes too hard
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all cost philosophy
- A player, coach or team who intimidates inappropriately
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person

Bullying can include:

Verbal: e.g. name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic remarks

Emotional: e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring Sexual: e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments. Physical: e.g. hitting, kicking or theft.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, young people and vulnerable adults, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

It is important not to delay taking action.

The Police also have specially trained officers in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) who will give guidance and support. Victim Liaison Officers from the police can advise on adult protection issues. Contact details for the Northumbria Police are set out in Appendix 2. If you need to find out the details of the Social Care Duty officer urgently, the Samaritans also hold these details: 08457 90 90 90.

Action if Bullying is Suspected

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children and vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns¹
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority by creating an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the person in charge at the club, coaching session or school (wherever the bullying is occurring)

Action towards the bully: *if it is another child:*

- Talk with the bully, explain the situation, and try to get the bully to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim
- Inform the bully's parents
- Insist on the return of items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim
- Provide support for the coach of the bully
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour Hold meetings with the families to report on progress Inform all organisation members of action taken
- Keep a written record of action taken

In cases where incidents are serious (e.g. physical injury), or persistent, despite attempts to deal with it, the same protocols should be followed as set out previously.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a "need to know basis." This includes to the following people:

- The Designated Person
- Social Care/Police
- Parents/ carers of the person making the allegation if they're a child
- The parents or carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- As Appropriate, the Designated officers within the governing body of sport e.g. Legal Adviser; Lead Child Protection officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the abuser is a child)*

***Where there is any possibility that a criminal act may have been committed advice should FIRST be sought from the police and/or children's social care.**

Care should be taken not to take any action that may jeopardise any subsequent criminal investigation; this includes contacting the alleged perpetrator.

Information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with Data Protection legislation (e.g. that information is accurate and is regularly updated, relevant and secure.)

It will be the responsibility of the Designated Person to develop and maintain a suitable system for holding these records.

Review

AP Coaching Sunderland will review this policy annually.

This document will be fully reviewed in July 2026 unless any new significant legislation, guidance or new developments emerge.