

Avon Schools Athletics Association

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Statement

Safeguarding and the protection of children is the responsibility of everyone associated with Avon Schools Athletics Association – this includes, but is not limited to coaches, volunteers, athletes, parents and carers. Children can suffer abuse or harm from adults and from other children.

It is vital that any concern you have for a child's welfare, however small is passed to our Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer. You can share concerns using the details below.

Avon Schools Athletics Association Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer is:

Dave Cook (Head of PE, St Katherine's School, cookd@skdrive.org, 01275373737)

To report a concern about any child under the care of The Avon Schools Athletics Association you can contact the Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer as named above. We also have an anonymous reporting form which is available at bit.ly/reporttoavonschools. Any concerns about the Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer should be reported to the Chairman.

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Introduction

The Avon Schools Athletic Association is the body responsible for the advancement of school's athletics within the four unitary authorities that made up the old county of Avon. The Avon Schools Athletics Association includes Bristol, North Somerset, Bath and North-East Somerset (BANES) and South Gloucestershire.

The objectives of the Association are the advancement of the moral and physical welfare and development of school pupils through the medium of athletics. Fundamental to this are the organisation of county schools track and field, cross country, combined events and sports hall championships.

The Association is affiliated to the English Schools Athletic Association and is run by a committee, comprising the offices of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Team Managers plus representatives from each of the districts, which meets on a regular basis to conduct the affairs of the association. All schools and colleges within the four districts affiliate to the association on an annual basis.

All sporting organisations which make provision for children and children must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff (paid / unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer

Policy Statement

Avon Schools Athletics Association has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in county schools' athletics from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be vulnerable must be considered. Avon Schools Athletics Association will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in county schools' athletics through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Avon Schools Athletics Association and set out in this policy. The guidance produced by the English Schools Athletics Association has formed the basis of the guidance used to create this policy.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). Whilst the legal definition of a child is anyone under the age of 18, Avon Schools Athletics Association will operate under the guidelines, procedures and practices below for all young athletes competing under the care of the Association given that the athletes competing will still be of school age.

Policy Aims

The aims of the Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Protection Policy are to:

- Provide all children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Avon Schools Athletics Association
- Support all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues
- Promote safe working practices with staff and volunteers of the association
- Set out the expectations for safer recruitment and training of all staff and volunteers of the association
- Outline a clear procedure for the reporting and recording of any concerns, allegations or suspicious as well as any subsequent action

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with children and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

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When a child has been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the Avon Schools Athletics Association must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. Good practice guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- Always working in an open environment – e.g. avoiding private locations or locations where observation is obstructed. Staff / volunteers should avoid spending time alone with children, away from others unless in the case of an emergency.
- Treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity – e.g. not discriminating against children for any reason or because of any protected characteristics
- Always placing the welfare of each child before any performance or outcome goals – e.g. not forcing athletes to train or compete where they may be suffering from injury / illness
- Maintaining safe and appropriate professional relationships with athletes / children that are based on mutual trust and respect – e.g. not abusing any positions of power and allowing children to share in any decision making
- Making athletics fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play and good sporting behaviour
- Ensuring that male and female members of staff accompany any mixed teams that attend any residential trips, visits or competitions. Ensuring that those members of staff do not enter children's rooms alone unless in case of emergency or where there are safety concerns or invite children into their rooms. Staff / volunteers should never share a room with children.
- Acting as a role model for children – e.g. not drinking alcohol or smoking in the company of children
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Not providing transport for children to or from events / sessions
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children – e.g. children are not adults and the same expectations cannot be placed upon them
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and / or other medical treatment. Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs along with the details of any treatment given
- Staff / volunteers should never engage in any of the following activities with children - rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. This includes any form of inappropriate touching or doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Staff / volunteers should not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Staff / volunteers should never make sexually suggestive comments to a child
- Staff / volunteers should never reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Staff / volunteers should never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Peer on Peer Abuse

The Avon Schools Athletics Association recognises that children can be subjected to harm and abuse by other children. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms including serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, financial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups steered by a dislike for a person's protected characteristics.

Children and adults should be vigilant for peer on peer abuse and reporting this in exactly the same that they would if the concern was about an adult.

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Reporting Concerns

All concerns about children under the care of The Avon Schools Athletics Association should be reported. It is vital that any concern you have for a child's welfare, however small is passed to our Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer.

Avon Schools Athletics Association Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer is:

Dave Cook (Head of PE, St Katherine's School, cookd@skdrive.org, 01275373737)

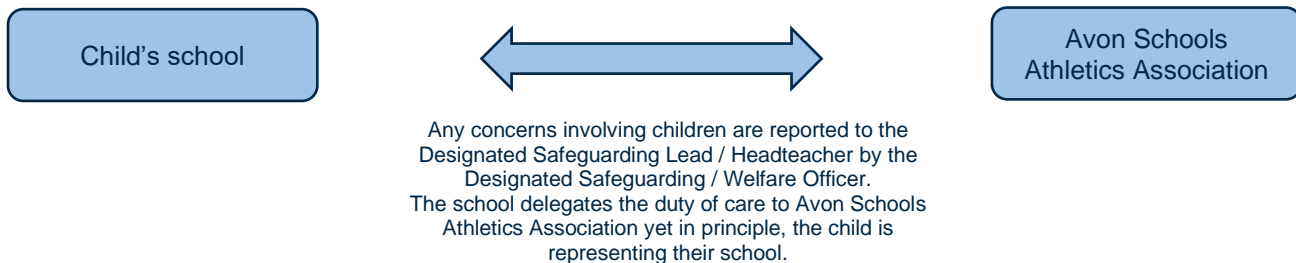
To report a concern about any child under the care of The Avon Schools Athletics Association you can contact the Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer as named above. We also have an anonymous reporting form which is available at bit.ly/reporttoavonschools. Any concerns about the Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer should be reported to the Chairman.

Examples of incidents that must be reported include, but are not limited to:

- Concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff / volunteer
- Concerns about the behaviour of a child towards another child
- A member of staff / volunteer accidentally hurts an athlete
- An athlete is visibly distressed by the actions of a member of staff / volunteer
- An athlete misunderstands or misinterprets something that a member of staff / volunteer has done

Reporting to Avon Schools

All concerns received by the Designated Safeguarding / Welfare Officer for Avon Schools Athletics Association will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the child's school. The diagram below shows how children competing for Avon Schools Athletics Association are competing under the care of the Avon Schools Athletics Association yet in principle, the child is representing their school.



Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Avon Schools Athletics Association, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Avon Schools Athletics Association will assure all staff / volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

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Concerns about poor practice

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer (CWO) liaise with the ESAA Welfare Officer who will liaise with England Athletics whose procedures will define the course of action to address this.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Avon Schools Athletics Association CWO, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the ESAA Welfare officer who will liaise with England Athletics whose procedures will define the course of action to address this.

Concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been a victim of abuse by either a member of staff or a volunteer will be reported to the Avon Schools Athletics Association CWO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. The official breach of welfare referral form will be used for this purpose.

The Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the Headteacher / Principal of the child's school, who should work with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LAD) and / or Social Services department.

The Avon Schools Athletics Association CWO will also notify the ESAA Welfare officer who may need to deal with any media enquiries.

Concerns about suspected bullying

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to Allegations or Suspicions' above.

Examples of action that may be taken by Avon Schools Athletics Association in the case of bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create 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 Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring)
- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- Inform the bully's / bullies' parents
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim
- Provide support for the victim's coach
- 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

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Concerns outside of the immediate sporting environment

Report your concerns to the Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer, who will contact the child's school.

If the Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services or the police immediately.

Social Services and / or the Police will decide how to involve the parents / carers. The Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer should also report the incident to the ESAA Welfare Officer.

Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the Avon Schools Athletics Association will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Sharing information with social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record will be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Social Services or the Police direct (see below), or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.

Confidentiality

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

- The Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Headteacher of the school

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- Social Services / Police
- The ESAA Welfare Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Use of Photographic / Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All County Schools Athletics Associations should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Avon Schools Athletics Association Child Welfare Officer.

Videoring as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents / carers should be made aware that this is happening and give their permission, and such films should be stored safely.

At all events licensed by England Athletics, which includes schools' events, anyone who wishes to take photos should sign in with the organiser in the same way as officials are expected to.

The purpose of this section of the policy statement is to:

- Protect children and young people who take part in Avon Schools Athletics events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- Set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs / videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- To ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people

This applies to all staff, volunteers and other adults associated with Avon Schools Athletics Association.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. Summaries of key legislation and guidance is available on:

- Online abuse [learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse](https://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse)
- Child protection [learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system](https://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system)

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to take, share and use images of children safely.

We recognise that:

- Sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- The welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- Children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation

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- Consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- There are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online

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

- Always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- Always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- Making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- Changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- Never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- Making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- Reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
 - avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
 - using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity
 - we will also develop a procedure for reporting the abuse or misuse of images of children as part of our child protection procedures. We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe

Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and / or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event.

This includes:

- Reminding parents, carers and children that they need to give consent for Avon Schools Athletics Association to take and use their images
- Asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media or asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include
- Recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share
- Reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Photography and/or filming for Avon Schools Athletics Association's use

We recognise that our group leaders may use photography and filming as an aid in activities such as coaching. However, this should only be done with Avon Schools Athletics Association's permission and using our equipment.

Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming is part of the programme and give written consent. If we hire a photographer for one of our events, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

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- Providing the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- Ensuring the photographer wears identification at all times
- Informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared
- Not allowing the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- Not allowing the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home
- Reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.

Photography and/or filming for wider use

If people such as local journalists, professional photographers (not hired by Avon Schools Athletics Association) or students wish to record one of our events and share the images professionally or in the wider world, they should seek permission in advance.

They should provide:

- The name and address of the person using the camera
- The names of children they wish to take images of (if possible)
- The reason for taking the images and/or what the images will be used for
- A signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

Avon Schools Athletics Association will verify these details and decide whether to grant permission for photographs/films to be taken. We will seek consent from the children who are the intended subjects of the images and their parents and inform the photographer of anyone who does not give consent.

At the event we will inform children, parents and carers that an external photographer is present and ensure they are easily identifiable, for example by using them with a coloured identification badge.

If Avon Schools Athletics Association is concerned that someone unknown to us is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, we will ask them to leave and (depending on the nature of the concerns) follow our child protection procedures.

Storing images

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law. We will keep hard copies of images in a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

Avon Schools Athletics Association does not permit staff and volunteers to using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children. Only cameras or devices belonging to the association should be used.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

The Avon Schools Athletics Association recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

All of our staff members and volunteers have been recruited using the safer recruitment procedures below:

- Committee members are elected to positions and seconded by other committee members – all committee members fall under one of the three categories below
- All adults working in the Avon Schools Athletics Association fall under one of three categories

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- 1) England Athletics Officials / Coaches (and therefore subject to an enhanced DBS check and licencing process)
- 2) Currently employed in an Avon School (and therefore subject to an enhanced DBS check and the school's own safer recruitment processes)
- 3) Volunteers who have received an enhanced DBS check and are working under the supervision of an adult who falls into either category 1 or 2 above

→ The Avon Schools Athletics Association are currently working on adopting a set of job roles / descriptions and person specifications to support future recruitment

→ The training requirements for adults working in The Avon Schools Athletics Association are outlined in the table below

Role	Enhanced DBS	First Aid Training	Safeguarding Training
Committee members	✓		Level 1
Designated welfare officer	✓		Level 3
Team managers	✓	✓	Level 1
Coach working in schools	✓	✓	Level 1
Volunteers	✓		Association training

Declarations and adopting the policy

This Policy was formally adopted by the committee of Avon Schools Athletics Association in November 2023. It will be reviewed on an annual basis, or following any major incident, with the next planned review taking place at the Avon Schools Athletics Association AGM.

On behalf of Avon Schools Athletics Association, we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed: J W Strudwick

Name: Jim Strudwick

Position with Avon Schools Athletics Association: Chairman

Date: November 2023

Signed:



Name: Dave Cook

Position with Avon Schools Athletics Association: Designed Safeguarding / Welfare Officer

Date: November 2023