



# Safeguarding Policy

Date of approval: 23/10/2025

Updated: April 2026    Next review date: 23/10/2026

## **1. Purpose and scope**

- 1.1 Balance & Beam is committed to creating and maintaining a safe welcoming and positive environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in our gymnastic activities.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all our staff, coaches, volunteers, sessional workers, committee members, external contractors children and young people, and vulnerable adults.
- 1.3 We recognise our duty of care to safeguard all participants from harm including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or mistreatment and to promote their welfare.

## **2. Legislative & Guiding Framework**

**This policy is underpinned by key UK legislation and statutory guidance including:**

- 2.1 Children Act 1989 - which places duties on local authorities and others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- 2.2 Children Act 2004 - which sets out arrangements for safeguarding children in partnerships and cooperation  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- 2.3 Safeguarding vulnerable groups Act 2006 - relating to vetting and barring of individuals working with children and vulnerable adults.  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>
- 2.4 Education and training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 - extends safeguarding duties to providers of post 16 education/training  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/16>
- 2.5 Guidance for out of school settings including sports clubs: out of school settings : safeguarding guidance for providers (DfE) - explicitly covers sports training environments  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice>

2.6 Prevent Duty 2023 – counter terrorism and security act

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

2.7 Working together to safeguard children 2026 -Multi agencies working together to help protect and promote the welfare of children

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c2c4ce380a2a73a7cf9df4/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2026.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c2c4ce380a2a73a7cf9df4/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026.pdf)

2.8 Data protection Act (2018) & UK GDPR – how to handle, collect and store personal data

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

2.9 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – Children who witness domestic abuse are a victim in their own right

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents>

### **3. Principles of Balance & Beam**

3.1 At Balance & Beam the welfare of the child/ young person/ vulnerable adult is paramount

3.2 At Balance & Beam we believe that all participants regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from abuse

3.3 At Balance & Beam we recognise that working in partnership with children, young people, parents/ carers and other agencies is essential

3.4 At Balance & Beam we will endeavour to create an environment in which participants feel secure, respected and listened to, and where they know they can talk to an adult if they are worried

3.5 At Balance & Beam all staff and volunteers, including those from partner organisations, acknowledge and accept their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name : Louise Morris

Title : Centre Manager

Phone: 01782 214452

Email: Louise@balanceandbeam.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Name: Lauren Gorton

Title: Senior Coach & Digital Media

Phone: 01782 214452

Email: Lauren@balanceandbeam.co.uk

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding matters within the club, including

- Being the first point of contact for any safeguarding concern
- ensuring appropriate referrals are made to the local authority, children services or adult safeguarding as required
- Maintaining a record of concerns and actions taken
- ensuring staff/ volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training and updates
- liaising with external agencies and the local authority designated officer (LADO) for allegations against staff/adults

#### 4.2 All staff /Coaches /Volunteers

- Must follow the safeguarding procedures in this policy and Balance & Beam s code of conduct
- Must attend safeguarding training at an appropriate level and update their knowledge regularly
- should be alert to signs of abuse or poor practise and report any concerns to the DSL without delay
- must ensure that their behaviour with children young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate and safe

### **5. Safe Recruiting & Vetting**

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

- All applicants will be asked to provide two references one preferably from a place of work relating to childcare( if not available we may wish to contact a college tutor) and one from a professional.
- All coaches, staff and volunteers who work regularly or unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults will undergo appropriate checks using our DBS (disclosure and barring service) procedure
- Volunteers or helpers who are not regularly involved may be supervised appropriately and follow Balance & Beam 's policies and procedures
- Balance & Beam aligned with good practise for safe recruitment in sports settings
- we will maintain appropriate records of checks, training and induction

## 6. Training & Support

- All staff/ coaches/ volunteers will receive induction training in safeguarding and sign to say they have read and understood this policy
- Regular refresher/ update training will be arranged at least every two years or when legislation/ guidance changes. Yearly staff training will be provided to ensure we are up to date with legislation / guidance changes
- The DSL and senior staff will ensure they are up to date with local safeguarding procedures and good practice in sport

## 7. Recognising & Responding to concerns

Staff must be alert to the following signs of abuse

- Signs of abuse:

**Sexual**

**Physical**

**Emotional Abuse**

**Neglect**

**Domestic Abuse**

In addition to the signs of abuse it is very important staff and volunteers are aware of other categories such as:

### **Prevent Duty 2023**

The Prevent duty requires specified authorities in England and Wales to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". It is part of wider safeguarding, requiring risk assessments, staff training, and partnership working to address radicalisation risks, including online grooming. To report concerns and referrals in relation to Prevent the following link should be used prevent and channel / Stoke-on-trent

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

### **FGM**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a illegal practice in the UK, classified as child abuse and a severe form of violence against women and girls. It involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons, causing severe short and long-term physical and mental health issues

This is a mandatory reporting duty. Should a child disclose this information you must report it to the police immediately.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

### **Child on child abuse**

child-on-child abuse (formerly peer-on-peer) refers to harmful, inappropriate, or abusive behaviours between children, both online and offline. It includes physical/emotional abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, and coercion. Childcare sectors must recognize that such abuse is a safeguarding issue, not mere "teasing".

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_from\\_1\\_September\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf)

- When there is a concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, it should be reported to the DSL immediately, and recorded
- In cases of immediate danger or life threatening situations, call 999
- To gain advice you can contact the integrated front door (IFD) via IFD portal or contact them on 01782 235100
- L.A.D.O – Local authority designated officer 01782 235100
- Emergency Duty Team – 01782 234234
- Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership – [sscoinformation@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:sscoinformation@stoke.gov.uk)
- The concern should be documented: what was seen/ heard, when, who was involved, actions taken and by whom
- The DSL will decide on next steps and liaise with local safeguarding agencies
- Balance & Beam will cooperate fully with investigations by statutory authorities
- Should staff feel appropriate action has not been taken or doesn't feel confident to raise concerns to the above people then the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline can be contacted -0800 028 0285. This is an independent helpline where staff can share concerns confidentially and if the NSPCC deem that the concerns meet threshold, they will independently refer concerns to the Integrated Front Door / Lado alongside Ofsted.
- To contact OFSTED immediately – 0300 123 1231

## **8. Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures**

- At Balance & Beam we will follow a clear procedure for managing allegations against staff/ coaches/ volunteers- including informing the local authority designated officer (LADO)
- We will ensure confidentiality is maintained appropriately and information is shared only on a need- to- know basis
- All records of safeguarding concerns, actions, outcomes and communications will be held securely and separately from other club records
- Balance & Beam will monitor incidents and update practice and policy accordingly

## **9. Safe Environment & Good Practice**

- Balance & Beam commits to providing a safe physical environment (including appropriate equipment/ supervision/ and risk assessments)
- Balance & Beam will promote positive behaviour among participants and challenge bullying, discrimination, and harassment
- Balance & Beam ensure inclusion: recognise the specific needs of children, young people or vulnerable adults with disabilities, learning difficulties, medical conditions or from minority backgrounds. Where learning and disabilities require 1 to 1 ratios we will ask for the support from a parent/carer.
- At Balance & Beam we will ensure proper consent is obtained for photography/ filming, and that images are stored/ used in line with data protection best practice

## **10. Monitoring, Review & Implementation**

- Balance & Beam's senior team will monitor the implementation of this policy regularly
- This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if legislation guidance or local procedures change or if a significant safeguarding incident occurs
- This policy will be made publicly available on our website and all staff, volunteers, parents/ carers will be made aware of it
- We will ensure that children, young people and their parents/ carriers have access to clear information about how to raise concerns and how Balance & Beam responds

## **11. Whistleblowing Policy**

This procedure applies to everyone who works at Balance & Beam, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

- Balance & Beam is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability
- In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the setting to come forward and voice those concerns
- It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy document makes it clear that employees can do something without fear of reprisals. It is intended that this policy will encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns, rather than overlooking a problem or having it play on their mind.
- Staff are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all children attending Balance & Beam and this takes priority over loyalty towards colleagues

- General Principals
  - This policy is intended to:
    - Encourage and enable individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns
    - Support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor practice
    - Ensure concerns are appropriately investigated
    - Protect those making the complaint from victimisation or retaliation.
- The Setting Manager (if whistleblowing is not involving them) and DSL will investigate promptly and thoroughly, all concerns that are raised in accordance with this policy and will take appropriate action
- Once the concerns have been raised, we expect that the complainant will not talk about this to any other person inside or outside the setting
- Anonymous Complaints: When a concern is expressed anonymously it is much less powerful and harder to investigate, however, they may still be considered and looked at
- Untrue allegations: If an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the complainant. If, however, an allegation proved to be malicious, action may be taken against the person responsible for the malicious act
- How to raise a concern: In the first instance, concerns should be raised with the Setting Manager. If the individual is looking to whistle blow concerning the Setting Manager, they will raise the concern with the company DSL. If the concern is regarding the DSL they should report to the Director, Yvonne Shuttleworth
- All staff are provided with details of who to contact when in their induction and handbook
- Concerns are best raised in writing, included in this should be the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates, places where possible and the reason why you are concerned. The earlier you express your concerns the easier it is to take action. If you do not wish to put the allegations in writing, the person to whom you are making the complaint will make a written record of the interview and will ask you to sign to confirm the accuracy of the notes taken. Although you will not be expected to prove the truth of your allegations, you will be required to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern
- You should **not**:
  - Investigate the matter yourself
  - Alert those suspected of being involved
  - Approach or accuse individuals
  - Tell anyone other than the designated person's i.e. Manager and DSL
- If your concerns cannot be expressed to the Setting Manager or DSL then you can contact the LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) 01782 235100. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may elevate your concerns directly to Ofsted 0300 123 1231
- An allegation against a member of staff/student/volunteer/supply staff or any other person may relate to a person who has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children any unnecessary reinvestigation. Balance & beam retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.
- Procedure for dealing with the allegation:
  - Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
  - If the time and place is inappropriate, arrange a suitable time and place as soon as possible
  - If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) keep your original notes, however rough
  - Never make a promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret
  - If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken
  - Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told
  - Do not ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. “Did he/she do X to you?” -just ask, “What do you want to tell me?” or “Is there anything else that you want to say?”
  - Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Deputy Safeguarding Lead – A member of staff must make a detailed written note of allegations of abuse and pass this directly to the Designated Person as quickly as possible and certainly within twenty-four hours, since any reports to the LADO will be required by then
  - The Designated Person will consult with other colleagues as appropriate and a course of action will be decided upon. If an allegation is made against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or a member of the Management Team then the Director must be informed immediately
  - Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse
  - Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people
  - Allegations found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records. Records of all others must be kept

## 12.Safeguarding Qualifications

- Yvonne Shuttleworth                      Level 1 – Nov 2022
- Louise Morris                              Level 2 – Nov 2025
- Jessica Leigh                              Level 1 – Mar 2025
- Lauren Gorton                              Level 1 – Mar 2025
- Harriett Colley                              Level 1 – July 2025
- Macy Whalley                              Level 1 – Nov 2025
- Libbie Gorton                              Level 1 – Nov 2025
- Juliette Watkins                              Level 1

Name: .....

Print: .....

Sign: .....

Date: .....