



POLICY ON SAFEGAURDING

Policy Statement/Aims

NextGen MultiSports Academy fully recognizes its responsibility under Kenyan Legislation, particularly The Children's Act (2013), to safeguard and promote the welfare of children involved in our sports programs. This responsibility extends to adhering to the principles outlined in the global safeguarding guidelines, ensuring all staff are aware of their duties to protect children from harm. As a dedicated sports academy for children aged 4-18, we are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all participants, aligning our practices with both local and international standards for child protection.

We actively collaborate with local child protection agencies, including the District Children's Officer (DCO) and Children's Officer (CO), to ensure swift and appropriate responses to any child's grievance. Our safeguarding policy encompasses prevention, procedures for identifying and referring cases of abuse or exploitation, support for affected children, and stringent measures to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. Our approach is deeply embedded in the philosophy that safeguarding is a collective responsibility, requiring a comprehensive, community-driven approach to ensure every child feels safe, heard, and valued.

Policy Aims

The aim of the Nextgen Multi Sports Academy Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Nextgen Multi Sports Academy coaches
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Prevention at NextGen MultiSports Academy

NextGen MultiSports Academy prioritizes creating a supportive and empowering atmosphere, promoting high self-esteem and resilience among young athletes. Recognizing the unique dynamics of sports training, we ensure:

- A safe environment across all physical and digital platforms, encouraging open dialogue between athletes and trusted coaches.
- Access to trained adults within the academy, ensuring athletes' concerns are promptly and effectively addressed.
- A curriculum designed to address the specific needs of young athletes, including topics on sportsmanship, teamwork, and the mental aspects of competitive play.
- Educational initiatives focusing on understanding and respecting diversity within sports, emphasizing equality and challenging prejudice.
- Comprehensive safety training, including recognizing signs of distress in oneself and others, understanding the importance of consent, and navigating online interactions safely.
- Strategies to foster privacy respect, self-ownership, and safe interactions, crucial in building a respectful team environment.

This approach not only enhances the athletic experience but also contributes to the holistic development of each participant at the academy.

Procedures at NextGen MultiSports Academy

- Appoint a dedicated Club Child Protection Officer from our coaching team, specialising in child protection within sports, to oversee safeguarding initiatives, supported by deputies across different sports disciplines.
- Incorporate specific sports-related safeguarding training and responsibilities into the job descriptions of all coaching and support staff.
- Provide continuous, sport-specific safeguarding training and resources for all staff, ensuring our Club Child Protection Officer has the authority and tools needed to protect all participants.

- Ensure clear, accessible reporting mechanisms are in place for staff and athletes, promoting a culture of vigilance and immediate action on concerns.
- Foster strong partnerships with local child protection agencies, adapting our strategies to the dynamic sports environment and ensuring all staff are equipped with knowledge on how to act in the best interest of our young athletes.
- Regularly update our online safety policies to protect children in digital environments related to sports training and communication.
- Publicly share our safeguarding policies, emphasizing our commitment to child safety in sports, and ensure transparency with parents, guardians, and the wider community.

For NextGen MultiSports Academy, the role of Designated Club Child Protection Officers (DSLs) will be tailored to the unique environment of a multi-sports setting:

- Coordinate safeguarding actions across all sports disciplines within the academy.
- Work closely with sports governing bodies, local child protection agencies, and health services.
- Follow and enforce sports-specific safeguarding protocols, ensuring prompt action on concerns.
- Provide guidance to coaches and staff on handling sensitive situations.
- Make necessary referrals to specialized support services as required.
- Keep secure, confidential records of any concerns or actions taken, coordinating closely with the academy's health professionals.
- Represent the academy at safeguarding forums and inter-agency meetings, sharing insights and learning from sports-specific child protection conferences.
- Oversee the safeguarding training program for all sports staff.
- Ensure smooth information transfer regarding safeguarding matters when athletes transition between programs or locations.
- Report significant incidents to the academy's management, maintaining transparency and accountability.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

NextGen MultiSports Academy is committed to maintaining precise and confidential records of any concerns regarding children's safety within our sports environment. We ensure:

- Comprehensive documentation of concerns, inclusive of the athlete's input, actions taken, and resolutions.
- Use of a secure, sport-specific digital platform for record storage, ensuring accessibility and privacy.
- Prompt transfer of important safeguarding records to any new sports program or academy an athlete joins, adhering to best practices in child protection.
- Transparency with parents about the existence of records, prioritizing the athlete's safety in every decision.
- Strict adherence to confidentiality protocols by all staff and volunteers, balancing the need for privacy with the imperative to share information for safeguarding purposes.
- Decisions on information sharing are guided by the principle of the athlete's best interest, with careful consideration of consent and the potential risk of harm.

Good Practice Guidelines

At NextGen MultiSports Academy, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of child protection and welfare. Our practices are designed not only to comply with The Children's Act (2013) but also to exceed them by integrating global best practices. Here's how we safeguard our young athletes:

- **Transparency in Activities:** We conduct all activities in open, observable environments to prevent private, unobserved interactions, fostering a culture of openness and trust.
- **Equality, Respect, and Dignity:** We treat all children equally, respecting their individuality and ensuring they feel valued, which is fundamental to their development and self-esteem.
- **Prioritizing Child Welfare:** The welfare of each child is our paramount concern, guiding all decisions and actions over competitive success or achievements.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Our staff and volunteers maintain safe and appropriate relationships with children, clearly distinguishing professional care from personal involvement.

- Empowering Through Trust: We build trust-based relationships that empower children to partake in decision-making, enhancing their confidence and ability to voice concerns.
- Safe and Enjoyable Sporting Experience: Making sports fun, enjoyable, and safe is at the heart of our mission, where fair play and positive reinforcement thrive.
- Professional Development and Best Practices: Our team stays updated on coaching techniques, safeguarding practices, and sports qualifications to ensure expertise and safety in delivering sports education.
- Active Parental Involvement: We involve parents in our activities and decisions, especially in situations like supervision in changing areas, to ensure transparency and shared responsibility.
- Safeguards for Mixed-Gender Activities: When organizing activities involving mixed-gender teams, we ensure the presence of both male and female staff, being mindful of and protecting against all forms of abuse.
- No Room for Abuse: Staff are prohibited from entering children's accommodations during events, and any need for such entry is managed with strict protocols to safeguard privacy and safety.
- Exemplary Behavior: Our staff models healthy, positive behavior, avoiding any activities like smoking or drinking alcohol around children, to set a high standard for our athletes.
- Constructive Feedback: We focus on building up our athletes with positive, constructive feedback, fostering a nurturing environment that celebrates effort and improvement.
- Respecting Developmental Needs: Recognizing each child's physical and emotional development, we avoid pushing them beyond their limits, ensuring sports remain enjoyable and developmentally appropriate.
- Emergency Preparedness: With written consent from parents, we are prepared to act in loco parentis to administer necessary first aid or emergency treatment, keeping meticulous records of any incidents.
- Safe Transportation: We require written consent from parents for transporting children for activities, ensuring safety and clarity in our travel arrangements.
- Safe Recruitment Practices: Our recruitment processes include thorough background checks and adherence to safeguarding qualifications to ensure a safe environment.

- **Mandatory Training on Child Protection:** All staff and volunteers undergo regular, comprehensive training on recognizing and responding to signs of abuse, ensuring everyone is equipped to protect our athletes.
- **Anti-Bullying Strategies:** We implement strong anti-bullying measures, fostering an environment where all children feel safe, supported, and free from harassment.
- **Appropriate Digital Communication:** Guidelines for digital and social media ensure safe, appropriate interactions between staff, volunteers, and children, safeguarding against misuse.
- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing:** We handle all child-related information with the utmost confidentiality, sharing details only when necessary for the child's protection.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** Encouraging a culture of accountability, our whistleblowing policy ensures that concerns about misconduct can be reported without fear of reprisal.
- **Responsive Allegation Management:** We have clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers, ensuring swift, fair, and thorough investigations.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Our programs are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all children, with accommodations made to ensure every child can participate fully.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:** We continuously monitor and evaluate our safeguarding practices, ensuring they remain effective and responsive to the needs of our athletes.

Practices Never to be Sanctioned

At NextGen MultiSports Academy, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards behaviors that could harm or cause discomfort to children. The following practices are strictly prohibited:

- **Inappropriate Games:** Never engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. All activities should promote safety and respect.
- **Room Sharing:** Staff or volunteers must not share a room with a child under any circumstances, to ensure privacy and safety for both children and adults.
- **Inappropriate Touching:** Any form of inappropriate touching is strictly forbidden. Physical interactions must always be respectful, consensual, and appropriate for the age and development of the child.

- **Unchallenged Inappropriate Language:** Do not allow children to use inappropriate language without addressing and correcting the behavior constructively.
- **Sexually Suggestive Comments:** Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in jest, is entirely unacceptable and harmful.
- **Emotional Manipulation:** Never use tactics that could emotionally distress a child, such as reducing them to tears, as a form of control.
- **Ignoring Allegations:** Always act upon and meticulously record any allegations or concerns raised by a child. Taking every claim seriously is crucial to their protection.
- **Personal Care:** Avoid performing personal care tasks for children or disabled adults that they can manage themselves. This encourages independence and respects their dignity.
- **Unsupervised Visits:** Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised. All interactions should occur within the structured, safe environment of the academy or officially sanctioned events.

Additional Guidance on Personal Care:

- In certain circumstances, particularly involving young children or those with disabilities, staff or volunteers may need to assist with personal tasks. These tasks should only be undertaken with the full understanding and consent of both the parents and the child involved. Key principles to follow include:
- **Open Communication:** Clearly communicate with the child about any tasks you need to perform, offering choices and respecting their preferences to the greatest extent possible.
- **Consent and Understanding:** Ensure that any personal care tasks, such as dressing or undressing of outer clothing or physical assistance, are conducted with explicit consent from both the child and their parents.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Staff and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries, even when providing necessary personal care. Avoid taking on tasks for which you are not adequately trained or prepared.
- **Training and Responsiveness:** Those involved in the care of children, particularly in personal care tasks, must be appropriately trained and sensitive to the child's reactions and comfort levels.

Incidents that Must be Reported/Recorded

At NextGen MultiSports Academy, maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all participants is paramount. To uphold our commitment to child safety and welfare, it is crucial that staff and volunteers are equipped to respond appropriately to incidents that may arise. The following outlines the types of incidents that must be immediately reported to the appropriate safeguarding officer, recorded in detail, and communicated to the child's parents or guardians:

- **Accidental Injury:** Any incident where a player is accidentally hurt by a staff member, volunteer, or another player must be reported. This includes, but is not limited to, injuries sustained during practice, games, or any academy-related activities.
- **Emotional Distress:** If a child seems distressed for any reason, whether due to interactions at the academy or external factors, it is imperative to report this. Emotional distress can manifest as unusual behavior, withdrawal, anxiety, or upset.
- **Inappropriate Responses or Reactions:** Any incident where a child appears to be sexually aroused by an adult's actions or by the sporting activity itself must be addressed immediately. This extends to any actions, even if unintentional or misinterpreted, that could be construed as sexually provocative.
- **Misunderstandings or Misinterpretations:** If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something said or done by a staff member, volunteer, or another player in a manner that could cause discomfort or concern, it must be reported. This includes jokes, gestures, physical contact, or instructions.
- **Witnessed or Reported Bullying:** Any incidents of bullying, whether observed directly, reported by a child, or brought to attention by parents, must be reported and recorded.
- **Concerning Behavior Among Children:** Any behavior observed among children that raises concerns regarding their safety or well-being, including signs of abuse from others, must be reported.
- **Violations of Safeguarding Policies:** Any breaches of the academy's safeguarding policies, whether by staff, volunteers, or players, must be addressed immediately.

Reporting and Recording Procedures:

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Incidents must be reported as soon as possible to the designated safeguarding officer or a senior member of staff if the safeguarding officer is not available.
2. **Detailed Recording:** A written record of the incident should be made, including dates, times, individuals involved, a description of the incident, and any actions taken in response. This record must be treated with confidentiality and stored securely.
3. **Parental Notification:** The parents or guardians of the involved child must be informed about the incident in a timely and sensitive manner, unless doing so may put the child at further risk.
4. **Follow-Up:** Ensure that appropriate follow-up actions are taken, which may include supporting the child, disciplinary action against the perpetrator (if applicable), and reviewing and updating safeguarding policies as necessary.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment and Online Safety at Sporting Events

At NextGen MultiSports Academy, we recognize the potential risks associated with the use of photographic and filming equipment at sporting events, as well as the challenges presented by online platforms. To safeguard young and disabled sportspeople from inappropriate use of their images and to ensure their safety in both physical and digital spaces, we implement the following comprehensive guidelines:

Photographic and Filming Equipment:

- **Consent and Awareness:** Prior to any event where photography or filming is planned, athletes and their parents/carers must be informed about the purpose of the activity. Explicit, informed consent must be obtained from the parents/carers of minors and from the athletes themselves if they are of legal age to consent. This includes detailing how the images or footage will be used and stored.
- **Vigilance and Reporting:** Staff, volunteers, and participants are encouraged to remain vigilant during events. Any concerns regarding inappropriate photography or filming should be immediately reported to the Club Child Protection Officer. We maintain a clear reporting procedure for such concerns, ensuring they are addressed swiftly and effectively.
- **Use as a Coaching Aid:** The use of video equipment by coaches as a legitimate coaching aid is recognized. However, transparency with performers and their parents/carers is essential.

They must be made fully aware that filming is part of the coaching programme, and their consent must be secured. All footage must be used exclusively for coaching purposes and stored securely, with restricted access to authorized personnel only.

Online Safety and Security:

- **Digital Use and Sharing:** Guidelines for the use, sharing, and posting of images or videos on websites, social media, and other digital platforms are strictly defined. Consent forms include options for parents/carers to agree to or restrict the sharing of images or videos involving their children in online spaces.
- **Secure Storage:** Digital content, similar to physical footage, is stored securely with access limited to authorized individuals. Measures are in place to protect against unauthorized access, hacking, or accidental sharing.
- **Education and Awareness:** Athletes, parents/carers, and staff are educated on the importance of online safety. This includes guidance on sharing personal images, the potential risks of digital platforms, and strategies to maintain privacy and security online.
- **Monitoring and Compliance:** The academy commits to regularly monitoring the use of images and footage to ensure compliance with these guidelines. This includes periodic reviews of where and how images are stored, shared, and used, ensuring they align with our safeguarding policies and respect the wishes of the individuals involved.
- **Right to Withdraw Consent:** Individuals (or their parents/carers) have the right to withdraw consent for the use of specific images or footage at any time. Procedures are in place for the prompt removal of images from all platforms and the secure deletion of footage upon request.

This comprehensive approach to the use of photographic/filming equipment and online safety ensures that NextGen MultiSports Academy not only complies with best practices in safeguarding but also addresses the evolving challenges of digital security and privacy. Our priority is the safety and well-being of all athletes, both within our physical spaces and in the digital realm.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

NextGen MultiSports Academy is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, recognizing the critical importance of rigorous recruitment and training processes to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. To this end, our comprehensive approach includes the following steps and checks:

Recruitment and Preselection Checks:

- **Application Forms:** Every applicant, whether for volunteer or staff positions, is required to fill out a detailed application form. This form is designed to gather information about the applicant's past experience, qualifications, and any self-disclosed criminal record.
- **Criminal Record Checks:** We obtain consent from all applicants to seek information from the Director of Criminal Investigation. This includes conducting up-to-date police clearance checks to ensure there is no known history that would make the individual unsuitable for working with children.
- **References:** Two confidential references are required for each applicant, specifically including one that verifies the applicant's previous work with children. These references are thoroughly checked and confirmed through direct telephone contact or in-person interviews to validate the information provided.
- **Identity Verification:** Applicants must provide valid evidence of identity, such as a passport or driving licence with a photograph, to prevent identity fraud and ensure the authenticity of the individual.

Enhanced Safeguarding Measures:

- **Qualification Verification:** All qualifications related to the position, especially those relevant to child care and safeguarding, are verified with the issuing institutions or organizations.
- **Social Media Checks:** Where appropriate, and with due regard for privacy laws, social media profiles and public records may be reviewed to identify any potential concerns regarding suitability to work with children.
- **Interview Process:** A structured interview process that includes competency-based questions designed to assess the applicant's suitability for working with children and their understanding of safeguarding principles.

Training and Continuous Development:

- **Mandatory Safeguarding Training:** All staff and volunteers undergo comprehensive safeguarding training upon induction, covering child protection policies, recognizing signs of abuse, and responding to concerns about a child's welfare.
- **Specialized Training:** Depending on their role, additional specialized training may be required, such as first aid, online safety, or disability awareness, to ensure they can support the diverse needs of all children.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** Staff and volunteers are encouraged to participate in ongoing training and professional development opportunities to stay updated on the latest safeguarding practices and legislation.
- **Performance and Conduct Monitoring:** Regular performance reviews and monitoring of conduct in relation to child safeguarding practices are conducted to ensure ongoing compliance and to address any concerns promptly.

Confidentiality

NextGen MultiSports Academy is committed to maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality in handling information related to allegations or suspicions of child abuse. The protection of all parties involved, especially the children, is paramount. Our approach ensures that information is managed sensitively, ethically, and in compliance with relevant data protection laws.

Principles of Confidential Information Handling:

- **Need to Know Basis:** Information concerning allegations or suspicions of abuse is shared strictly on a "need to know" basis. The aim is to protect the child's welfare and rights and to ensure the integrity of any investigation. The individuals who may need to be informed include:
 - The Club Child Protection Officer (CPO).
 - The parents or guardians of the child involved, unless doing so could further endanger the child.
 - The individual making the allegation.

- Relevant authorities, such as social services and the police, as required for a thorough investigation.
- The NextGen MultiSports Academy Regional Development Manager and the relevant Sport Governing Body Child Protection Officer, to ensure appropriate oversight and support.
- Consultation with social services for guidance on whether, and how, to approach the alleged abuser or their parents if the abuser is also a child.

Secure Storage and Data Protection:

- **Data Protection Compliance:** All personal data, including details related to allegations and investigations, must be handled in accordance with data protection laws. This includes ensuring the information is accurate, up to date, relevant, and stored securely.
- **Access Control:** Access to sensitive information is restricted to designated individuals who have a legitimate role in managing the safeguarding process. This ensures that confidentiality is preserved and the risk of data breaches is minimized.
- **Record-Keeping:** Documentation related to safeguarding concerns, investigations, and outcomes is kept in a secure location, either physically with appropriate security measures or digitally with encryption and access controls. Records are retained for a period determined by legal requirements and best practice, after which they are securely destroyed.

Training and Awareness:

- **Confidentiality Training:** Staff and volunteers receive training on the importance of confidentiality, the legal context of data protection, and the academy's specific procedures for handling sensitive information. This training reinforces the understanding that safeguarding children's welfare is paramount and that handling information appropriately is a key component of this responsibility.
- **Review and Update:** Procedures for handling confidential information are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legal requirements, best practices in safeguarding, and advancements in data protection and security technologies.

Policy Acknowledgment and Contact Information

Acknowledgement:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the NextGen MultiSports Academy Child Protection Policy. I agree to abide by its guidelines and procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of all children participating in academy programs. I commit to promoting a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment, in accordance with the principles and practices outlined in the policy.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Contact Information:

For any concerns, questions, or reports related to child protection within NextGen MultiSports Academy, please refer to the following contact details:

Club Child Protection Officer:

Name: Sylvia Mugweru

Email: info@nextgenkenya.com

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