



CHILD AND ADULTS AT RISK SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FIERCE ELITE CHEERLEADING

MAY 2022

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1. Introduction

Fierce Elite Cheerleading is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment in which children can grow in confidence through athletic endeavours. In operating a cheerleading gym, Fierce Elite Cheerleading recognises the importance of its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care.

As an organisation working with children and young people, Fierce Elite Cheerleading has a responsibility to act if abuse comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect children from the possibility of being abused within Fierce Elite Cheerleading's care. It is the responsibility of the Erin Douglas to appoint a designated Safeguarding Lead to oversee the implementation of this policy. This position will be held for a one-year term and then be reviewed by Erin Douglas when appropriate. As and when required, the named nominated person will work with the statutory agencies and other organisations.

1.1 Monitoring and review of the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Safeguarding Lead should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee. The policy should be reviewed every year, or whenever there is a major change in the organisation, in relevant legislation or relevant legislation or any changes in the cheerleading industry.

1.2 Contact details

In the case of an emergency where a child is in immediate risk, please dial 999

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jenny Goodman
Telephone: 07889656766

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Erin Douglas
Telephone: 07455955595 or **E-mail:** info@fiercelitecheer.com

To report a concern about a child

To make a report click link: www.nelincs.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-about-a-child/

Emergency Telephone Only - 01472 326292 (option 2)

Report a concern about an athlete over 18yrs

To make a report click link: www.focusadultsocialwork.co.uk/social-work/

Telephone: 01472 256256

Report a concern about an adult you suspect of abuse

www.nelincs.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-and-social-care/adult-social-care/

Telephone: 01472 256256 (option 2)

1.3 Mission Statement

As part of its mission Fierce Elite Cheerleading is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child/Adult at Risk is paramount
- All children/Adults at Risk, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in cheerleading and/or other activities held by Fierce Elite Cheerleading in a safe environment
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children/Adults at Risk from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment, and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Fierce Elite Cheerleading, employees or volunteers who work with children/Adults at Risk will be recruited with regards to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and Safeguarding procedures
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and children/Adults at Risk is essential for the protection of children/Adults at Risk
- Supporting those affected by abuse
- Make links with statutory childcare and social care authorities and other organisations if / when required.

All staff and volunteers employed by and associated with Fierce Elite Cheerleading are expected to abide by the Safeguarding Policy.

1.4 Policy description

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18. Where this policy refers to children, it equally applies to Adults at Risk. An Adult at Risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support:

Adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) Personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. and/or
- b) Life circumstances which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

Adult in need of protection is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) Personal characteristics AND/OR
- b) Life circumstances AND
- c) Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND
- d) Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed

The policy sets out what action will be taken in various circumstances to reassure parents, carers and funders that all possible steps will be taken to protect children involved in any aspect of Fierce Elite Cheerleading activities.

2. Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in cheerleading, everyone must operate within the accepted ethical framework laid out in Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Code of Conduct for Staff Members and Volunteers. It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in cheerleading to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/Adult at Risk, as explained in section 4. This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel including volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets) This means all 1-2-1 coaching sessions should have other staff present in the building.
- Make the experience of cheerleading fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying, help build positive relationships and life skills.
- Treat all Children/Adults at Risk equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with athletes (e.g., it is never appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child / a student of any age, or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required for spotting or safety purposes in cheerleading, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given, and it is for the benefit of performing or acquiring skills for the sport
- Involve parents/cares wherever possible, e.g., where children/Adults at Risk need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents/carers, coaches etc work in pairs
- Request written parental consent if Fierce Elite Cheerleading staff are required to transport children/Adults at Risk(in minibuses or coaches)
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- Ensure that at away events adults should not enter a children/Adults at Risk's room or invite children/Adults at Risk to their rooms

- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person is important. Do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for team, programme, or personal achievements.
- Secure written parental consent for Fierce Elite Cheerleading to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

The following information on Responsibilities, Rights, Relationships and Respect, is taken from the Fierce Elite Cheerleading Code of Conduct, which all employees and volunteers sign and to which they are held accountable:

Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- Providing a safe environment for children and young people
 - Ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - Have a good knowledge of safeguarding and child protection issues and take action where appropriate
- Following our principles, policies and procedures, Including our policies and procedures for child protection/safeguarding, whistleblowing and online safety
- Staying within the law at all times
- Modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- Challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to: Erin Douglas
- Reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures. This includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age

Rights

You should:

- Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- Understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief system, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to Fierce Elite.
- Challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes and behaviours that make them uncomfortable

Relationships

You Should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, truth and respect
- Avoid favouritism

- Be patient with others
- Exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children and young people
- Ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the sporting activity undertaken
- Ensure, wherever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
 - If a situation arises in which you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults
 - If a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are
- Only provide personal care in an emergency and ensure there is more than one adult present if possible

Respect

You should:

- Listen to and respect children at all times
- Value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible
 - If you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity

In addition to these key principles of Good Practice, where Fierce Elite Cheerleading work with 3rd parties (schools and community groups) the additional standards of requirement will be made:

- For sessions that are arranged for a third party at their own venue (e.g. schools, community groups where a Fierce Elite coach is a visiting guest teacher) it is the responsibility of the third party to register participants.
- All Fierce Elite Cheerleading staff are given clear established roles for their work as a visiting guest teacher
- Workshops should be conducted in the presence of a teacher from the school, who will be responsible for discipline, hold medical records etc
- Children are supervised at all times during sessions, including breaks by the school (not Fierce Elite Cheerleading)
- Fierce Elite Cheerleading will request that any children participating in workshops with SEN, disabilities or relevant medical concerns are noted and accommodated for prior to the commencement of a workshop/s.
- Coaches are required to ensure that Health and Safety and Duty of Care requirements are met in the working environment during sessions, and any policies etc from the school are issued ahead of time.

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Allow allegations made by children/Adults at Risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Take unnecessary risks
- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/Adults at Risk away from others
- Taking children/Adults at Risk alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking children/Adults at Risk to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a child/Adult at Risk
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children/Adults at Risk to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to children/Adults at Risk, even in fun
- Patronise or belittle children or young people
- Reducing a child/Adult at Risk to tears as a form of control
- Do things of a personal nature that the child/Adult at Risk can do for themselves
- Smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- Let the children or young people have your personal contact details (phone number, email or postal address) or allow contact via your personal social media accounts
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g., transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child/Adult at Risk, the child/Adult at Risk seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child/Adult at Risk misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

1. Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Additionally, it is acknowledged that children may be at risk of abuse by another young person, as well as adults.

It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working with or volunteering for Fierce Elite Cheerleading to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse** and **neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person. Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities (and Adults at Risk of any age) may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

It is recognised that there are additional categories of abuse that relate to adults (over 18) and that both participants over 18yrs, parents or Fierce Elite Cheerleading staff/volunteers may be at risk. Details of additional categories of abuse in over 18's are also listed below in this policy

3.2 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical child abuse.

Physical abuse in cheerleading may occur in the form of manual stretching to the point of extreme pain, forcing an athlete to train on an injury, refusing water or toilet breaks.

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a

young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in cheerleading may occur when the young person is constantly given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are clearly unrealistic for their age/skill level. Other forms of emotional abuse could include - but are not limited to - name calling and bullying.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages or social media posts), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in cheerleading could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, failure to check equipment properly, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In cheerleading activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power the coach has over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Additional categories of abuse in adults

It is recognised that there are additional categories of abuse that relate to adults (over 18) and that both athletes over 18yrs, parents or Fierce Elite Cheerleading staff/volunteers may be at risk of the following:

- **Domestic violence or abuse**

This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called "honour" based violence.

- **Psychological or emotional abuse**

This includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

- **Financial or material abuse**

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. It can also include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

- **Modern slavery**

This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude.

- **Discriminatory abuse**

Discrimination is abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion.

- **Organisational or institutional abuse**

This includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. Organisational abuse can range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

- **Neglect or acts of omission**

This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services. It also includes the withdrawing of the necessities of life, including medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

- **Self-neglect**

This covers a wide range of behaviour, but it can be broadly defined as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health, or surroundings. An example of self-neglect is behaviour such as hoarding.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child/Adult at Risk is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a child/Adult at Risk
- Unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g., becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with others
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Losing weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- An unexplained drop off in performance
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g., on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- A shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions
- A sudden unexplained amount of money or possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. Again, it is **NOT** the responsibility of those working with or for Fierce Elite Cheerleading to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

For additional indicators of abuse which may occur in adults (over 18yrs) please refer to the Ann Craft Trust website:

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/types-of-harm/>

4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working with or volunteering for Fierce Elite Cheerleading, 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 so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the child/Adult at Risk. This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately.

If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **Stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **Reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **Listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **Keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **Inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **Safety of the child** is paramount. If the child is in immediate danger, call the police. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **Record** all information verbatim and pass this to the Safeguarding Lead
- **Report** the incident to Safeguarding Lead

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed written record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents

- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

Fierce Elite Cheerleading provides Reporting Forms that can be located in the reception area.

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/Adult at Risk immediately with the Safeguarding Lead and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the Safeguarding Lead or deputy are not available for immediate help/action, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the relevant authority listed on page 3.

As mentioned previously in this document, Fierce Elite Cheerleading personnel and volunteers are not child protection experts, and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection. If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Safety of the child is paramount. If the child is in immediate danger, call the police. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.

4.5 Reporting a concern against a member of staff or volunteer

An allegation may relate to a member of staff or volunteer (including guest coaches and choreographers) who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Safeguarding Lead, who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The matter will be in the first instance referred to the relevant authorities.
- The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the relevant services
- Assuming they are not themselves under suspicion, Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Director should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- If the Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to **Jenny Goodman** who will then manage the case
- Outcomes resulting in a criminal conviction or child protection case, or where there remains a reasonable concern regarding a coach's behaviour, it should also be reported to SportCheer England (<https://sportcheerengland.org/report-a-concern>)

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child Protection** in which case the welfare services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Fierce Elite Cheerleading will be involved

4.6 Reporting a non-recent allegation of abuse

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event.

Reporting of non-recent abuse must follow the same reporting procedure as a current allegation. This is because other children/Adults at Risk in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offenses related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.7 Reporting a child in need of support services (Not at risk of harm)

Where a child/Adult at Risk is deemed to be in need of additional support services, but they are not at risk of harm, the same procedure of reporting is to be followed, and the Safeguarding Lead will make an assessment as to the most appropriate and effective course of action to provide the appropriate support.

4.8 Concerns outside the immediate cheerleading environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to Fierce Elite Cheerleading Safeguarding Lead
- If the Safeguarding Lead is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact the relevant authorities.
- The relevant authorities and Fierce Elite Cheerleading Safeguarding Lead will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

4.9 Confidentiality and Record Keeping

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 only. This includes the following people:

- Fierce Elite Cheerleading Safeguarding Lead
- The parents of the child (if appropriate)
- The person/child making the allegation
- Relevant authorities (Police, Child Services, LADO etc)
- The alleged abuser (If appropriate and necessary for the purposes of suspension. If the alleged abuser is a child, the parents of the abuser may be informed by the appropriate authorities) Seek the relevant authority advice on who should approach the alleged abuser, if deemed necessary for the purposes of suspension.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with GDPR and Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Privacy Policy.

Record keeping

Employers should keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record on a person's confidential personnel file and give a copy to the individual. The record should include details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, the decisions reached, and the action taken. It should be kept at least until the person reaches normal retirement age or for ten years if longer.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on. It will provide clarification where a future background check request reveals non convicted information and will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. In this sense it may serve as a protector to the individual themselves, as well as in cases where substantiated allegations need to be known about to safeguard future children.

A copy of the Fierce Elite Cheerleading company privacy policy can be found at: [Fierce Elite Cheer | Privacy policy \(fiercelitecheer.com\)](https://fiercelitecheer.com/privacy-policy)

5 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and authority inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the relevant authorities or police inquiries, Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Director will, with the guidance of the Safeguarding Lead, assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Director must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/Adult at Risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.
- Should an individual accused of abuse be found guilty, the staff member will be unable to return, and the Safeguarding Lead will notify any relevant organisations, including DBS and SportCheer England.
- Should an individual accused of abuse be found not guilty and able to return to work, it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to ensure they are supported in their return.
- Upon entering into a contract with Fierce Elite Cheerleading, staff and volunteers are issued a code of conduct. Should a staff member or volunteer be in serious breach of the code of conduct, these same procedures will apply.

Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion in all cases even if:

- The individual refuses to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations
- It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.

Compromise agreements' must **not** be used (i.e. where a member of staff or volunteer agrees to resign provided that disciplinary action is not taken and that a future reference is agreed). A settlement/compromise agreement which prevents the employer from making a referral to the police/welfare/governing body when the criteria are met for so doing would likely result in a criminal offence being committed for failure to comply with the duty to refer.

6. Social Media

Fierce Elite Cheerleading operates public Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts to promote the business. They are official business pages and are run by a member of staff who has been DBS checked and screened.

It is Fierce Elite Cheerleading's policy that employees and volunteer staff do not accept requests from athletes to 'Friend' or 'Follow' them on any social media network. Any friend / follow requests made by children under the age of 18 will be rejected / blocked from coaches' personal accounts. Athletes may follow Fierce Elite Cheerleading's, but they will not be followed back, as this would then allow for Direct Messaging between athlete and account, which we do not encourage.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading's staff will not direct message athletes through social media accounts, nor will they respond to messages from athletes. All messages from athletes, sent to coaches are to be reported to the safeguarding lead and a note made of them, regardless of their nature.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading's copyrighted logos or associated branding should not be used on athletes' or parents' personal social media accounts.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading reserve the right to all images connected to its name, logo or image. Any images posted on social media related to or promoting Fierce Elite Cheerleading will be appropriate, with appropriate hashtags. If images are deemed to be inappropriate or in breach of safeguarding, we will ask that they be removed and reported. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading requests that cheerleaders and parents use social media in a positive and sportsmanlike manner and not engage in negative discussions on cheerleading groups or forums, which will be interpreted as bullying and dealt with as such in relation to 8.5 p23 of this policy. Any activity on social media (including activity on personal accounts) deemed to be inappropriate, alert a safeguarding concern or defamatory to Fierce Elite Cheerleading may result in removal from the programme.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading will regularly remind parents and athletes to be safe on the internet and mindful of appropriateness when posting cheerleading related images.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading uses parent Facebook groups for the purpose of sharing training and competition-related information and updates e.g. videos from training sessions; stretching and conditioning plans, routine choreography and competition schedules. Fierce Elite Cheerleading will communicate with parents/guardians/athletes privately with any information and passwords required to join. To join these groups, children must also have a parent/guardian present on the group, or express written permission from a parent/guardian to be on Fierce Elite Cheerleading's groups without them.

7. Photography, CCTV and use of images on social media

It is important that children and young people feel happy with their achievements and have photographs and films of their special moments. Family and friends also want to be able to share the successes of their children when they have been part of a special event or activity. However, some children, parents or carers may not be comfortable with images of themselves or their children being shared. For example:

- if a child and/or their family have experienced abuse they may worry about the perpetrator tracing them online
- children who choose not to have contact with some members of their family may decide to minimise their online presence
- families may have religious or cultural reasons for choosing not to be photographed.

It's important to be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when taking photos of or filming children and young people. The potential for misuse of images can be reduced if organisations are aware of the potential dangers and put appropriate measures in place.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading 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
- 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.

Fierce Elite Cheerleading 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/not using 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
 - avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming on minimal clothing where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

Reporting abuse of an image / an abusive image

If you suspect abuse of an image, it should be reported in the same way as all other forms of abuse. Any images identified by children, parents or coaches as a misuse of images should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead who will report them to the police.

We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

7.1 Use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on site at the Fierce Elite Cheerleading

CCTV is operated on the outside of the gym premises for the purposes of the prevention, identification, and reduction of crime and to monitor the building. It is used to provide a safe and secure environment for the public and to prevent the loss of or damage to property. It is a TV system primarily for surveillance and security purposes in which signals are not publicly distributed but are monitored, and where access to their content is limited by design only to those authorised to see it.

CCTV is controlled on Fierce Elite Cheerleading premises by The Enterprise Village main reception hub.

Athletes, parents and visitors attending Fierce Elite Cheerleading are made aware that CCTV is in use on the exterior of the building prior to attendance and via signage up in the building.

7.2 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 [name of group/organisation] 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 them.
- 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/by Fierce Elite Cheerleading

7.3 Photography and/or filming as a training aid for athletes

We recognise that Fierce Elite Cheerleading's staff may use photography and filming as a training aid for athletes. However, this should only be done with Fierce Elite Cheerleading's permission and using Fierce Elite Cheerleading ' equipment*. Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made

aware that photography and filming is part of Fierce Elite Cheerleading's activities as a training aid and give written consent.

*From time to time when Fierce Elite Cheerleading ask employees to undertake this role, they may on occasion need to use their personal devices. In these instances, all images and video will be deleted from their personal devices following the teaching application/before the end of the lesson. If they are required for Fierce Elite Cheerleading ' use on social media, they will be transferred to a secure Fierce Elite Cheerleading owned hard drive, where regular privacy policy will apply regarding their secure storage and use.

7.4 Someone acting suspiciously with a camera or phone

All employees and volunteer staff should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming (by other members of staff, parents, athletes or members of the public) and any concerns should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead directly. Where possible, the person filming/taking pictures should be immediately challenged and a request to view the footage made. Should the footage be deemed inappropriate so as to raise a safeguarding concern, the device should be seized, and the police called. Should it be deemed inappropriate but not raise a safeguarding concern they will be asked to delete it.

7.5 Externally hired photographers

If Fierce Elite Cheerleading hire a photographer for one of our events (showcase, local performance etc), we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- 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.
- Have sight of the photographers Child Protection Policy, privacy certification regarding safe storage of images.

7.6 Use of images for Fierce Elite Cheerleading ' social media

Fierce Elite Cheerleading will not name athletes next to their image in public spaces on social media unless express permission is given by the parent/guardian for that specific image, and with particular reason for it to appear. If a athlete's image is used on Fierce Elite Cheerleading's official public Facebook page, Instagram or TikTok accounts for publicity purposes, parents and athletes will be asked not 'tag' or name the athlete, so as to help us keep this policy in place and keep our athletes safe.

8. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel

8.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

8.2 Controlling Access to Children

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from a police background check
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact. If the coach is under 18, this could be a teacher/school reference
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)
- Team Parents will complete the Chaperone Licence training course through Lincolnshire council. Their DBS will also be carried out as part of this process: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/keeping-children-safe/apply-chaperone-licence/print>

8.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on self-disclosures, and a DBS check if applicable to their role on staff
- All qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to Fierce Elite Cheerleading Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures/Safeguarding is explained, and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

8.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child/Adult at Risk
- Work safely and effectively with children/Adults at Risk

Fierce Elite Cheerleading requires:

- All staff and volunteers over 16yrs in positions of responsibility for children to undergo a DBS check
- All employees, volunteers, coaches and Safeguarding Lead to undertake relevant training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All coaches, trainee coaches and leaders should have an up to date first aid qualification

8.5 Disciplinary procedures

The disciplinary procedures for Fierce Elite Cheerleading are encapsulated within the code of conduct signed by all staff and volunteers.

Minor First-Time Incident

If you behave in a way that does not follow our behaviour code, our staff or volunteers will remind you about it and ask you to comply with it. They will give you the opportunity to change your behaviour.

This gives you the opportunity to think and to plan how you could behave differently, with support from staff and/or volunteers.

Formal Warning

If you continue not to follow the code of behaviour after your first reminder, or if your behaviour is more serious, you will be given a formal warning by the person in charge during the session.

They will make a record about what happened and inform your parents or carers if this is appropriate. They will also talk with you about what happened and agree what support you need in order to improve your behaviour in future. We may also decide that a sanction is appropriate such as stopping you from taking part in training sessions for a period of time.

Final Warning

If the support we have put in place isn't helping you to change your behaviour, we may need to give you a final warning. Again, this will be recorded and we will inform you parents/carers as appropriate.

At this point, we will call a meeting between our staff, yourself and your parents/carers in order to discuss further support services you may need.

Child Protection Procedures

In the case of a child protection concern, the procedure will be followed as outline in this policy

9. Declaration

On behalf of Fierce Elite Cheerleading , we the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to. It is outlined here

Signed _____

Role _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Role _____

Date _____

10. Policy Created


Date

28th May 2022

Written by

Joanna Gamper Cuthbert, Squad Safe

Signed



Policy review due

Date

28th May 2023

To be reviewed by

Fierce Elite Cheerleading's Safeguarding Lead