



**East Midlands Cheer Academy (EMCA)**  
**Safeguarding Policy**  
**2023/24 Season**

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead:</b>	Emma Pye 07967276642 emca_safeguarding@icloud.com
<b>Date updated:</b>	October 2023
<b>Date for next review:</b>	May 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- ☆ Health and Safety and Risk assessments
- ☆ Safer recruitment
- ☆ Anti Bullying Policy
- ☆ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities statement
- ☆ Code of Conduct
- ☆ Mixed age teams' guidance
- ☆ Photographs and Social Media use



## 1. Introduction

- ☆ EMCA, acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice. This comprehensive safeguarding policy underscores our commitment to safeguarding and highlights the detailed measures we've put in place to ensure the protection and well-being of everyone associated with our gym.
  
- ☆ This policy is written in line with the following statutory guidance:
  - *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023*
  - *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*
  - *The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (replacing the Sexual Offences Act 1956)*
  - *The Sexual Offences Act 2003 is an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom. It*
  - *The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003*
  - *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*
  - *Prevent Duty 2015*
  - *The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*

## 2. Aims of the policy

- ☆ EMCA is wholeheartedly committed to the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, safety, and protection of all its members fostering a culture of trust and respect.
- ☆ Our safeguarding policy is designed to be both proactive and responsive, with clear, comprehensive policies, procedures, and guidelines that cover prevention, identification, and response to safeguarding concerns, including abuse, neglect, bullying, and other inappropriate behaviour.
- ☆ Comprehensive training programs will be established for all staff, coaches, volunteers, and participants, ensuring that they are well-informed about recognising the signs of abuse, understanding appropriate coaching techniques, and how to navigate our reporting procedures.
- ☆ We will ensure that the policy is accessible to parents/guardians and athletes to ensure they understand the policy and their role in fostering a safe and secure gym environment and who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- ☆ *Programme Director (Ant Ridgeway)* - Leads in setting the safeguarding culture but also allocates the necessary resources and oversight to guarantee policy adherence. They are





responsible for appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will be responsible for overseeing all safeguarding matters.

- ☆ *Designated Safeguarding Lead (Emma Pye):* The safeguarding lead is responsible for implementing and promoting policies and procedures related to child protection and welfare within the cheerleading organization. They work to create a safe and supportive environment for all participants, ensuring that children and young athletes are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect. (Further details of the DSL's role in responding to abuse can be found further on in the policy)
  
- ☆ *Coaches and Staff:* Coaches must adhere to the Code of Conduct to ensure that children are kept safe and that coaching takes place within a culture of respect and support. Junior Coaches understand that they must not coach without the supervision of a suitable qualified over 18 and must report if they are ever left alone without supervision. All Coaches have a responsibility to follow the Safeguarding Policy and report any concerns about children in a timely manner to the Programme Director and the DSL.
  
- ☆ *Parents/Carers:* We actively encourage parents/guardians to familiarise themselves with the policy and actively support its implementation. Their role extends to reporting any concerns they may have regarding their child or any other participant or any breaches of the code of conduct in order that these can be properly investigated and addressed.
  
- ☆ *Athletes:* We empower athletes to understand, adhere to, and promote the policy. Athletes are encouraged to report any concerns they may have and play an active role in creating a gym culture that emphasises safety, respect, and inclusivity. Adult athletes are made aware of their role in safeguarding children through our Mixed Age Teams Policy (See Appendices)

#### **4. Recruitment and Training**

- ☆ Prior to commencing coaching with children, all staff and volunteers will undergo a selection process, including criminal background checks (DBS), comprehensive reference checks, and verification of appropriate coaching qualifications.
- ☆ Staff and volunteers will participate in at least annual safeguarding training, which covers recognising signs of abuse and reporting procedures (Appendix 1 and 2)
- ☆ Additional training may include specific areas which have been identified as 'greater risks' to our sporting context such as eating disorders, emotional abuse, bullying and mental health of teenagers.
- ☆ The DSL will have up to date Safeguarding Lead Training by a recognised body which should be updated every 2 years. Our DSL also holds a Safer Recruitment Certificate and Supervision in Safeguarding Qualification.



## 5. Reporting Procedures

- ☆ We maintain a well-defined and easy-to-understand process for reporting concerns or suspicions of abuse, neglect, bullying, or harm. This process is detailed in the flow chart in Appendix 2 and reports can be made by Coaches, Parents or Athletes using the reporting form attached in the Appendix.
- ☆ Details of how to report concerns will be permanently visible in the Gym and on our website and reminders will be sent in newsletters and through Team WhatsApp groups.
- ☆ All reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and information will only be shared with those directly involved in safeguarding matters.
- ☆ EMCA is fully committed to cooperating with local authorities and relevant agencies during investigations or inquiries related to safeguarding concerns.
- ☆ Any concern should be discussed in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

**If at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Social Care or the police immediately. Anybody can make such a referral.**

## 6. The role of the DSL

**Where concerns have been raised about a child/children the role of the DSL is to:**

- ☆ Ensure that written records of concerns are kept, even if there is no immediate need for referral.
- ☆ Ensure all child protection records are marked as such and kept secure.
- ☆ Monitor Safeguarding concerns for patterns both at an individual level which may suggest a greater concern than each individual incident and at a whole Gym level to identify common themes which may require further training/support.
- ☆ Liaise with the parents and where applicable the child's school to share information and ascertain whether the recorded concern is part of a bigger picture.
- ☆ Refer to outside agencies as appropriate (see detailed guidance in Appendix)

## 7. Allegations against staff/volunteers

- ☆ As detailed in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, EMCA will notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day where there is a safeguarding allegation made about anyone who works with children who may have:

- *Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed 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.*

☆ If a parent or member of staff has any concern about another member of staff these concerns must be communicated directly to the Safeguarding Lead immediately. Upon being made aware of a safeguarding allegation about a member of staff the DSL will:

- *Seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer.*
- *Consider if it is necessary to involve the Police.*
- *Obtain written details in the form of a report of the allegation from the person making the allegation and ensure these are signed and dated.*
- *Record information about times, dates, locations, and names of potential witnesses.*

☆ The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Nottingham City is **Caroline Hose** who can be contacted on **0115 8764762**

## 8. Low level concerns

☆ A low-level safeguarding concern could involve situations or behaviours that are not immediately harmful but may have the potential to escalate or lead to more serious issue or allegations. Low level concerns usually involve poor practice or breaches of the Code of Conduct. Some examples of low-level safeguarding concerns in sport may include:

- *Inadequate Supervision: Insufficient supervision during cheerleading practices, which could lead to accidents or unsafe behaviours.*
- *Inappropriate Language or Conduct: Use of inappropriate language, teasing, or threats from coaches.*
- *Lack of Inclusive Practices: Exclusion or favouritism within the team, which might make certain members feel isolated or undervalued.*
- *Unsafe Training Techniques: The use of unsafe or improper training techniques, which may increase the risk of injuries.*

☆ Low level concerns should be reported to the DSL who will liaise with the Programme Director about any actions or retraining which needs to occur. They may also contact the LADO for advice if it is unclear if a concern is considered low level or an allegation.



## 9. Child on child abuse

☆ All coaching staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- *bullying (including cyberbullying).*
- *physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.*
- *sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.*
- *sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.*
- *up skirting, typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.*
- *sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)*
- *initiation/hazing type violence and rituals*

☆ All incidents of child-on-child abuse should be recorded and passed to the DSL as per the reporting procedures. The club also has an anti-bullying policy in place which can be found on the club website.

## 10. Prevent

☆ The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 imposes a duty on a wide range of bodies including sporting bodies and charities to respond when they become concerned that a child is being, or is at risk of, becoming radicalised.

☆ When any member of staff has concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DSL. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures to report the concern.

☆ Statutory guidance has been published and is available here:

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

## 11. Vulnerable groups

☆ At EMCA we recognise that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others including but not exclusively:

- *Those who are Fostered or Adopted (known as Looked after Children or previously looked after)*
- *Those with additional and/or special needs or disabilities*
- *children with a history of domestic abuse*
- *children with mental health problems, or a parent with mental health problems*
- *children living in hard social conditions, such as poverty, isolation, or poor housing.*



- ☆ Parents can make the club aware of any additional needs or background circumstances through their child's coach or by updating the Coacha App. Any information communicated to coaches will remain confidential.

## **12. Use of social media and Images**

- ☆ Social media can have a range of positive benefits to support coaching at EMCA. Photographs and Video's may be taken for the purposes of performance analysis, skill development and progress tracking. Coaches may therefore take photographs and videos of children for this purpose which will be shared on Team WhatsApp groups.
- ☆ Photographs will not be shared for any other purposes and parents can withdraw consent if they do not wish for photographs of their child to be shared.
- ☆ Children are permitted to be on Team WhatsApp groups however they must also have a parent or guardian on the group who can monitor their use.
- ☆ Children are not permitted to set up separate WhatsApp or social media groups as this could enable bullying or unsafe behaviours particularly on mixed age teams where adults and children are placed together.

## **13. Review and Monitoring**

- ☆ This safeguarding policy will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if deemed necessary, to remain current with evolving legislation, best practices, and the specific requirements of our gym. Additionally, we will conduct regular internal audits and assessments to ensure consistent policy implementation and the ongoing effectiveness of our safeguarding measures.

**Date finalised: October 2023**



## Appendix 1

### Categories and signs of abuse

The four main types of abuse are:

Type	Potential Indicators
<b>Physical Abuse:</b>	Bruises, cuts scratches or scars particularly to less visible body parts or unusual areas (inside of arms and legs) Bite marks Fractures Burns or scalds. Reluctance to remove clothing for PE/Sports Inconsistent explanations as to how injuries occurred. Flinching or backing away if an adult comes close. Reluctance to seek medical help for injuries. Induced and fabricated illnesses
<b>Emotional Abuse:</b>	Negative interactions with parents/carers Putting undue pressure on themselves Behaviour not appropriate to the age of the child Low self-esteem or self confidence Trying to 'push people away' or make others dislike them. Difficulties with attachment and making friends.
<b>Sexual Abuse:</b>	Dropping 'hints' or mentioning secrets Inability to sit still. Sexually inappropriate behaviour Needing the toilet, a lot/repeated urinary infections Pregnancy and STI's Marks and bruises suggesting restraint. Secretive online behaviours Fear of particular people or places
<b>Neglect</b>	Signs of malnutrition Severe and persistent illnesses or infections Consistently inappropriate shoes or clothes Always hungry/looking for food. Poor medical or dental health Not attending routine appointments Persistently dirty or smelly





## Appendix 2 – Reporting procedures and templates

### Step 1: Immediate response to the child (if applicable)

It is vital that our actions do not harm the child further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

- ☆ listen to the child, if you are shocked by what is being said, try not to show it.
- ☆ it is ok to observe bruises but not to ask a child to remove their clothing to observe them.
- ☆ stay calm, the pace should be dictated by the child without them being pressed for detail by asking leading questions such as “what did s/he do next?” It is your role to listen - not to investigate.
- ☆ use open questions such as ‘is there anything else you want to tell me?’ or ‘yes?’, ‘and?’
- ☆ be careful not to burden the child with guilt by asking questions like ‘why didn’t you tell me before?’
- ☆ acknowledge how hard it was for the child to tell you.
- ☆ do not criticise the perpetrator, the child might have a relationship with them.
- ☆ do not promise confidentiality, reassure the child that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated lead) and why; and, depending on the child’s age, what the next stage will be. It is important that you avoid making promises that you cannot keep such as ‘I’ll stay with you all the time’ or ‘it will be all right now’.

### Step 2: Recording

- ☆ make some brief notes at the time if you can or immediately afterwards so that you remember. record the date, time, place and context of disclosure or concern, facts and not assumption or interpretation.
- ☆ if it is observation of bruising or an injury try to record detail, e.g., ‘right arm above elbow’. Do not take photographs.
- ☆ note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the child (try not to translate into ‘proper terms’)
- ☆ At the earliest opportunity complete the recording template as accurately as you can. Use the child’s words and do not add your own interpretation.

### Step 3: Contact the DSL

- ☆ Discuss the safeguarding concern with the DSL who can decide if you need to take immediate action.
- ☆ pass on the concern form so that they can decide on the appropriate course of action.

**If there is an immediate risk of harm, then please contact the Police or Nottingham City Social Care duty Team on 0115 915 9299**



#### Step 4: The role of the DSL

- ☆ Once a concern is received by the DSL they will decide on the most appropriate course of action.
- ☆ This may involve talking to the parents, contacting the child's school or making a referral to children's social care if appropriate.
  
- ☆ All professionals are expected to follow consent guidance from the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2017, the Children Act 1989 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. To make a referral, parents/carers must give their **explicit and informed consent** for information to be shared with other agencies to enable holistic support and access to services. Recorded consent should be gained by the referring agency, with clarity about why and with whom information will be shared. Services cannot accept a referral without consent, unless there are safeguarding concerns whereby there is a statutory duty to intervene and seeking consent may put the child at further risk or cause a delay. In situations where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, information may be shared without consent.
- ☆ Circumstances may include:
  - *Suspicion that a child will be forced into marriage or removed from the country against their will.*
  - *Suspicion that a child is at risk of female genital mutilation.*
  - *A disclosure of sexual or physical abuse putting the child at immediate risk*
  - *Suspicion that illness is being fabricated.*
  
- ☆ Permission to share information with the social care should always be sought from an adult with parental responsibility for the child / young person before passing information about them to Children's Social Care, UNLESS seeking permission would place the child at immediate risk of significant harm or may lead to the loss of evidence, for example destroying evidence of a crime or influencing a child about a disclosure made.

***The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. (Page 17, paragraph 57 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023)***

- ☆ All actions taken by the DSL will be recorded in detail and a summary of the concern will be added to the Child's safeguarding file on Coacha.
  
- ☆ The full detailed version will be retained and stored confidentially even if the decision is to take no further action at this stage.

☆



## Incident reporting form

Your information			
Name			
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Name of organisation		Your role	

Personal information – child / young person					
Name				Date of birth	
Gender <sup>i</sup>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/>	Another description (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there any information about the child that would be useful to consider?					

Contact information – parent / carer		
Name(s)		
Address		
Contact number(s)		
Email		
Have they been notified of this incident/disclosure?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain why this decision has been taken
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please give details of what was said / actions agreed

Incident/Disclosure details*			
Date and time of incident/disclosure			
Please tick one:	<input type="checkbox"/> I am reporting my own concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am responding to concerns raised by someone else – please fill in their details:	
Name of person raising concern		Role within the sport or relationship to the child	
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Details of the incident or concerns (include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion, or hearsay)			



Incident details (continued)			
Child's account of the incident (if they are not the one reporting above)			
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident			
Name of witness (and date of birth, if a child)		Role within the sport or relationship to the child	
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Please provide details of action taken to date			

Declaration	
Your signature	x
Print name	
Today's date	
<p>Please email this form to the DSL at <a href="mailto:emca_safeguarding@icloud.com">emca_safeguarding@icloud.com</a> or call 7967276642 to discuss if unsure how to proceed.</p> <p><b>If there is an immediate risk of harm, then please contact the Police or Nottingham City Social Care duty Team on 0115 915 9299</b></p>	

To be completed by DSL	
Safeguarding Officer's name	Emma Pye
Date received	
Actions taken	
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – please provide further details:
Name of organisation / agency	
Contact person	
Contact number(s)	
Email	
Agreed action or advice given	



### Appendix 3: Safeguarding Flow chart

Safeguarding concerns raised by a coach, parent or child





Referrals to Social Care should be made based upon the **child's home address**:

<p><b>Nottingham City</b></p>	<p><b>For Urgent Referrals</b> City MASH 0115 876 4800</p> <p><b>For non-urgent referrals</b> <a href="https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/children-and-families/multi-agency-safeguarding-children-hub-mash">https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/children-and-families/multi-agency-safeguarding-children-hub-mash</a></p>
<p><b>Nottinghamshire</b></p>	<p><b>Urgent referrals</b> During work hours 0300 500 80 90 Out of hours duty 0300 456 4546</p> <p><b>For non-urgent referrals</b> <a href="https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/safeguarding/childrens-mash/report-a-new-concern-about-a-child">https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/safeguarding/childrens-mash/report-a-new-concern-about-a-child</a></p>
<p><b>Leicester City</b></p>	<p><b>All referrals: Call 01164541004</b></p> <p><b>MARF form (non urgent only)</b> <a href="https://my.leicester.gov.uk/service/Multi_Agency_Referral_Form__MARF__">https://my.leicester.gov.uk/service/Multi_Agency_Referral_Form__MARF__</a></p>
<p><b>Leicestershire and Rutland</b></p>	<p><b>All referrals</b> Leicestershire 0116 305 0005 (24 hours) Rutland: 01572 758 407 (Work hours) out of hours call the number above.</p> <p><b>For non-urgent referrals</b> <a href="https://www.rutland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Multi-Agency%20Referral%20Form.docx">https://www.rutland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Multi-Agency%20Referral%20Form.docx</a></p>
<p><b>Derby City</b></p>	<p><b>Urgent referrals</b> 01332 956607 (24 hours)</p> <p><b>For non-urgent referrals</b> <a href="https://myaccount.derby.gov.uk/en/service/report_concerns_about_a_child">https://myaccount.derby.gov.uk/en/service/report_concerns_about_a_child</a></p>
<p><b>Derbyshire</b></p>	<p><b>For Urgent Referrals</b> Call: 01629 533190 (24 hours)</p> <p><b>For non-urgent referrals</b> <a href="https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/support-for-families/starting-point-referral-form/starting-point-request-for-support-form.aspx">https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/support-for-families/starting-point-referral-form/starting-point-request-for-support-form.aspx</a></p>

We recognise that some children may come from outside of these areas however the above list will cover the majority of Under 18's who attend EMCA. The DSL will refer to the appropriate agency as required.



## **Safeguarding guidelines for mixed age-group teams**

At EMCA the safety of the athletes in our care is of paramount importance to us, we recognise that we have a responsibility to uphold the highest levels of conscientiousness in safeguarding and that the sport of Allstar Cheerleading presents unusual and unique challenges in that area. With that in mind, we feel it is important that we issue some guidelines and rules specific to our mixed-age group teams.



In this instance we define “mixed age-group” as teams that have athletes both over and under the age of 18 (“adult” and “minor athletes”). These teams present an unusual situation in terms of safeguarding as they bring adults and minors into social contact in a way that rarely exists in other contexts. We believe it is important that all parties involved in these teams (Coaches, Parents, Adult athletes and Minor athletes) are aware of the potential issues and have clear rules where required, information and guidance about expectations and appropriate conduct.

### **1. Expectations of adult athletes**

We expect our adult athletes to accept that they share a role in protecting our minor aged athletes. This includes being a positive role-model, setting strong examples of personal conduct and behaviour and avoiding creating or engaging in any situations that might violate legal, ethical or standard safeguarding boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not engaging in romantic or sexual relationships, flirtation or related conversation with minor athletes.
- Not facilitating or encouraging any alcohol, nicotine/tobacco or drug use by minor athletes.
- Not allowing yourself to be in unsupervised 1-on-1 situations with a minor athlete.
- Not making comments, engaging in conversation, using language or exhibiting materials that might make anyone uncomfortable or expose minors to inappropriate content.

We recognise that friendships will develop between adult and minor athletes and that this is a positive for our teams, but these friendships should remain within the bounds of team activities. We also extend reporting responsibility to adult athletes if you hear of, are party to or see signs of any kind of abuse of minor athletes.

### **2. Specific rules for mixed age-group teams**

- Parents of minor athletes must be on any team WhatsApp groups in addition to the athlete themselves (if the parent approves the athlete being on the group).
- No unofficial or additional WhatsApp or other messaging groups may be set up for teams or sub-groups within teams without coach permission and must also include parental supervision where minor athletes are included.
- No adult athlete should make direct contact with a minor athlete whether through WhatsApp, text message, phone call, direct message on social media or any photo exchange app (e.g. SnapChat).
- All materials (photos, videos etc) exchanged/shared on team groups must be appropriate for all ages and audiences.
- Team social events and non-cheerleading activities must be suitable for all ages and may not involve alcohol consumption (including by adult athletes).
- Smoking or vaping are not allowed anywhere on EMCA gym property, at team events, by adult athletes in the presence of minor athletes or while in EMCA uniform.

### **3. Guidance for minor athletes and parents of minor athletes.**

Minor athletes should be aware of the above rules and expectations for the adults that are their team-mates and avoid creating situations that might lead to any breach of these. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not initiating direct messaging or other communication with an adult athlete.
- Never asking any adult athlete to purchase alcohol, nicotine/tobacco products or illegal drugs on your behalf.
- Never putting an adult athlete in a situation where they are 1-on-1 with you.