

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY NORTH DERBYSHIRE DOG AGILITY CLUB

Approved by: North Derbyshire Dog Agility Club Committee

Date approved: 5 October 2026

Review date: October 2027

1. PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

North Derbyshire Dog Agility Club is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who take part in club activities.

The club recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All trainers, volunteers, committee members and other adults acting on behalf of the club have a responsibility to behave appropriately, recognise concerns and report them promptly.

The club is a Royal Kennel Club dog agility club and its safeguarding arrangements are designed to be effective and proportionate to the nature of the club and the activities it provides.

The club will:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for children.
- Promote appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.
- Ensure adults working with children understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Undertake appropriate recruitment and DBS checks where required.
- Provide safeguarding training appropriate to people's roles.
- Respond promptly to safeguarding concerns.
- Record and refer concerns appropriately.
- Follow Derbyshire safeguarding procedures.
- Never investigate allegations of abuse itself.

This policy applies to all trainers, volunteers, committee members and other adults acting on behalf of the club.

2. WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing harm to their health or development, and taking action to enable children and young people to have the best possible outcomes.

A safeguarding concern does not have to involve an obvious injury or allegation of abuse. It may arise from something a child says, something an adult observes, a change in a child's behaviour, an interaction between children, or concerns about the behaviour of an adult. All concerns should be taken seriously.

It is not the responsibility of a trainer or volunteer to decide whether abuse has occurred. Their responsibility is to recognise a concern, respond appropriately, record what they know and report it.

3. TYPES OF HARM

The following information is intended to help trainers and volunteers recognise possible concerns. The presence of one sign does not necessarily mean that abuse has occurred.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse involves deliberately hurting a child or causing physical harm.

Examples include:

- Hitting, kicking, shaking, punching or pushing.
- Deliberately causing an injury.
- Using excessive physical force.
- Giving inappropriate or dangerous physical punishment.
- Deliberately causing illness or poisoning.

In a dog agility environment, adults should be particularly mindful of appropriate physical contact with children. Physical contact should be necessary, appropriate and proportionate to the activity. Physical handling of a child should not be used as a form of discipline.

EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse involves persistent behaviour that damages a child's emotional development or sense of worth.

Examples may include:

- Humiliation, belittling or persistent criticism.
- Threatening or frightening a child.
- Bullying or intimidation.
- Deliberately isolating a child.
- Making a child feel worthless or unwanted.
- Persistent unrealistic expectations.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.

A trainer should never use humiliation, ridicule or fear as a way of controlling children or improving performance.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves involving or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child understands what is happening.

It may include:

- Sexual touching.
- Sexual assault or rape.
- Involving a child in sexual conversations or activity.
- Showing a child sexual images or material.
- Taking or sharing sexual images of children.
- Grooming a child for sexual purposes.
- Encouraging a child to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

A concern may arise from something a child says, an adult's behaviour or communications, or online activity.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND GROOMING

Grooming involves building a relationship with a child in order to gain their trust and potentially exploit or abuse them. Grooming can happen face-to-face or online.

Possible warning signs include:

- An adult giving a child inappropriate gifts or special treatment.
- An adult seeking unnecessary private contact with a child.
- Excessive private messaging.
- Attempts to isolate a child from parents or other adults.
- An unusual or secretive relationship between an adult and child.
- An adult encouraging a child to keep aspects of their relationship secret.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs.

Possible signs include:

- Regularly arriving without appropriate clothing or equipment.
- Persistent lack of supervision.
- Frequent hunger or tiredness.
- Poor personal care.
- Unexplained medical or developmental needs not being addressed.
- A child appearing consistently fearful, withdrawn or distressed.

One isolated incident would not normally constitute neglect, but repeated concerns should be reported.

CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE

Children can abuse or harm other children.

This may include:

- Bullying.
- Physical violence.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Sharing sexual images.
- Intimidation or threats.
- Online abuse.
- Deliberate exclusion.

The fact that both people involved are children does not mean that a concern should be ignored.

4. OTHER SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Safeguarding concerns may also include:

- Domestic abuse affecting a child.
- Online abuse.
- Radicalisation or exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Serious bullying.
- Self-harm or significant emotional distress.
- Unsafe behaviour by an adult.
- Concerns about a child's home circumstances.
- Missing children or unexplained absence.
- Concerns about another organisation or activity involving the child.

The club does not need to establish which category applies. If something causes a genuine safeguarding concern, it should be reported.

5. RESPONDING TO A CHILD

A child may tell a trainer or volunteer something directly, or may make an indirect comment. If a child discloses something:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Take the child seriously.
- Allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep the information secret.
- Tell the child what you will do next.
- Report the concern promptly.

Do not:

- Interrogate or repeatedly question the child.
- Ask leading questions.
- Investigate the allegation.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Confront an alleged perpetrator.
- Contact parents/carers about the allegation unless advised to do so by the appropriate safeguarding authority.

6. RECORDING A CONCERN

A written record should be made as soon as possible after a concern arises.

The record should include:

- Date, time and location.
- The child's name and age, if known.
- What was seen or heard.
- The child's own words wherever possible.
- The names of people present.
- What action was taken.
- Who was informed and when.

Records should be factual and objective.

7. REPORTING CONCERNS

The normal route is to report the concern promptly to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Sue Williams

Email: NDDACSafeguarding@gmail.com

Deputy Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Amy Wood

Email: amywood892@yahoo.com

Deputy Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Wendy Wells

Email: josholi99@hotmail.com

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Any person who has a safeguarding concern can contact Children's Social Care directly. They do not need permission from the club.

8. THE CLUB WILL NOT INVESTIGATE

The club's role is to:

- Recognise concerns.
- Listen appropriately.
- Record information.
- Seek advice where necessary.
- Make referrals.
- Cooperate with Children's Social Care, Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and other appropriate agencies.

The club will NOT:

- Investigate allegations of abuse.
- Interview children to establish what happened.
- Interview alleged perpetrators.
- Attempt to decide whether an allegation is true.
- Undertake its own safeguarding enquiry.

This is particularly important where a concern involves a trainer, volunteer or another adult working with children.

9. ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT AN ADULT

A safeguarding concern must be raised if an adult working with children:

- Has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- May have committed a criminal offence against or relating to a child.
- Has behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.

- Has behaved inappropriately even where the behaviour may not meet the threshold for an allegation.

The club will not investigate such concerns. Advice will be sought through the appropriate Derbyshire safeguarding and LADO arrangements.

If the concern is about the Club Safeguarding Officer, it must be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

10. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND DBS

The club recognises that DBS checks form only one part of safer recruitment.
The club will:

- Consider the suitability of people appointed to work with children.
- Carry out DBS checks where the role is eligible and a check is required and ensure the level of DBS check is appropriate to the actual duties of the role.
- Keep appropriate records of checks.
- Consider safeguarding concerns or information arising after appointment.

11. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All trainers and relevant volunteers working with children will receive safeguarding awareness training appropriate to their role.

The Safeguarding Officer and Deputy will receive additional training appropriate to their responsibilities and will be proportionate to the role.

12. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND SAFE WORKING

Adults working with children should maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
Adults should:

- Treat children fairly and respectfully.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations where practicable.
- Keep parents/carers appropriately informed.
- Use club-approved communication methods.
- Avoid private social media relationships with children.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour appropriately.
- Report concerns about the behaviour of other adults.

Adults should not:

- Humiliate, ridicule or threaten children.
- Use physical punishment.
- Develop inappropriate or secret relationships with children.
- Exchange inappropriate personal messages with children.
- Share inappropriate images or information about children.

13. DOG AGILITY-SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING

The club recognises that dog agility involves children working closely with adults, dogs and equipment.

Trainers and volunteers should consider:

- The safety of children around dogs and equipment.
- The child's confidence, age and ability.
- Appropriate physical contact.

Children should not be placed in situations where they are unnecessarily isolated with an adult.

Parents/carers remain responsible for their child's attendance and should be in attendance during training sessions and other club activities (e.g. Trials Days).

14. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Photographs or videos of children should only be taken and used in accordance with the club's agreed arrangements and parental/carer permissions.

Images should be appropriate and should never be used in a way that could embarrass, humiliate or place a child at risk.

Adults should not use personal social media accounts to establish inappropriate or secret communication with children.

Any safeguarding concern arising from online communication, images or social media should be reported in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Safeguarding information will be treated sensitively and shared only with those who need the information to protect a child or manage the safeguarding response. Information should be accurate, relevant and proportionate. Safeguarding records should be stored securely and separately from general club records.

Information should not be shared with the person who is the subject of an allegation where doing so could prejudice a safeguarding, police or LADO response.

16. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring that the club has appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

The Committee will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Officer and Deputies.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding training is available.
- Ensure appropriate DBS arrangements are in place.
- Review this policy at least annually.
- Ensure concerns are appropriately referred.

- Ensure that safeguarding records are securely maintained.
- Review safeguarding arrangements following any significant incident.

The Committee will not investigate safeguarding allegations itself.

17. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if:

- There is a significant safeguarding incident.
- There is a change in legislation.
- Derbyshire safeguarding procedures change.
- The club's activities or arrangements change.
- A review identifies a need for amendment.

The club will have regard to the current procedures and guidance of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Royal Kennel Club.