

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

West Country Wolves — Girls Basketball Development Programme

Last reviewed: 23.06.27 Next review: 23.06.27 Owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead

1. Policy statement

West Country Wolves is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every young person who takes part in our development programme — at monthly training and leadership days, at camps, and on trips including international opportunities such as the Paris programme. Every player has the right to be protected from harm, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, faith, sexuality or background.

This policy is written in line with Basketball England's Safeguarding Policy, the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) standards, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and Working Together to Safeguard Children. Because our players come together only monthly and travel further and further afield than a typical local club, we place particular emphasis on safeguarding around travel, overnight stays and less frequent contact, set out below.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all coaches, mentors, volunteers, committee members, parents/guardians and players involved in West Country Wolves, at every training day, leadership day, camp and trip, including international travel.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Designated Safeguarding Lead / Welfare Officer	TBC — to be confirmed
Chair / Head Coach	Rio Lynes
Basketball England Safeguarding Team	See Basketball England Resource Manual for current contact details
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000

The DSL, or a nominated deputy, is contactable at every training and leadership day, and throughout every trip. If a concern involves the DSL themselves, it should be reported directly to Basketball England's Safeguarding Team or the NSPCC helpline.

4. Recognising abuse and harm

Abuse can take several forms, and a young person may experience more than one at the same time. Coaches and mentors are trained to be alert to signs of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying, including online bullying

Because players attend monthly rather than weekly, coaches and mentors are encouraged to build familiarity with each player over time and to keep brief written notes between sessions so that changes in a player's wellbeing are more likely to be noticed. You do not need to be certain that a young person is being harmed to raise a concern - if something doesn't feel right, report it.

5. Reporting a concern

- Stay calm and listen, do not promise to keep it secret
- Reassure the young person they were right to speak up
- Do not question or investigate the situation yourself
- Record what was said or observed as soon as possible, using the young person's own words where you can, with dates and times
- Report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, the same day, wherever possible, or as soon as contact can be made if it occurs while travelling

The DSL will decide, taking advice from Basketball England or children's social care where needed, whether a referral to children's social care, the police, or Basketball England's Safeguarding Team is required. In an emergency, or if a young person is in immediate danger, call 999 (or the local emergency number while abroad).

6. Safer recruitment

- All coaches, mentors and volunteers - including those involved only in occasional training days, leadership sessions or trips - complete an enhanced DBS check before starting
- References are taken up and coaching/mentoring qualifications verified
- Guest coaches or mentors brought in for a specific day or trip are subject to the same checks before working with players
- New coaches, mentors and volunteers complete an induction covering this policy and our code of conduct

7. Codes of conduct

Coaches, mentors and volunteers

- Maintain professional boundaries with players at all times
- Avoid being alone with a single player; where 1:1 contact is unavoidable, including leadership mentoring conversations - ensure it is visible or observable to others and, where practical, that a parent is aware it is taking place
- Only use physical contact that is necessary, appropriate and welcomed, such as demonstrating technique
- Follow the club's guidance on transport, accommodation and supervision during trips
- Do not exchange personal phone numbers with players; all contact with a young person goes through a parent/guardian or an official club channel
- Do not contact a player directly by phone call, text, or messaging app under any circumstances

Players

- Treat teammates, coaches, mentors and opponents with respect
- Play fair and follow the rules of the game
- Speak up if something feels wrong, to a coach, mentor, parent, or the Welfare Officer

Parents and guardians

- Support positively from the sidelines - no criticism of players, coaches, mentors or officials
- Provide complete and up-to-date medical, dietary and emergency contact information ahead of camps and trips

8. Photography and use of images

We only photograph or film a player with prior parental/guardian consent (see our Privacy Policy). Images are used solely for programme promotion and funder/sponsor reporting, and are never published alongside identifying details such as a player's school or home address.

9. Online safety and communication

- Programme communication with players takes place through group channels only, never 1:1 messaging between an adult and a young person
- Coaches, mentors and volunteers should not accept or send friend/follow requests to players on personal social media accounts
- Any concern about a player's online safety should be reported to the DSL

10. Anti-bullying

We have zero tolerance for bullying of any kind, including cyberbullying, whether it takes place between players from the same or different home clubs. Any player, parent, coach or mentor who experiences or witnesses bullying should report it to the Welfare Officer.

11. Camps and international trips

Trips: including camps and international opportunities such as the Paris programme - carry additional safeguarding requirements:

- A trip-specific risk assessment is completed in advance, covering the destination, accommodation and travel arrangements
- A minimum of two DBS-checked adults, including at least one member of the coaching/mentoring staff, accompany every trip
- Appropriate adult-to-player ratios are maintained throughout, including overnight
- Players never share a room with an adult; room allocation follows a clear, published plan shared with parents in advance
- Passports, visas, travel insurance details and emergency/consular contact information are carried by the lead member of staff
- Parents are given a clear communication plan for the trip, including how and when they will hear from staff
- Any safeguarding concern arising during a trip is reported to the DSL as soon as contact can be made, and escalated to Basketball England or local authorities as appropriate

12. Whistleblowing

Anyone with a concern about the conduct of a coach, mentor, volunteer or committee member (including the DSL) has a duty to report it. Concerns can be raised with the DSL or, where the concern involves the DSL, with the Chair or Basketball England's Safeguarding Team directly. No one will be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

13. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is shared only with those who need to know, in line with our Privacy Policy. Records are stored securely and separately from general programme records.

14. Training

All coaches, mentors and volunteers complete Basketball England safeguarding training as part of their induction, refreshed in line with Basketball England's requirements, with additional briefing before any trip involving overnight stays or international travel.

15. Review

This policy is reviewed at least annually, and immediately after any safeguarding incident, trip, or significant change in guidance from Basketball England or the NSPCC.