



# Westcroft Park Polo Club

## Child Protection & Safe Guarding Policy 2019/2020

Contact: Richard Blake Thomas  
Tel 01276 858545  
[www.westcroftparkpolo.co.uk](http://www.westcroftparkpolo.co.uk)

Contents

Foreword

Introduction and policy statement

Recruitment

What is Abuse?

Policy Aims

Best Practice

Procedures



## Foreward

Westcroft Park Polo Club (WPPC) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children playing polo at the club and we acknowledge our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the children involved with the club from harm.

We adhere to the HPA's Safeguarding Policy guidance and procedures and endorse and adopt the policy statement contained within that document.

This document covers all minors participating in polo activity up to the age of 18 years old.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, size, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm.
- All allegations, suspicions of harm and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of the children.
- The interests of those who work or volunteer with children will be protected.

## **Introduction and policy statement: Children and Vulnerable Adults**

**It is widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every person to protect children from abuse. Child abuse, and particularly child sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgment about any action to take.**

**Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children and vulnerable adults in order to harm them.**

**Everyone who works at WPPC either in a paid or voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse. All coaches and instructors may have regular contact with children and can be a very important link in identifying cases where a child or vulnerable adult needs protection.**

**With the above in mind, the Management ,enhanced DBS checked coaches & instructors recognise that they have a responsibility:**

- To safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of children and vulnerable adults with whom they are working;**
- To take all reasonable practical steps to protect children from physical harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment;**
- To respect children and vulnerable adults rights, wishes and feelings.**

Our child protection procedures will:

- Offer safeguards to the children with whom we work and also to our professional members of staff, coaches and instructors and;
- Help to maintain the professionalism and the safeguards of good practice, which are associated with the HPA and the sport of Polo.

In addition, WPPC will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- Anyone under the age of 18 years will be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

It is recognised that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it. WPPC is therefore committed to the sound recruitment, provision of support and appropriate training for all professional staff, coaches, instructors and volunteers who have responsibility for children in connection with the Club. This will enable them to work together with schools/ chaperones/ parents/carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and the welfare of children paramount.

## Definitions

### Children

Children are defined in the Children Act 1989 as people under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this Policy the legal definition applies.

## Children Playing in the Adult Game

This Policy covers all players under 18.

Child players can, with the necessary written consent, play in the adult game he or she has passed their rules test.

WPPC's management team must have assessed and continue to assess, that any child player playing in adult games or training is both physically, emotionally and intellectually capable of taking part. Those responsible for the management of adult teams must at all times be mindful of their safety and wellbeing and ensure that a suitable adult from within the team and management acts as a mentor or buddy.

If a child is playing polo while playing or training with the adults he is treated as an adult. However, as soon as he is out of that environment the player is once again a child and thus the policies and legislation regarding children apply.

## Recruitment

Children are entitled to learn and to play polo in a safe and welcoming environment. Safe recruitment procedures enable WPPC to reduce the risk of abuse to children.

When recruiting employees or volunteers WPPC adheres to the HPA's recruitment guidelines to ensure only suitable people are selected. WPPC requires any individual who is to become involved in regulated activity to undertake an enhanced DBS check through the Safeguarding Officer. In addition, WPPC recognises its responsibility to:

- Appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO), as the first point of contact for safeguarding and welfare concerns
- Ensure that the CSO:
  - Develops a safeguarding training plan ensuring that as a minimum:
    - Publish the club's own safeguarding policy which reinforces the HPA Safeguarding Policy and procedures which reflects unique local circumstances for our club and makes it accessible to all coaches, instructors, players, members and employees.
    - Ensure coaches, instructors, players, members and employees are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
    - Identify any signs of harm and reports them to the CBSM and/or the WPPC Safeguarding team
    - Ensure that the club's children's workforce have up-to-date enhanced DBS checks in accordance with Best Practice Guidance .

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Any adult who works in regulated activity on a paid or voluntary basis with children in polo in England must comply with the requirements of the HPA's DBS process.

### Regulated Activity

To be deemed as being in 'regulated activity' within a polo setting, the position must meet the following criteria and frequency (when working with children) in order to be deemed 'regulated activity'.

**Activity:** Teaching, training, instruction, coaching of children carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight, all on an unsupervised basis.

An Enhanced DBS check (without barred list checks) can be applied for if the role is specified under the activity above. However, at all times the individual must be supervised by an individual in regulated activity i.e. has been DBS checked to enhanced level with an appropriate barred list check.

There are certain roles that are not deemed eligible for a DBS check, as per below:

- Bar Staff/Event and Catering Staff
- Grooms

## What is Abuse?

### Types of abuse

There are four main types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Examples of physical abuse in sport include extreme physical punishments; forcing a child into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body; assaulting a person; or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or in the case of a child, delay puberty.

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, which may involve inappropriate touching, penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmental<sup>^</sup> inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may involve a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another as well as serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm or bullying. It could also include their regular exclusion from an activity, non-selection for a team, failing to rotate team positions or more subtle actions such as staring at or ignoring a child. Putting players under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

## Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may involve a parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, or to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children are safe; exposing them to unsuitable weather conditions, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

## Bullying

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or instructor with a 'win at all costs' attitude or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying should not be ignored and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

WPPC exercises a zero tolerance response to bullying and only communicates directly with parents, guardians and chaperones and schools via emails, WhatsApp and text messages and not children.

## Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice arise when the needs of children are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported. Examples of poor practice may be shouting, excessive training, , ridicule of players' errors, ignoring health and safety guidelines and failing to adhere to the WPPC's codes of conduct.

## Policy

At WPPC we believe that taking part and learning to play polo should be both a positive and enjoyable part of children's lives which produces a rewarding experience.

We want to make sure that children are protected and kept safe from abuse (physical injury, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse) whilst they are with the club's professional, staff, coaches and instructors.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility in this area and that the club respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse .
- Implement a policy of Best Practice for all adults working with children;
- Ensure that all relevant members who have regular supervisory contact with children undertake an enhanced DBS application; and
- Identify a disciplinary panel which, where necessary, is able to manage cases of poor practice as identified by the HPA Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure that all coaches and instructors working directly with children and vulnerable adults will have a job description;
- Coaches and instructors must obtain HPA certificates before they are allowed to teach any age group.
- Undertake a regular risk assessment of the playing environment and the equipment used, ensuring that the necessary maintenance is undertaken promptly to minimise the risk of accident or injury;
- Ensure that written records of any accidents which occur during polo activities are kept.
-

Provide all parents, schools, chaperones, coaches, instructors and workforce with a written procedure for dealing with accusations or suspicions of child or vulnerable adult abuse;

- All allegations relating to child abuse will be handled in accordance with the Club's detailed Child Safeguarding procedures as contained herein.

### Best Practice

WPPC's aim is to create a culture where everyone feels confident to raise legitimate concerns without prejudice to their own position.

Concerns about the behaviour of coaches, instructors and employees of the club which may be harmful to a child or vulnerable adult in their care must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

While remembering that it is the safety and welfare of children that is of paramount importance, there will be times when those responsible will need to exercise discretion and common sense to ensure their wellbeing.

### Alcohol

WPPC's management take considered positive action to ensure that they are

responsible licensees. We recognise that it is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to someone under 18
- For an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18 alcohol or to be sold alcohol.

## Coaching & Instructor techniques

Any inappropriate or aggressive contact between coaches, instructors and children is unacceptable and a number of principles must be followed when teaching polo:

- Physical handling by a coach or instructor, must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique
- The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that children and vulnerable adults and their parents are comfortable with this approach.

## Transportation

In most instances it is the responsibility of schools, chaperones and parents/guardians , not WPPC, to transport their child to and from the club or nominated meeting point. If parents make arrangements between themselves this is a private arrangement and at the parents' discretion.

## Disclaimer

All children must have a disclaimer signed by their parent or guardian prior to taking part in any polo activities as outlined below:

**Declaration:** I the undersigned hereby agree to be bound by the rules of Westcroft Park Polo Club and the Hurlingham Polo Association and specifically the waiver in the WPPC rules for so long as I am participating in any activity associated with or run by "WPPC". This includes day membership to Westcroft Park.

I recognise that Polo is a dangerous sport and that there are risks and hazards to all present at WPPC and any polo related activities organised by WPPC whether i am a participant, player or spectator whether a polo activity is in progress or not I do so entirely at my own risk and I indemnify WPPC of any liability for any kind of injury, loss and/or damage suffered by myself or any person or property whom i bring to WPPC, its grounds or property. I recognise that all activities involving horses carry risk as equines can be unpredictable. I agree to take direction and follow all instructions given by Coaches and Instructors and Staff at WPPC who are there to ensure my safety.

I understand that failing to do so may result in injury or loss.

I understand and accept that any member of staff at WPPC may end my lesson or polo activity at anytime should it be in the interest of my own safety. I understand that it is my own responsibility to check all documentation for WPPC before participating in activities. I understand that all children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a chaperone, parent or guardian when onsite or participating in activities at WPPC. I hereby confirm that I do not suffer from any condition which would affect my capacity to participate in this activity and I will not hold Westcroft Park Polo Club responsible for any injury or accident suffered while at the club. Children under ten are required to wear body protectors.

**Public Domain Declaration:**

I understand that the club may take pictures of lessons and other polo activities whilst I am at the club and I give/ do not give permission for these images to be used by the club with their discretion for publicity material on our website and brochures.