



CHILD AND ADULTS AT RISK PROTECTION POLICY

(also known as "CAARP Policy")

**ASCENSION EAGLES CHEERLEADERS
and
TALENT CENTRAL CHEER & DANCE**

**Last updated:
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**Trustee lead for this policy:
Peter Sharp**

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1. Introduction to this policy

At Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders/Talent Central we recognise the importance of our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children/young people and adults at risk who are entrusted to our care.

This policy is called the Child And Adults At Risk Protection Policy; also referred to in this document as the “CAARP Policy” or “the policy”.

2. Definition of terms used in this policy

For the purposes of this policy:

Children/ child/young people/young person	Whenever we refer to “ <i>children</i> ”, “ <i>child</i> ”, “ <i>young people</i> ” or “ <i>young person</i> ” in this policy we also intend that this includes adults at risk, as per the name of this policy (Children and Adults At Risk). Our definition of a child/young person is someone who is under 18 years of age.
Position of trust	'Position of trust' is a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with children/adults at risk.
Child abuse	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 any child/adult at risk regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.
DBS	The abbreviation for the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Disclosure and Barring Service has set standards which ensure their DBS checks are conducted correctly and that any information disclosed in DBS checks is handled appropriately.

3. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to athletes/members of and to anyone working on behalf of:

- Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
- Talent Central Cheer & Dance.

In this document the above organisations will also be referred to as “**the Group**”, “**We**” or “**Us**”.

People working on behalf of the Group includes senior managers (known as “the senior team” or “the management team”), the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Wherever this document uses the expression “parent” or “parents” this includes the responsible adult/s who is/are the principal caregiver/s for a child or an adult at risk (e.g. guardians).

4. Why this policy is important

As an organisation working with children/adults at risk, The Group has a duty to protect them from the possibility of being abused within The Group and - if abuse does come to light – to act responsibly and appropriately.

The Group recognises that, sadly, whenever human beings associate there will always be a risk of abuse and, of course, this includes - but is not limited to - cheerleading settings. Therefore, the Group is **committed to providing a safe space for all its members** and to supporting any member who is a victim of abuse regardless of where that abuse has taken place (e.g. within a familial, social, digital or institutional setting).

The Group also recognises that it has **a duty to ensure employees and volunteers are well-informed about the risks and prevention of abuse**, and are equipped to recognise signs of abuse. Some people (e.g. young or vulnerable people) may not be in a position to recognise that they are subject to abuse, regardless of whether or not such abuse takes place in connection with cheerleading.

Furthermore, these people may not feel able to - or be capable of - sharing concerns or their experiences of abuse. These athletes are therefore reliant upon adults and responsible persons around them to recognise signs of abuse.

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the AEC Board of Trustees to appoint a **Nominated Safeguarding Lead** and a **Deputy Safeguarding Lead** to oversee the implementation of this policy. These positions will be held for a one-year term and then be reviewed by the Board as appropriate.

The nominated people in these two roles will work with the **statutory agencies** and other organisations, as required.

The AEC Board also appoints a **Trustee Safeguarding Lead** who will report to the Board at each Board meeting on The Group's safeguarding practice, including raising any concerns of which the Board needs to be aware and any incidents which have taken place (in accordance with any confidentiality or reporting restrictions which may apply).

6. The scope of this policy

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989). Where this policy refers to children, it equally applies to Adults at Risk, such as, but not limited to, persons with additional needs, regardless of age.

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 The Group's activities. The procedures within this policy take the following into consideration:

- The Children's Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children's Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

This CAARP policy is consistent with the London Child Protection Procedures and the London Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

7. Monitoring and review of the CAARP policy and procedures

The Nominated Safeguarding Lead must regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievement gaps and any areas where changes are required to The Director.

If it is not appropriate to report issues to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or The Director (e.g. because of allegations concerning these people) then Safeguarding personnel should report any issues to the Safeguarding Trustee Lead instead, or in their absence the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

This policy will be reviewed every year in May, or whenever there is a major change in the organisation, in relevant legislation or relevant legislation or any changes in the cheerleading industry.

8. Contact information

Nominated Safeguarding Lead: Robert Horton

Contact no: (10am - 5pm) 07714 631336

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Paula Brown

Contact no: (10am - 5pm) 07866 612610 (gym mobile)

The Director: Angela Green

Contact no: 07854 487309

Safeguarding Trustee Lead: Peter Sharp

Contact no: 07990 561562

Chair of Board of Trustees: Sue Winston

Contact no: 07975 688644

Chair of Board of Trustees - email: chair_trustees@ascensioneagles.com

Designated Officer (Newham) email: lado@newham.gov.uk

Contact no: 0203 3733803
0203 3736706

The role of the Designated Officer, or DO, (formerly known as the Local Authority Designated Officer, or LADO) is set out in the Government's Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and is governed by the Authorities' duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and London Child Protection Procedures Chapter 7: Allegations against staff or volunteers who work with children. Further information here: <https://www.newhamscp.org.uk/lado/>

Newham Child Protection Team

Contact no: 020 3373 4600 from 9am - 5.15pm weekdays or
020 8430 2000 at other times.

9. Our mission statement

As part of its mission, The Group is committed to:

- Making the welfare of the child/adult at risk paramount
- Ensuring that we provide a safe environment for all children/adults at risk to participate in cheerleading (and/or other activities held by The Group), regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual identity
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children/adults at risk from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment, and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- Taking seriously and responding swiftly and appropriately to any suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse
- Making sure that all The Group employees and volunteers who work with children/adults at risk will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility; they will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and Child Protection procedures
- Working in partnership with parents and their children and with adults at risk and their carers to ensure the protection of children/adults at risk
- Supporting those affected by abuse
- Establishing links with statutory childcare authorities and other organisations if / when required.

10. Promoting good practice

To provide children/adults at risk with the best possible experience and opportunities in cheerleading, everyone must operate within the accepted ethical framework laid out in The Group's Code of Conduct.

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 to act without delay if they have concerns about the welfare of the child/adult at risk.

10.1 Definition of good practice

All personnel, including volunteers and trustees, **must adhere** to the following principles and actions:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Make the experience of cheerleading fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront, and deal with bullying, help build positive relationships and life skills
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the children/adults at risk first - before winning. Do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for team, programme, or personal achievements
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with athletes (e.g. it is **never** appropriate for our staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child/adult at risk, 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 for the sport, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child/adult at risk. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and their consent has been given, and it is for the benefit of performing or acquiring skills for the sport
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own child/adult at risk). If groups must be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs
- Request written parental consent if The Group personnel are required to transport young people in their cars
- Get 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 the room of a child/adult at risk, nor invite children/adults at risk to their own rooms
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the child/adult at risk is important
- Secure written parental consent for The Group to act *in loco parentis* – e.g. 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.

10.2 Definition of poor practice

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

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/adults at risk away from others
- Taking young people/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 a child/adult at risk, even in fun
- Reducing a child/adult at risk to tears as a form of control

- Allow allegations made by a child/adult at risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature that the child/adult at risk can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situations (e.g. transporting a child/adult at risk in your car), the task should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the child/adult at risk involved.

If, during your care, you accidentally hurt a child/adult at risk, they seem distressed in any way, and/or if they have misunderstood or misinterpreted something you have done, you must report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents/guardians should also be informed of the incident.

11. Defining abuse

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 any child/adult at risk regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

Additionally, it is acknowledged that children may be at risk of abuse by another child, as well as adults.

It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working with or volunteering for The Group to decide that abuse is occurring.

It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

There are four main categories of abuse:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

The abuser may be a family member, someone the child/adult at risk encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may be guilty of abuse or neglect of a child/adult at risk directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the child/adult at risk.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if not treated, they may follow the individual into adulthood.

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.

11.1 Types of abuse

According to the NSPCC, abuse can take the following forms:

Physical abuse

This occurs where adults physically hurt or injure a child/adult at risk e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical child abuse.

Emotional abuse

This means the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/adult at risk, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve telling a

child/adult at risk that they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only in terms of meeting the needs of another person.

It may feature expectations of the person which are not appropriate to their age or development.

It may cause a child/adult at risk to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened, or taunted which may make the child/adult at risk frightened or withdrawn.

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

Emotional abuse in cheerleading may occur when the child/adult at risk 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.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child/adult at risk, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of that person'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 child/adult at risk safe or exposes them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual abuse

This occurs when adults (male and female) use children/adults at risk to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or 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/adults at risk could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also, the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

You can read more about the types of potential abuse on the NSPCC website:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/>

Bullying

As set out in our Anti-bullying policy, our definition of bullying is unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting; that undermines, humiliates or causes physical or emotional harm to someone. It may come from another child/adult at risk or an adult.

- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding personal items, making threatening gestures etc)
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, hair-pulling, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, making gestures
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic:** because of/focusing on someone's sexual identity or how they choose to identify
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber:** this includes -

- o All aspects of the internet, such as email, social media platforms and internet chat room misuse
- o Threats by messaging services (e.g. text, Whatsapp etc) or phone calls
- o Misuse of technology (e.g. recording sound or images/video using a mobile phone or webcam without them knowing; sharing a recording of someone without their permission).

Please refer to our [Anti-bullying policy](#) for further information on our approach to preventing and responding to bullying.

11.2 Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with children/adults at risk who have suffered abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. For people who are not experts in recognising the signs of abuse, indications that someone 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 person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- Another person expresses concern about the welfare of a child/adult at risk
- Unexplained changes in the behaviour of a child/adult at risk 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 frequent loss of possessions.

It is important to understand 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 The Group to decide that abuse is occurring.

It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

12. Responding to concerns and allegations

It is **NOT** the responsibility of anyone working with or volunteering for The Group, (i.e. in a paid or unpaid capacity) to decide whether 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.

12.1 Being made aware of possible abuse

You may become aware of possible abuse in various ways - for example:

- ❖ you may see it happening
- ❖ you may suspect it is happening because of signs such as those listed in the [Indicators of abuse](#) section of this document, or
- ❖ it may be reported to you by someone else or directly by the child/adult at risk who has been affected.

In the last of these cases, it is **particularly** important to respond appropriately. If someone says they have been or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- Stay calm, so as not to frighten the person
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Listen to them, 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 extremely strict and abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the person has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify what has been said
- Inform them that you must inform other people about what they have told you. Tell them this is to help stop the abuse continuing
- Safety of the person is paramount. If they needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern, and ensure they are made aware that this is a protection issue
- Record all information verbatim and report this incident to the [Nominated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead](#).

If your concern or an incident you wish to report involves the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead, then you should report your concerns without delay **directly** to [the Director, the Safeguarding Trustee Lead or the Chair of the Board of Trustees](#), who will take appropriate action.

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do, you can get help from NSPCC Helpline:

- Telephone: 0808 800 5000 (open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm)
- Email: help@NSPCC.org.uk at any time.

More information is available on the NSPCC website:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/nspcc-helpline/>

IMPORTANT: If you believe that someone is in serious or immediate danger, please contact the police by dialling 999.

12.2 Making a record

To ensure that any recorded information is as useful as possible, a detailed written record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern (i.e. as soon as possible after you receive a report of a concern or are aware of an issue).

In recording this information, you should stick to the facts – this means, you should be clear in your notes to distinguish what information is from what others have told you and which parts are from your personal knowledge of the situation.

Please do NOT include your own opinions – just record the FACTS.

Relevant information could include the following:

- The child's name, surname, 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 (only record what you know already, because asking other people if they were witnesses may breach our duty of confidentiality)
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred – be aware of the advice on [keeping questions to a minimum](#)
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record these details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record these details.

12.3 Reporting the concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. We recognise that this requirement could cause you strong emotions, particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there may be misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action you need to take.

The Group expects its employees and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/adult at risk **immediately** with [the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead](#) and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy is not available for immediate help/action, you should contact [the Director, the Safeguarding Lead Trustee or the Chair of the Board of Trustees](#) to report your concerns.

They will decide on the appropriate next steps, which could include:

- seeking further advice from the [NSPCC Helpline](#)
- contacting the duty officer at our local Social Services department (Newham Child Protection team: 020 3373 4600 from 9am - 5.15pm weekdays or 020 8430 2000 at other times) or
- making a report to the police.

13. Reporting to the charity regulator

The Charity Commission (also referred to here as “the Commission”) requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place within The Group it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission.

We must report what happened and, importantly, let the Commission know how we are dealing with it, even if we have also reported it to the police, donors or another regulator.

13.1 Definition of “serious” and “significant”

A **serious** incident is defined as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to our beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with The Group charity through its work
- loss of our money or assets
- damage to our property
- harm to our work or reputation.

For the purposes of this guidance, “**significant**” means significant in the context of your charity, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to decide whether an incident is significant and should be reported. The Charity Commission has [published guidance](#) to help trustees make this decision.

13.2 Who is responsible for reporting to the Charity Commission?

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the charity’s trustees. In practice, this may be delegated to someone else within the charity, such as an employee or the charity’s professional advisers.

However, all trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring their charity makes a report, and does so in a timely manner.

13.3 When should we report to the Charity Commission?

We must report an actual or alleged incident promptly. This means as soon as is reasonably possible after it happens, or immediately after we become aware of it.

As well as reporting to the Commission, depending on the nature of the incident, we will also notify the police, the local authority and any other relevant agencies (e.g. the DBS service).

13.4 How to report a safeguarding issue to the Charity Commission

We should use the [‘Report a serious incident’](#) online form to report serious incidents to the Charity Commission.

14. Reporting a concern in specific circumstances

14.1 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/adults at risk, who has:

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

Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019, section 195)

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to The Group’s [Nominated Safeguarding Lead \(or their deputy\)](#), who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child/adult at risk in question and any other child/adult at risk who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The Nominated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy) will refer the matter to the relevant Designated Officer at the Local Authority and local social services department

- Following advice from the social services department the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible
- The Director will be notified by the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy, in order to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and to implement any disciplinary proceedings as necessary
- The Director will notify the Trustee Safeguarding Lead (and, if they are not available, the Chair of the Board of Trustees)
- The Chair of the Board of Trustees will discuss with the Board whether/who will notify the Charity Commission
- If it is the Nominated Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Deputy Lead or The Director that is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, extra care must be taken to ensure there is no conflict of interests with other members of the safeguarding team. In these cases, the report must be made to [the Safeguarding Trustee Lead](#), who will manage the reporting process and any internal investigation/review (as appropriate), including contacting the Social Services/Designated Officer at the local authority.

14.2 An historic allegation of abuse

Allegations of abuse might be made sometime after the event. Where such an allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and make a report to social services/Newham's Designated Officer. This is because other children/adults at risk in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser.

Reporting of historic abuse must follow the same reporting procedure as a current allegation.

Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

14.3 A child/adult at risk is 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 is not at risk of harm, the same procedure of reporting is to be followed, and the Nominated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy) will make an assessment as to the most appropriate and effective course of action to provide the appropriate support.

14.4 Potential abuse outside the cheerleading/gym environment (eg by a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to The Group's Nominated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy)
- If neither the Nominated Safeguarding Lead nor their Deputy is available, the person being told about/discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately
- Social services and The Group's Nominated Safeguarding Lead will jointly decide how to inform the parents/carers
- It is important to maintain [confidentiality](#) - i.e. discuss this information with others **ONLY** on a need-to-know basis - please see section 15 on Confidentiality and sharing of information for further guidance.

15. Confidentiality and sharing of information

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:

- The Group's Nominated Safeguarding Lead (and their Deputy)

- The parents of the child (if appropriate)
- The person (eg the child/adult at risk) making the allegation
- Social services/Newham's Designated Officer/police
- The Charity Regulator
- The alleged abuser -
 - if they are an employee or volunteer - i.e. if it is 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).

Please be aware that BEFORE approaching a suspected abuser, you should seek advice from social services/LADO (and the police if appropriate) on who should approach the alleged abuser and when, assuming this is necessary for the purposes of suspension.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).

15.1 Sources of guidance on the sharing of information

While it is important for us to ensure that confidentiality and the dignity of those involved are respected, the Government's statutory guidance - as set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) - is clear that:

DPA and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The **Information Commissioner's Office** has also published guidance on the sharing of information to protect children:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/a-10-step-guide-to-sharing-information-to-safeguard-children/>

16. Record keeping

The Group will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record on a person's confidential personnel file and give a copy to the individual, upon request.

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 (whichever is the longer).

The purpose of this 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 DBS request reveals non-convicted information and will help to prevent unnecessary reinvestigation if an allegation re-surfaces after a period.

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/adults at risk.

A copy of The Group's GDPR policy can be found in our current policies folder here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_DizlYW7XEaFILbXCvCldKUq_QyuFpdC?usp=share_link

17. Types of investigation following an allegation

Where there is an allegation or complaint against an employee of The Group or a volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved

- **Child Protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case The Group will be involved and will conduct an internal investigation.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Adoption and Children's Act 2004) to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidents of which you are not aware, which in combination may be a cause for significant concern.

18. Summary of our approach

If something does go wrong, we will take **immediate** action to:

- prevent or minimise any further harm, loss or damage
- document the issue and the actions being taken
- ensure the Trustees are aware of the issue and agree the actions the need to be taken
- report it to the Charity Commission as a serious incident and update them on developments as they occur
- report it to the police (and/or other relevant agencies) if we suspect a crime has been committed, and to any other relevant agencies
- plan what to say to our staff, volunteers, members, the public, the media and other stakeholders, such as funders
- review what happened and prevent it from happening again – this may include reviewing internal controls and procedures, internal or external investigation and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

19. Procedures for those accused of abuse

19.1 Suspension pending investigation

If there is a concern about/an allegation made against an employee of The Group or a volunteer, the Group's Nominated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy) will make an immediate recommendation to The Director and the Safeguarding Trustee Lead about whether the individual accused/suspected of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending enquiries by police and any other appropriate agencies.

19.2 Decisions regarding reinstatement following an allegation

Irrespective of the findings of the police/other appropriate agencies' enquiries, The Group's HR Committee will assess cases on an individual basis to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this could be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially if there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police.

In such cases the HR Committee 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.

In these circumstances, the HR Committee may seek guidance from external specialist agencies, such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the NSPCC, as well as consulting legal advisors as appropriate.

19.3 In the event of a ‘not guilty’ verdict in court

Should an individual accused of abuse be found not guilty by a court of law and they are able/wish to return to work, it is the responsibility of the Nominated Safeguarding Lead to ensure they are supported in their return.

19.4 Breaches of our Code of Conduct

Upon entering a contract with The Group, staff and volunteers are issued a Code of Conduct. Should a staff member or volunteer be found to be in serious breach of our Code of Conduct, the procedures in that code will be followed.

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 to the HR Committee.

It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.

Should an individual accused of abuse be found guilty of the offence in court, the staff member will be unable to return, and the Nominated Safeguarding Lead will notify The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The Director or the Chair of the Board of Trustees will notify the charity regulator.

19.5 Prohibitive agreements

Compromise agreements **must not** be used (i.e. where an employee 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 an employer from making a DBS referral 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.

19.6 DBS referral for automatic barring offences

This section of our policy is informed by the Government’s guidance on making DBS referrals, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs#:~:text=You%20may%20suspe nd%20a%20person,duty%20to%20make%20a%20referral.>

Anyone convicted or cautioned for certain serious offences will be barred from working in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults (this includes the activities carried out by The Group).

Regulated activity providers (employers or volunteer managers of people working in regulated activity in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) have a legal duty to refer to DBS where both of the following conditions are met:

Condition 1

- we withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Or we move the person to another area of work that isn’t regulated activity. (This includes situations when we would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left.)

Condition 2

We think the person has carried out one of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;

- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and / or vulnerable adults. eg there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable still exists.*or*
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

If you believe that these conditions have been met, then you should report your concerns to The Group's [Nominated Safeguarding Lead \(or their deputy\)](#), immediately.

The Safeguarding Lead or their deputy will make the Director and the Safeguarding Trustee Lead aware. They will agree who will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); it is the DBS who then decides whether to add the individual to the barred list.

The requirement to refer to the DBS applies irrespective of whether a referral has been made to local authority children's social care and/or the designated officer or team of officers. It is an offence to fail to make a DBS referral without good reason.

The Director or the Chair of the Board of Trustees will notify the charity regulator that a DBS referral has been made.

20. Social media

The Group reserves the right to all images connected to its name, logo, or image. The Group's copyrighted logos or associated branding should not be used on athletes' or parents' personal social media accounts.

Any images posted on social media related to/promoting The Group will be appropriate, with appropriate hashtags. If images are deemed to be inappropriate or in breach of safeguarding, we will ask for these to be immediately removed and deleted. Any employee of The Group who fails to do this (i.e. requesting removal or actioning removal) may be putting themselves at risk of disciplinary action.

The Group requests that athletes and parents use social media in a positive and sportsmanlike manner and do not engage in negative discussions on cheerleading groups or forums: this will be treated as bullying and dealt with in line with our disciplinary procedures.

Any activity on social media (including activity on personal accounts) which is deemed to be inappropriate, raises a safeguarding concern or could be defamatory to The Group may result in the person responsible being removed from The Group.

The Group will regularly remind parents and athletes about the importance of being safe on the internet and the need to be mindful of appropriateness when posting cheerleading-related images.

The Group operates closed 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.

The Group will communicate with parents/guardians/athletes privately with any information and passwords required to join relevant closed groups. To join these groups, children must also have a parent/guardian present in the group or have express permission from a parent/guardian in order to be active in the group without them.

See also the section on [Use Of Images For The Group's Social Media](#).

21. Photography and filming

21.1 The benefits and risks of photography and video

It is important that children and young people (including adults at risk) 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, particularly when they have been part of a special event or activity.

However, some children/adults at risk, parents or carers may not be comfortable with images of themselves or their children being shared. For example:

- if a child/adult at risk and/or their family have experienced abuse they may worry about the perpetrator tracing them online
- children/adults at risk 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 is important to be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when taking photos of or/filming children, young people and adults at risk. The potential for misuse of images can be reduced if we are aware of the potential dangers and put appropriate measures in place.

The Group recognises that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children/adults at risk, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children/adults at risk taking part in our activities is paramount
- children/adults at risk, their parents/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/adults at risk is only meaningful when children/adults at risk, 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.

The Group will seek to keep children/adults at risk safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or adult at risk/carers before taking and using the image of a child/adult at risk
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children/adults at risk
- making it clear that if a child/their family or an adult at risk 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/adults at risk or not using names of children/adults at risk 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/adults at risk and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of a school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children/adults at risk, their parents and carers understand how images of children/adults at risk will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
 - only using images of children/adults at risk in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
 - avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused.

We will ensure everyone involved in The Group knows the procedures to follow to keep children/adults at risk safe.

21.2 Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children/adults at risk themselves, parents, carers or spectators will be 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/adults at risk that they need to give consent for The Group 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/adults at risk, 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/adults at risk, parents, and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

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

We recognise that The Group's staff may use photography and filming as a training aid for athletes. However, this should only be done with The Group's permission and using The Group's equipment*.

Children/adults at risk, parents, and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming are used as part of The Group's activities as a training aid and should give written consent.

The Group employees may on occasion need to use their personal devices to record for training purposes. In these instances, all images and video will be deleted from their personal devices following the teaching application/before the end of the lesson.

21.4 Someone acting suspiciously with a camera or phone

All employees and volunteer staff should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming (e.g. by other members of staff, parents, athletes, or members of the public) and any concerns should be reported immediately to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy 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 (only if safe to do so), and the police called.

Should the cheerleading images be deemed inappropriate - but not raise a safeguarding concern - they will be asked to delete them.

21.5 Working with external photographers or external production crews

If we hire a photographer for one of our events or if we agree to take part in any externally commissioned productions (e.g. television or film/podcast or similar), we will seek to keep children/adults at risk safe by:

- providing the photographer/production crew with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- ensuring the photographer/production crew always wears identification when with The Group's athletes

- informing children/adults at risk, their parents, and carers that a photographer/production crew will be at the event
- ensuring children/adults at risk and their parents/carers give written consent to any images/recordings which feature their child/the adult at risk being recorded and used
- not allowing the photographer/production crew to have unsupervised access to our children/adults at risk
- not allowing the photographer/production crew to carry out sessions outside the event or at the home of a child/adult at risk without a representative of The Group being present
- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography/recording, in line with our CAARP procedures
- checking the photographer's/crew's Child Protection Policy, DBS certificate/update number and their GDPR policy regarding safe storage of images, before the photography/recording begins.

21.6 Use of images for The Group's social media

The Group will not publicly identify athletes next to their image in public spaces on social media unless express permission has been given by the parent/guardian for that specific image and with reason for it to appear.

If an athlete's image is used on The Group's official public social media accounts (including Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts or similar) for publicity purposes, parents/carers and athletes will be asked not 'tag' or name the athlete in comments/sharing that post, to help us keep this policy in place and keep our athletes safe.

22. Selecting and recruiting personnel

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with young people and children/adults at risk. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, whether full or part-time. Our approach to ensuring unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/adults at risk is set out below.

22.1 Controlling access to children/adults at risk

- All staff and volunteers must complete an application form. This form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a request for self-disclosure about any criminal record which may be relevant to the vacant position
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Two confidential references should be obtained, including one regarding previous work with children/adults at risk. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact before the appointment is confirmed
- Evidence to confirm the applicant's identity must be checked and recorded (e.g. passport or driving licence with a photo).

22.2 Interview and induction

- All potential employees and volunteers will be required to undertake a formal interview to explore the applicant's background, experience, motivations and expectations.
- The interviewer may make written/typed notes outlining what is discussed in these interviews; any interview notes will be held on file securely, under the following protocol:
 - If the applicant is unsuccessful, the records will be kept for one month after the applicant has been notified of the outcome, to allow time for any reviews/appeals. After one month these interview records will be deleted/destroyed.

- o If the applicant is successful, the interview records will be added to their personnel file and held securely.

All employees and volunteers who have been appointed will receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A DBS check will be made, if applicable to the role. If a DBS check subsequently reveals that the applicant is not a suitable appointment, any offer of employment will be withdrawn
- Their qualifications should be validated (e.g. sight of certificates)
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to The Group's Code of Conduct
- CAARP procedures are explained, and training needs identified e.g. basic DBS protection awareness.

To protect our athletes, we reserve the right to withdraw any offer of employment/volunteering if our pre-employment checks reveal any issues which may affect the applicant's suitability to work with children/adults at risk (i.e. issues which we were unaware of at the point at which the employment offer was made).

For further information regarding our approach to the recruitment of ex-offenders, please see our [Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy](#).

22.3 Training new staff and volunteers

In addition to pre-employment checks, the safeguarding process includes training after appointment 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.

The Group requires:

- All staff and volunteers in positions of responsibility for children/adults at risk to undergo a DBS check (Note: we regard it as best practice to conduct Enhanced DBS checks to ensure the safety of our athletes/members/participants)
- All employees, volunteers, coaches, and Nominated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead to undertake relevant training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate a positive culture regarding best practice in safeguarding
- 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 someone towards a young or vulnerable person
- All coaches, trainee coaches and leaders should have an up-to-date first aid qualification.

23. Declaration

On behalf of Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders, and Talent Central Cheer & Dance, we the undersigned, confirm that we will oversee the implementation of the CAARP Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Role

Print Name

Signature

The Director

Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
Talent Central Cheer & Dance

Date:

Nominated Safeguarding Lead

Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
Talent Central Cheer & Dance

Date:

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
Talent Central Cheer & Dance

Date:

24. Policy update information and next review date

This policy was updated on:	15 May 2024
Updated by:	Sue Winston, Chair of Board of Trustees
Reviewed by:	Angela Green, The Director
Other reviewers:	Peter Sharp, Safeguarding Trustee Lead
	Susan Spiller, Trustee
Approved by the Board:	28 May 2024
Next review due:	May 2025
To be reviewed by:	Angela Green, The Director
Review to be approved by:	The Board of Trustees, Safeguarding Trustee Lead

25. The category of this policy

This policy is categorised as:

Category	Description
1.	This document is publicly available and is published on the AEC website

26. Change log

The following changes have been made to this document: since it was last approved by the Board:

Date	Heading of section	Details