RS121 PERFORMANCE COACHING

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Policy owner: RS121 Performance Coaching
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Purpose

This policy sets out RS121 Performance Coaching's commitment to safeguarding children and young people and the procedures expected of anyone representing the organisation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Safeguarding concerns must be shared with the appropriate people and authorities when necessary to protect a child.

1. Our safeguarding commitment

RS121 Performance Coaching is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who participate in our football coaching sessions, training programmes and football camps.

We believe every child has the right to participate in football in a safe, positive, inclusive and supportive environment, free from abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination and exploitation.

The welfare of the child is our primary consideration. We will take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, respond appropriately to concerns and ensure that our coaching practices promote safety, respect, confidence and enjoyment.

This policy applies to all coaches, assistants, volunteers, contractors and anyone representing RS121 Performance Coaching.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all activities delivered or organised by RS121 Performance Coaching, including:

- Individual one-to-one football coaching.
- Small-group and partner coaching sessions.
- Football camps, holiday programmes and development sessions.
- Goalkeeping and specialist technical training.
- Sessions delivered at hired sports facilities, schools, community venues and outdoor football pitches.
- Communication with players and their parents or carers in connection with coaching.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Ryan Sartain is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for RS121 Performance Coaching.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Recording concerns and incidents accurately and securely.
- Referring concerns to the appropriate safeguarding organisations or statutory authorities.
- Ensuring coaches understand and follow this policy.
- Reviewing safeguarding arrangements and identifying improvements.
- Cooperating with venue management, parents, carers, football governing bodies and relevant authorities when necessary.

All coaches and representatives must report safeguarding concerns promptly. They must not attempt to investigate allegations themselves or decide whether abuse has occurred.

If a concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported directly to the relevant local authority children's social care service, the police where appropriate, or the NSPCC Helpline.

4. Safer recruitment and suitability

RS121 Performance Coaching will take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure that people working with children are suitable for their roles.

These steps may include:

- Checking relevant coaching qualifications and experience.
- Obtaining appropriate references where applicable.

- Verifying identity and employment or volunteering history where appropriate.
- Ensuring the correct Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are obtained for roles that are legally eligible and require them.
- Providing safeguarding guidance and appropriate training.
- Ensuring individuals understand the expected standards of behaviour.

Where an enhanced DBS check and Children's Barred List check are legally required, the relevant individual must not undertake the regulated activity until the applicable requirements have been satisfied.

A DBS certificate alone does not guarantee that a person is suitable to work with children. Ongoing supervision, professional conduct and safeguarding awareness remain essential.

5. Safe coaching practices

All RS121 Performance Coaching representatives must:

- Treat every child with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Use positive, age-appropriate coaching methods.
- Encourage effort, learning, confidence and enjoyment.
- Provide clear instructions and appropriate supervision.
- Respect personal boundaries and individual needs.
- Avoid shouting, humiliating, threatening or intimidating children.
- Never use physical punishment or degrading language.
- Challenge bullying, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Coaches must never form inappropriate relationships with players or use their position to exploit, manipulate or intimidate a child.

6. One-to-one coaching and individual sessions

RS121 Performance Coaching recognises that one-to-one coaching requires particular safeguarding care because a coach may work individually with a child.

To reduce risk:

- Parents or carers must be informed of the session arrangements, venue and timings.
- Written parental or guardian consent must be obtained before a child participates.
- Sessions should take place in an appropriate, observable and suitable coaching environment wherever possible.
- Parents or carers should remain present or nearby where appropriate, particularly for younger children, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed and assessed as suitable.
- Coaches must not deliberately isolate a child in a concealed or private location.
- Any unavoidable change to the agreed location or arrangements must be communicated to the parent or carer.
- Coaches must maintain professional boundaries throughout the session.
- Any physical contact must be appropriate, necessary, proportionate and explained to the child where possible.

A parent or carer's consent does not remove the coach's responsibility to safeguard the child.

Where a session is delivered at a hired venue, RS121 Performance Coaching will also comply with the venue's safeguarding rules and any additional requirements agreed with the venue operator.

7. Physical contact and changing facilities

Football coaching may occasionally involve physical contact when demonstrating a technique, correcting body positioning or providing appropriate first aid.

Any contact must be necessary, proportionate, respectful and appropriate to the child's age and understanding. Coaches should explain what they intend to do and seek the child's agreement wherever possible.

Coaches must never engage in unnecessary physical contact, rough handling, inappropriate touching or any contact of a sexual nature.

Coaches must not change clothes with children, shower with children or enter changing areas unnecessarily. Children should be supported to use appropriate facilities in line with venue rules and their individual needs.

Where assistance is necessary, it should be handled sensitively, transparently and in accordance with the child's needs and the venue's safeguarding procedures.

8. Communication and social media

Communication with children must remain professional, transparent and related to coaching.

- Parents or carers should normally be included in messages concerning session arrangements.
- Coaches should communicate through agreed channels and avoid private or secretive conversations with children.
- Coaches must not send inappropriate messages, images, videos or content to children.
- Coaches must not request or share sexualised images or engage in sexualised conversations with a child.
- Personal social media contact with children should be avoided unless there is an appropriate, transparent and authorised arrangement.
- Concerns arising from online communication must be reported and recorded.

RS121 Performance Coaching will respect privacy and handle personal information in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

9. Photography and filming

Photographs and videos may be useful for coaching feedback and promotional purposes, but children's safety and privacy must come first.

Before taking or using identifiable images of a child for promotional purposes, RS121 Performance Coaching will obtain appropriate written consent from the parent or carer and seek the child's agreement where appropriate.

Coaches must:

- Explain how images or videos will be used.
- Avoid capturing or publishing inappropriate images.
- Never photograph children in changing rooms or other private areas.
- Avoid publishing children's personal details alongside images.
- Respect requests not to be photographed or filmed.
- Store images securely and restrict access to authorised people.

Consent for coaching analysis must not automatically be treated as consent for public marketing.

10. Bullying, discrimination and inclusion

RS121 Performance Coaching does not tolerate bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia, disability discrimination or other abusive or discriminatory behaviour.

All children must be treated fairly regardless of their background, disability, gender, identity, ability, religion or personal circumstances.

Concerns about bullying or discrimination will be taken seriously, recorded where appropriate and addressed promptly.

Reasonable adjustments should be considered to enable children with additional needs or disabilities to participate safely and meaningfully.

11. Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns may involve physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, online harm, inappropriate adult behaviour or concerns about a child's welfare outside football.

If a child discloses abuse or a coach suspects that a child may be at risk, the coach must:

1. Remain calm and listen carefully.
2. Take the child seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
3. Avoid leading questions or attempting to investigate.
4. Never promise to keep the information secret.
5. Explain that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
6. Record the child's words as accurately as possible, together with the date, time, location and any relevant observations.
7. Report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
8. Refer the matter to the appropriate authorities where necessary.

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, call 999.

Concerns must not be ignored because there is no apparent proof. It is not the coach's responsibility to establish whether abuse has taken place.

12. Reporting and escalation

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without unnecessary delay.

Where there is a risk of harm, an allegation of abuse or a concern requiring statutory intervention, RS121 Performance Coaching will contact the appropriate local authority children's social care service or the police, as appropriate.

The NSPCC Helpline can provide advice on 0808 800 5000 or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk.

If a concern involves a football club or activity affiliated with The Football Association, the relevant club welfare officer and County FA safeguarding procedures should also be followed where applicable.

A parent or carer should not automatically be informed of a concern if doing so could place the child at further risk or interfere with an appropriate safeguarding response. Advice should be obtained from the relevant safeguarding authority.

13. Health, safety and emergency arrangements

RS121 Performance Coaching will take reasonable steps to ensure that coaching activities are delivered in a safe environment.

This includes:

- Checking the suitability of the playing area and equipment.
- Identifying hazards and taking appropriate precautions.
- Following venue rules and relevant risk assessments.

- Maintaining suitable emergency arrangements.
- Recording accidents, injuries and significant incidents.
- Ensuring parents or carers provide relevant emergency contact information and disclose important medical or support needs.
- Making appropriate arrangements for first aid and emergency assistance.

Where a child becomes unwell or injured, the coach must take appropriate action and contact the parent or carer as necessary.

In an emergency, call 999 and follow the venue's emergency procedures.

14. Supervision, arrival and collection

Parents or carers must be given clear information about session times, locations and collection arrangements.

For children attending organised camps or group activities, RS121 Performance Coaching will establish suitable registration, attendance and collection procedures appropriate to the activity.

Children must not be left unsupervised by a coach at the end of a session while awaiting collection. Any delay or concern about collection must be handled appropriately and recorded where necessary.

RS121 Performance Coaching will not assume responsibility for transporting children unless transport has been specifically agreed and appropriate safeguarding, consent and insurance arrangements are in place.

15. Confidentiality and record keeping

Safeguarding information will be treated sensitively and shared only with people who need the information to protect a child or respond to a concern.

All safeguarding records must be factual, accurate, dated and stored securely with access restricted to authorised individuals.

Records should distinguish between direct observations, information provided by others and the coach's own concerns.

Records will be retained and disposed of securely in accordance with applicable legal requirements and appropriate safeguarding and data protection guidance.

Confidentiality must never prevent a necessary safeguarding referral.

16. Allegations against coaches or representatives

Any allegation or concern regarding the behaviour of a coach, assistant, volunteer or representative must be taken seriously.

RS121 Performance Coaching will:

- Record the allegation accurately.
- Take immediate steps to protect children where necessary.
- Refer the matter to the appropriate safeguarding authority or police where required.
- Cooperate with any investigation.
- Avoid conducting an investigation that could compromise statutory enquiries.
- Review whether temporary changes to duties or access to children are necessary while the concern is assessed.

All individuals representing RS121 Performance Coaching are expected to cooperate fully with appropriate safeguarding processes.

17. Training and policy awareness

RS121 Performance Coaching will take reasonable steps to ensure that everyone working with children understands this policy and knows how to report concerns.

Relevant safeguarding training will be undertaken or refreshed as appropriate to each person's role.

This policy will be made available to parents, carers, coaches, venue operators and other relevant parties on request.

18. Review and compliance

RS121 Performance Coaching will review its safeguarding arrangements periodically and sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance, the nature of the coaching activities or the organisation's arrangements.

RS121 Performance Coaching will work with relevant venues, football governing bodies and safeguarding organisations to maintain appropriate standards of child protection.

All representatives of RS121 Performance Coaching are expected to follow this policy. Failure to comply may result in removal from coaching duties and referral to the relevant authorities where appropriate.

19. Safeguarding contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ryan Sartain
Organisation: RS121 Performance Coaching
Email: rs121performancecoaching@outlook.com
Telephone: 07544 832262

Emergency services: 999
NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
NSPCC email: help@nspcc.org.uk

For non-emergency concerns, contact the relevant local authority children's social care service. Where applicable, contact the relevant club welfare officer or County FA safeguarding team.

POLICY APPROVAL

Name: Ryan Sartain
Position: Owner and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Signature: _____

Date: _____