

## Vogue Athletics Safeguarding Policy 2023/2024

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- **General Policy Statement**

**Vogue Athletics** believe that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare

of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that safeguards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Throughout these policies and procedures, reference is made to “children and young people.” This term is used to mean “those under the age of 18”. **Vogue Athletics** recognise that adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults, such as, but not limited to, persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, regardless of age, and the elderly.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Vogue Athletics C.I.C, including senior managers and the board of Directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

**Vogue Athletics** is committed to ensuring that the organisation:

- Provide a safe and secure environment where children, young people, and vulnerable adults are heard and respected.
- Identify and monitor children, young people and vulnerable adults who are suffering emotionally or physically.
- Take necessary **action** to ensure the physical safety and emotional well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, protecting them from potential harm.

In pursuit of these aims, Vogue Athletics recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

**Vogue Athletics** will approve and annually review policies and procedures to ensure the following:

- Raise awareness of issues relating to the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults and actively foster the promotion of a safe environment for the children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Provide and disseminate transparent protocols and procedures for the reporting and addressing of allegations of abuse involving children, young people, vulnerable adults and staff members.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

**Vogue Athletics** has nominated **Michael Cave** as lead person with special responsibility for child protection issues for the year 2023/2024 Season. They have undertaken appropriate training. **Michael@vogueathletics.co.uk** or Tel: 07717081164.

Staff and volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will receive training adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the organisation's procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every 3 years.

If appropriate, there will also be a member of the management team or volunteer, who may through their employment background, have particular

expertise in child protection issues. All staff and volunteers will undergo DBS, where appropriate.

**Vogue Athletics** recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a child, young person or vulnerable adult (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping). Giving a child, young person or vulnerable adult alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute abuse.
- **Verbal Abuse:** where adults verbally hurt a child, young person or vulnerable adult (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages or social media posts).
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on their emotional development (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group). It may involve telling a child, young person or vulnerable adult they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of a child, young person or vulnerable adult that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a child, young person or vulnerable adult to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Emotional abuse in sport may occur when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is constantly given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are clearly unrealistic for their age/skill level.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (of any gender) use a child, young person or vulnerable adult to meet their own sexual needs (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing a child, young person or vulnerable adult pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse. It may also include cyber bullying inclusive of comments and contact through social media. In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.
- **Bullying** is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. It may be physical.
- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child'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 sport could occur when a coach does not keep the child, young person or vulnerable adult safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but **indications that a child 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 child, young person or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- unexplained changes in a person's behaviour 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 expect.
- difficulty in making friends.
- being prevented from socialising with others.
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite.
- losing weight for no apparent reason.
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- Cutting or self-harm

**Signs of bullying include:**

- 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 must be recognised 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.

It is **not** the responsibility of those working with or for **Vogue Athletics** to decide that child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse is occurring. It is their responsibility to share concerns with the designated safeguarding lead who will then act appropriately on a case by case basis.

## **2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead with Responsibility for Child and Vulnerable**

### **Adults Protection**

- The designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for child protection issues is **Michael Cave, E: [Michael@vogueathletics.co.uk](mailto:Michael@vogueathletics.co.uk) Tel:07717081164.**
- They have a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the organisation of issues relating to the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and the promotion of a safe and secure environment for the children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- They are responsible for ensuring that exempted questions are asked on relevant volunteer and employment application forms.
- They have received appropriate training and should keep up to date with developments in child protection issues. They will also have responsibility for making new staff and volunteers aware of the existing child protection policy.
- They will be the main contact point for Child Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers. This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police child protection unit.

## **3. Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns**

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells a member of staff about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interview them, but question normally and without pressure, to be sure that you understand what the child is telling you.
- Do not use leading questions, rather ask the question “what happened next” or “can you tell me more about that?”
- Reassure them that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- Inform them that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.
- Note the main points carefully.
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what they said, did and your questions etc.
- Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Recording Information**

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed written record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording, you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

#### **Information should include the following:**

- the child/vulnerable adult’s name, age and date of birth.
- their 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. Any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

- details of witnesses to the incidents.
- the child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- have the parents/carer been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.

### **Reporting the Concern**

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

**Vogue Athletics** expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

While **Vogue Athletics** has its own policy, the organisation will also adhere to the policies of the organisations and venues that it works with: for example, referring relevant information to training locations welfare officers if appropriate.

If the nominated welfare officer is not available for immediate help/action, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or 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 **Vogue Athletics** will be involved.

As mentioned previously in this document, **Vogue Athletics** personnel and volunteers are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 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. NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause concern.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to **the designated safeguarding lead**, who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child/vulnerable adult in question and any other child/adult who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- **Vogue Athletics** will refer the matter to the local social services.
- the parent/carer of the child/vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- the chairperson of your organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings.
- if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to another member of the Board of Directors who will refer the matter to social services.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the event. Where such an allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offenses related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

#### **4. Regulated Activity and obtaining Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks**

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, an individual working unsupervised with children/vulnerable adults is considered to be engaged in regulated Activity and must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which

will involve a check of the children/vulnerable adult's barred list, in order to perform their duties.

However, an individual working in a directly and permanently supervised position is not considered to be engaged in regulated activity but should still have an enhanced DBS disclosure check. However, because they are working in a supervised role the enhanced check will not include a check of the children/vulnerable adult's barred list. Note that applications for a DBS enhanced check can only be submitted, where the applicant is aged 16 or over, at the time of making the application.

### **Confidentiality**

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:

- **Vogue Athletics** Management and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The parents of the child.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services/police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.
- All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

### **5. Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 both make it mandatory to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to a child or vulnerable people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This means that the designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding must not knowingly employ anyone who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, this includes anyone who is believed to have committed a relevant conduct while on the job or who has a record of such conduct.

**Vogue Athletics** has a legal duty to refer an employee or volunteer who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to 5 years imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the employee or volunteer poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. The employer should also inform the police and other relevant authorities if they believe a relevant conduct has

occurred. Referral forms can be downloaded from the DBS's website [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs).

## **6. Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Vogue Athletics events and training sessions**

**Vogue Athletics** allows photography and video with hand held mobile devices such as mobile phones or iPads by friends and family of athletes. However, the use of long lens cameras is strictly prohibited. Sale of photos taken at **Vogue Athletics** events is strictly prohibited unless you are the hired photo vendor for the given event.

All clubs, athletes, and spectators of cheerleading and dance should be vigilant for any suspicious behaviour involving cameras/filming and any concerns should be reported immediately to security, **Vogue Athletics** staff, or the welfare officer directly.

All parents and performers should be made aware that **Vogue Athletics** occasionally use video equipment as a coaching aid.

## **7. Use of children/vulnerable adult's images for Vogue Athletics publicity, website, social media and press**

From time to time **Vogue Athletics** may use images of workshops to promote its activities through their website, social media, promotional materials such as posters/flyers and press releases. Parents/guardians/carers and athletes over 18yrs are asked to sign written consent forms. Where a form is signed, the parents/guardians/carers and athletes over 18yrs give consent for photographs to be taken, and/or footage filmed during practices and performances for promotional materials relating to **Vogue Athletics** (including the **Vogue Athletics** Facebook page, Instagram, and Twitter account). Footage will not be broadcast or distributed through any commercial operations and names will not be placed next to photos.

## **8. Social Media**

It is **Vogue Athletics's** policy that coaches do not accept requests from athletes to Friend or Follow them on any social media network. Requests will be rejected, or athletes blocked from following coaches' personal accounts such as Instagram, Facebook or Twitter etc.

## **9. The DBS's barring process**

Whenever new relevant information (such as a conviction or caution) becomes known, the information will be sent to the DBS. The DBS will consider this information, together with other information known on the individual, and

decide whether it indicates that the individual poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups. If so, the DBS will commence its barring process and the DBS will issue a disclosure certificate to the applicant with the barring information.

The applicant should be advised by the designated member of staff to make a representation to the DBS regarding the barring information. The DBS will assess the barring information and representation and decide whether to bar the applicant. If there is sufficient barring evidence, the applicant will be placed on either the **Children's Barred List** or the **Vulnerable Adults Barred List** or both depending on the offence. The applicant must then be removed from regulated activity.

The applicant has the right of appeal to a tribunal and must be advised of this right. Serious offences committed against vulnerable people will lead to automatic barring and the applicant will have no right to make representations or to appeal against a barring decision.

#### **10. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff.**

The procedures apply to all staff, whether trustees, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

**Vogue Athletics** recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

**Vogue Athletics** recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child / vulnerable adult is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

#### **11. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

**Vogue Athletics** has recruitment and selection procedures. These are reviewed in order to ensure that they address the following:

- They apply to staff and volunteers who may work with children/vulnerable adults.
- The post or role is clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role are identified.
- Vacancies are advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- Professional and character references are obtained.
- Previous employment history is verified.
- Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure/List 99 checks (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure).
- Use a variety of selection techniques (eg qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).

### **Declaration**

On behalf of **Vogue Athletics** we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Name: Michael Cave**

**Signed: Michael Cave**

Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Vogue Athletics C.I.C.**