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Dealing with Disclosures and Concerns about a Child or Young Person

Policy Statement

At Defiant Sports, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for the children and young people we work with. This policy and procedure outline the guidelines for effectively and appropriately dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person's well-being. Our approach is in compliance with UK law and aims to ensure that all disclosures and concerns are handled sensitively, promptly, and in the best interests of the child or young person.

Definitions

- **Disclosures:** Any statements, information, or allegations shared by a child or young person regarding their well-being, safety, or any form of harm.
- **Concerns:** Any information, observations, or suspicions that raise a safeguarding issue or indicate a risk to the welfare of a child or young person.

Aims and Objectives

- To provide clear guidance to all Defiant Sports staff on how to respond to disclosures and concerns about a child or young person.
- To ensure that disclosures and concerns are taken seriously, handled sensitively, and in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.
- To prioritize the welfare and well-being of the child or young person and take appropriate action to safeguard their interests.

Procedures:

Recognizing and Responding to Disclosures and Concerns

- Staff members must be vigilant and responsive to signs of distress, changes in behavior, or any indication that a child or young person may be in need of support.
- If a child or young person makes a disclosure or if a staff member has concerns, they should follow these steps:
 - a. Remain calm, reassuring, and non-judgmental, creating a safe and supportive environment for the child or young person.
 - b. Listen attentively, giving the child or young person the opportunity to express themselves at their own pace.

- c. Avoid asking leading questions and allow the child or young person to share information voluntarily.
 - d. Ensure privacy and confidentiality during the conversation, conducting it in a suitable location away from others.
- Staff members should inform the child or young person that they may need to share the information with appropriate individuals to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Staff members should not promise confidentiality if there is a safeguarding concern, as it may be necessary to share information with designated individuals or agencies.

Recording Disclosures and Concerns

- Staff members must accurately and promptly document any disclosures or concerns using the designated [safeguarding form](#) or incident report template.
- The record should include the date, time, location, nature of the disclosure or concern, individuals involved, and any relevant details or observations.
- Language should be objective and factual, avoiding assumptions, personal opinions, or discriminatory language.
- Any visible injuries or marks should be described objectively and, if possible, photographed with the consent of the child or young person.
- All records must be stored securely, following data protection regulations and organizational policies.

Reporting and Referral

- Staff members who receive a disclosure or have concerns must report it immediately to the designated safeguarding officer (DSL) or their deputy.
- The DSL will assess the severity and urgency of the disclosure or concern to determine the appropriate course of action.
- If the DSL is not available, staff members should report the disclosure or concern to the most senior member of staff on-site or contact the local child protection services or helpline for advice.
- If the disclosure or concern indicates immediate risk or danger to the child or young person, the DSL will take appropriate action to ensure their safety, which may include contacting emergency services.

- The DSL will follow local child protection procedures and statutory guidance to determine the appropriate referral to the relevant agencies, such as social services or the police.

Support for the Child or Young Person

- Defiant Sports will ensure that appropriate support is provided to the child or young person who made the disclosure or is the subject of concern.
- The DSL will liaise with relevant professionals and agencies to ensure that the child or young person receives the necessary support, such as counselling, medical assistance, or social services intervention.
- The well-being and ongoing support of the child or young person will be regularly reviewed and monitored, with actions taken to ensure their safety and welfare.

Training and Welfare

- All staff members will receive regular training on dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person, including how to respond, record, report, and provide support.
- Defiant Sports will maintain up-to-date knowledge of UK legislation and statutory guidance related to dealing with disclosures and concerns, incorporating any necessary updates into training programs and procedures.

Review

- This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation, guidance, or operational requirements.
- Feedback from staff, children, and young people, as well as any incidents or near misses, will be considered in the review process to ensure continuous improvement.
- Any necessary updates or revisions will be communicated to all staff members, and appropriate training and support will be provided to ensure compliance.