



## EMMAA safeguarding procedure

Version 1

January 2022

EMMAA acknowledge that it is essential to recognise and describe our own understandings and definitions of all forms of harm and have these written into this document. EMMAA believe it is impossible to actively create and implement any safeguarding procedure if there is a lack of clarity over what children are needing to be kept safe from. The terminology and details below evidence our understandings which will be included in the aforementioned EMMAA “**safeguarding children document**” that will be sent out to all affiliated clubs. As this policy will also be accessible on our website it is hoped that even clubs that are not affiliated to us can view this document and we can illustrate to them what we perceive as the best practice approach to safeguarding children in MMA.

Safeguarding is fundamentally important to any organisation working with children as is recognising abuse and being confident and proactive in dealing with it. Children are often too young, too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone what is happening and so it is so important that professionals know what they are looking out for.

# Child abuse is any action by another person, be that a family member, care worker, trusted adult or stranger, that causes significant harm to a child.

# The term child or children, includes any child or young person up to the age of 18

# The abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional, but it can just as often be a lack of love, care and attention.

# It is evidenced and widely recognised that neglect can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse

# An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives.

# Rather than a one-off event, abuse often happens over a period of time, and is increasingly happening online.



The below identified types of abuse is by no means an absolute and definitive guide to the types of child abuse but it is EMMAA's understandings and definitions that we are placing in this procedure to provide as much awareness, understanding and oversight as possible.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse means deliberately hurting a child, causing injuries such as bruises, broke bones, burns or cuts. What we must remember is that bumps and bruises don't necessarily mean a child is being physically abused as all children have accidents, trips and falls. There isn't one sign or symptom that can indicate physical abuse but if a child often has injuries, there seems to be a pattern in these injuries, or the explanation doesn't match the injury, then this should be investigated.

#### **Physical Symptoms –**

Bruises

Burns or scalds

Bite marks

Fractures or broken bones

#### **Behaviours to be aware of –**

Withdrawn

Frightened

Flinches

Reluctant to undress

Passive

Aggressive

Easily upset

Clingy

Unwilling to go home

Soils clothing

Misses school

Self-harm



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/>

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. This type of abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child, ignoring them or making them isolated. This can also involve bullying and cyber-bullying where a child is made to feel frightened or in danger. Emotional abuse is the second most common reason children need protection from abuse.

### **Signs and symptoms –**

There often aren't any obvious physical symptoms of emotional abuse or neglect but signs may be spotted in a child's actions or emotions. It is important to remember that a change in emotions are a normal part of growing up so it can be difficult to tell if a child is being emotionally abused. Emotional abuse can include (but is not limited to)

- # Humiliation
- # Threatening, shouting and name calling
- # Using jokes and sarcasm to hurt a child
- # Manipulating a child

### **Behaviours you may notice –**

- # The child accepts punishment willingly
- # Overreacts to mistakes
- # Has an irrational fear of new situations
- # Is sad, depressed and withdrawn
- # Displays excessive behaviour, such as pulling out hair and head rocking

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/emotional-abuse/>



## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse of a child is when they are forced or enticed to take part in sexual activities. It is not necessarily violent and the child may not even understand that it is wrong. The activities may involve physical contact including assault by penetration (Rape/oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching the outside of clothing. Sexual abuse can also include non-contact activities such as encouraging children to view sexual images and footage, take part in the production of sexual images and other material, watch sexual activities and to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Signs and symptoms –**

- # Anal or vaginal soreness
- # Unusual discharge
- # Sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- # Pregnancy

### **Behaviours you may notice –**

- # Acting out or simulating sexual behaviours
- # Anorexia, bulimia or comfort eating
- # Self harm
- # Fear of a specific person
- # Substance abuse
- # Unexplained gifts or money
- # Use of sexualised language
- # Becoming secret around internet use

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse>



## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This failure is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and development. The type of abuse can mean a child is left hungry and without adequate clothing, excluded from the family home or abandoned.

### **Signs and symptoms-**

- # Poor levels of concentration
- # Poor appearance and hygiene
- # Complains about being hungry
- # Does not keep medical appointments
- # Frequently absent from school and often late
- # Reluctant to go home

### **Behaviours you may notice –**

- # Tired
- # Anxious
- # Clingy
- # Obsessive behaviour
- # Missing school
- # Soils clothing
- # Wets the bed
- # Depressed

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/neglect/>



## **CHILD TRAFFICKING –**

Child trafficking means recruiting or receiving a child or young person through force, trickery or intimidation to take advantage of them. Children are trafficked for sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, marriage, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal activity including theft and robbery.

### **Signs of child trafficking –**

- # Rarely leaves the home, has no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- # A domineering adult always accompanying the child
- # The adult always speaking for the child
- # Child may appear withdrawn or unkempt
- # Child could appear with little or no use of the English language

### **Behaviours you may notice –**

- # Isn't sure which Country, City or town they are in
- # Spends a lot of time doing domestic chores
- # Gives a prepared story which is very similar to other children

## **RADICALISATION –**

This refers to the process where children's minds are abused and corrupted. Radicalisation may occur when children are taught extreme, often violent, ideas based on political, social or religious beliefs.

### **Signs of Radicalisation –**

- # Behaviour changes
- # New friends or groups of new friends
- # Changes in the way a child speaks
- # The use of extremist terminology
- # Reading of extremist material or messages



## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION ( FGM) –**

Female genital mutilation means to remove, constrict or otherwise disfigure a girl's labia or clitoris for non-medical reasons. This usually takes place before the girl reaches the age of eight. It is also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna circumcision. Some communities may use religious, social or cultural reasons to justify FGM, but it is abuse, it is dangerous, and it is a criminal offence.

### **Signs of FGM –**

- # Severe pain and bleeding
- # Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- # Chronic infections
- # Psychological, mental and sexual health problems

### **Behaviours you may notice –**

- # Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- # Have unusual behaviours after returning from abroad or following an absence from school
- # Going on an extended holiday
- # Reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE –**

This is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse and can seriously harm children. Children who have or are witnessing domestic abuse may become aggressive, display anti-social behaviour, suffer from depression or anxiety and start to struggle at school.

[https:// www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/)



### **ONLINE ABUSE –**

This is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, whether through social networks, online gaming or using mobile phones. This type of abuse includes cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and emotional abuse. A child may be experiencing online abuse if they spend a lot of time in their rooms where messages and images are shared, spend more time than usual on their phones or gaming, present as withdrawn, upset or angry after using the internet or texting, become secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online and have lots of new mobile numbers or email addresses on their phones or tablets.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) –**

CSE is a type of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children and young people are tricked into thinking they are in a loving and consensual relationship. This type of abuse often involves children going to parties where they are given drugs and alcohol. Children who are being sexually exploited may well be involved in abusive relationships, be intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations, hang out with older people, vulnerable peers and antisocial groups. Children being exploited may also start to have older boyfriends or girlfriends, start to become associated with local gangs or go missing from home on a regular basis.

<https://nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/>

### **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) –**

According to the Home Office, child criminal exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of the **imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive** a child or young person under the age of 18. This is a growing issue where gangs target vulnerable children to get them to carry out criminal activity. This activity is regularly linked to **County Lines** which is a police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas, market and coastal towns. This is a criminal business model that's sees children used to deliver, supply and sell drugs.

What is County Lines? The Children's society ([www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk))





## **BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING –**

Bullying is a behaviour that hurts someone else, such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere and often happens over a long period of time and therefore can have significant physical and emotional implications. Cyberbullying happens online via social networks, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It can be very damaging as it can happen anywhere and any time of the day or night. If a child is being bullied you might notice belongings getting lost or damaged, physical injuries such as unexplained bruising, refusing to go to school, not doing well at school, asking or stealing money to give to bullies, losing confidence and becoming nervous and withdrawn and having problems with eating and sleeping.

The above describes and documents EMMAA's understanding and definitions of the harm that children need safeguarding from. The next step in our policy is to layout our commitment to safeguard children within the realms of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), at the clubs where the children train and the competition venues where these children compete. There is a clear joint responsibility between EMMAA and its affiliate members (which includes all training staff, coaching staff and volunteers) to ensure the following is embraced, adhered to, regularly reviewed and discussed. The EMMAA safeguarding lead will have the responsibility of liaising with club owners and head coaches to ensure this is done and be held accountable to have copies of the necessary training documents around safeguarding as detailed in EMMAA's affiliate club requirements section on their website. It will also be of paramount importance for the safeguarding lead to address the vetting process of club staff and which staff are DBS checked.

## **SAFEGUARDING AT CLUB LEVEL –**

The Mixed Martial Arts Club where children train is designed to be a hub that combines fun, confidence building, enjoyment, development, a clear progression pathway and a sense of personal achievement all in a safe environment. To ensure these fundamental and important aspects can take place EMMAA require the following from affiliated clubs –

# All staff to be vetted by club owner, a minimum of one DBS and First Aid trained member of coaching staff to be always onsite.



# At least one member of staff to have completed the recognised NSPCC child safeguarding online training course and evidence this by forwarding their certificate of attendance to EMMAA's safeguarding lead. This then will allow EMMAA to encourage and support the necessary refresher training.

# All affiliated clubs to have the EMMAA **safeguarding children document** kept onsite accessible for all staff and volunteers. This detailed document will help staff be aware of abuse and the potential signs and symptoms of different types of abuse and how to report any concerns.

# We encourage and advise all club membership forms to have a section around any special needs or disabilities as it is evidenced that children with learning difficulties, those with hearing or speech impediments and those children with Special Educational Needs such as ADHD and Autism are more susceptible to abuse in its many forms and therefore it is often imperative to be even more vigilant when working and engaging with these children. These children will often find it harder to express themselves in a way to report and detail any abuse.

# We encourage any club that has a platform for private one to one sessions with children to have a parent/guardian or other adult member of staff with them at all times.

# To always coach and teach in an open area where you can be observed.

# To always place the child's welfare and best interests ahead of winning and achieving goals.

# To ensure that if children need to be supervised in changing areas that coaching staff, volunteers, parents and carers never leave themselves alone, working in pairs is advised.

# We would actively encourage that children in attendance are not permitted to leave the club premises until an appropriate parent or guardian has arrived to collect them. We cannot enforce this but feel confident that our affiliated clubs would take such precautionary measures as standard practice in child safety.

# For all affiliated clubs and their staff to be confident in how to report a safeguarding concern and the relevant processes that need to be followed. This will all be detailed in the EMMAA **Child Safeguarding Document** for all clubs to keep onsite but will also be detailed here for everyone to see if they access this document on our website.



## **SAFEGUARDING AT COMPETITION LEVEL –**

It needs to be noted that at the time of writing this EMMAA is aware that it can only realistically have oversight of child safeguarding at competitions which are organised, overseen or run by our Governing body. We can take reassurance that any competition or event that is overseen by the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation (IMMAF) have a full quota of safeguarding protocols in place and we actively support these competitions by having children attend with EMMAA's own coaching team.

# All children and young people that compete regionally, nationally or internationally will have an assigned chaperone who can be a parent, carer or a member of the EMMAA coaching team. The chaperone will have key responsibilities, which include: To ensure they accompany athletes and stay with them for any medicals (this includes pre and post-fight), to be with them for any official meetings including rules meetings, event schedules and weigh ins, to ensure appropriate room allocation at hotels and other accommodation.

# At competition's overseen or arranged by EMMAA we will have trained safeguarding staff including the designated safeguarding officer where possible, onsite at all times. This will ensure our policies are adhered to and allow us to have oversight and control over the presence of chaperones, medicals, changing facilities, warm up areas, competition zones and the staff and volunteers in attendance.

# To ensure that all competition formats are arranged and run in a fair and safe way with professionally recognised staff in attendance including a qualified medical team.

# To ensure that children who choose to compete do so in the safest way adhering to the use of recognised amateur rules as written and endorsed by IMMAF.

# To ensure all athletes compete in the correct weight category against an opponent from the same weight category with previous levels of competition being matched as fairly as possible and agreed with by both athlete's head coaches and EMMAA coaching staff where applicable.

# All athletes under 18 to have a parental consent form to allow them to compete.

# No member of coaching staff to share a room with a child athlete (unless of course it is their own child)

# Young athletes to be supervised in changing facilities by a minimum of 2 members of their team.



# To ensure that no adults change or shower at the same time as children when sharing the same facilities.

# If a child is uncomfortable changing or showering in front of others, no pressure should be placed upon them, they can be encouraged to do this at a hotel for example.

# There is to be no photographic equipment used in assigned changing facilities.

### **Reporting a Child Safeguarding concern –**

At EMMAA we understand that reporting suspicions, allegations or disclosures can be very difficult BUT we actively encourage our affiliated clubs to use their professional judgement in dealing with issues of a safeguarding nature and we are very clear in our belief that the worst thing that can be done is to be ignorant. Coaches and trainers are trusted individuals and often build a key and important professional relationship with children and as such their duty of care extends from the gym and the realms of competition. EMMAA have laid out some easy to follow and step by step guidance in dealing with safeguarding issues.

# If a member of coaching/training staff or a volunteer has concerns then they need to liaise with head club coach or owner if appropriate to do so or seek professional advice from one of the numbers below.

# If a member of coaching/training staff or volunteer are approached by a child or young person make sure they know they have done the right thing. This can be a very significant and difficult thing for a child to do which requires a lot of bravery and courage and they need to be reassured.

# Listen carefully to their story and respect their rights. Your role here is simply to listen and not to judge or question.

# Let the child or young person know that only the people who need to know will be informed.

# Do not try to solve the situation yourself or confront anyone, immediate knee jerk reactions can simply add to a potentially already complex situation.

# Remember to take all claims seriously.

# Try to collect as much information as possible including days, dates and times as well as names and locations as this information might not be revealed again.



# Do not disclose any information to non-relevant parties.

# Affiliate clubs can seek support from the EMMAA team direct from our website.

# Use one of the following platforms to seek professional safeguarding assistance –

**Child and family services helpdesk for your local area (easily located on search engine like google)**

**GOV.UK website - this will provide the local council's children's social care team, simply enter your postcode.**

**NSPCC (for adults) – 0808 800 5000 (Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm and 9am to 6pm on weekends)**

**NSPCC Childline – 0800 1111**

**Crimestoppers (anonymous) – 0800 555 111 (available 24/7 365 days a year)**

**999 or 101 for direct contact with the police**