

- *Safeguarding – Promoting child welfare by ensuring children are protected from maltreatment such as abuse, harm and neglect and that they are nurtured in a safe and secure environment.*
- *Child Protection – A part of safeguarding. Child protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.*

For the purpose of this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18.

Policy Statement and Commitment

Gulf Star Sports is fully committed to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children and young people participating in its sports and activity programmes. Child safety is of paramount importance, and Gulf Star recognises the right of every child to live free from fear, violence, abuse, and neglect.

Because of the daily contact with children in coaching and activity settings, Gulf Star's coaches, instructors, and other personnel are in a strong position to notice outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour, or indicators of distress. Gulf Star therefore accepts its duty of care to:

- *Promote the welfare and well-being of all children who participate in or come into contact with our activities.*
- *Protect children from abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation, and inappropriate conduct.*
- *Respond promptly, sensitively, and effectively to concerns or allegations involving children.*

This policy applies to all Gulf Star employees, third party providers, coaches, instructors, assistants, volunteers, contractors, and anyone acting on behalf of Gulf Star in a professional capacity.

As part of our safeguarding policy, Gulf Star Sports will:

- *Promote and prioritise the safety and well being of children and young people.*
- *Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.*
- *Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.*
- *Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.*
- *Ensure that all direct and third party employees have taken safeguarding training (to a minimum of UK Level 1)*
- *Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.*
- *Ensure all staff are aware of best practice to protect themselves from any safeguarding concern or allegation*

Promoting Awareness

Maltreatment of a child or vulnerable other can take many forms (including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect). It is the responsibility of coaches/ instructors within the Gulf Star framework to recognize signs of maltreatment and report them accordingly.

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- *Significant changes in a child's behaviour*
- *Deterioration in a child's general well-being*
- *Unexplained bruising or marks*
- *Comments made by a child which give cause for concern*
- *Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.*

These indicators do not prove that abuse is occurring, but they must never be ignored. Any concern should be reported in line with this policy.

Responding to Suspected Abuse or Disclosure

If abuse is suspected or disclosed and/or a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- *Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out*
- *Listen to the child but not question them*
- *Give reassurance that you will take action*
- *Record the incident as soon as possible (see Logging an incident below).*

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway.

Logging an incident:

All information about suspected abuse, concerns, or disclosures must be recorded on an incident form as soon as possible after the event or disclosure.

The record should include:

- *Date of the disclosure or of the incident causing concern.*
- *Date and time at which the record was made.*
- *Name and date of birth (if known) of the child involved.*
- *A factual, objective account of what has happened or what has been witnessed.*
- *If recording a disclosure, use the child's own words wherever possible.*
Avoid assumptions, opinions, or diagnoses.
- *Details of any actions already taken to safeguard the child (for example, informing a school contact, moving the child to a safer environment).*
- *Name, signature, and job title of the person making the record.*

The completed incident form should be shared with the Gulf Star Sports Centre Manager, who will then share it with the designated safeguarding officers at the host school or institution, in line with agreed protocols. All records must be treated as confidential and stored securely

Managing an Internal Safeguarding concern:

Gulf Star recognises that safeguarding concerns may involve its own staff, third party providers, or course instructors. All such concerns will be managed promptly, fairly, and sensitively, with the safety and welfare of children as the overriding priority.

Gulf Star ensures that all third party providers, coaches, and course instructors are fully aware of best practice expectations before they come into direct contact with children during activities. Coaches and staff must acknowledge that parents and schools are rightly vigilant about children's safety, and that any accusation or concern must be taken seriously.

If allegations or concerns are made by parents, school staff, or others about a Gulf Star staff member or partner, the following steps will be taken without delay:

- *Person accused is suspended pending investigation*
- *Internal investigation takes place*
- *If found guilty – further steps to be taken*
- *If found innocent – person will resume duties.*
- *It is deemed imperative that all third party providers, coaches & course instructors report (via email) all issues, accidents, complaints and incidents to Gulf Star so that we can take care of the necessary and contact all involved.*

Professional Conduct

Below are a few pointers used to refresh the knowledge of our coaches/instructors and third part providers when it comes to working with children.

- *Ensure your actions are at all times unambiguously professional.*
- *Give a verbal explanation, in front of all children of how, where, when and why you may need to directly come into contact with them.*
- *Remember that the welfare of the child or children is always of paramount importance.*
- *Know what policies, complaint processes and codes of behaviour your sport has in place and how this applies to you.*
- *Understand how the child protection legislation in the UAE may affect you.*

Physical Contact

- *Ensure that any physical contact with children is appropriate to the development of the skills required for sport/activity (e.g. it may be deemed appropriate to teach a child to float in the water by touching their back, or to hold their arms or feet to demonstrate a movement)*
- *Be careful about which part of your body and how much of it is in contact with a child's body.*
- *Avoiding overly intrusive or unnecessary contact, and never involving areas that could be seen as sexual or degrading.*

Coaches must:

- *Be mindful of which part of their body and how much of it is in contact with a child's body.*
- *Stop contact immediately if the child appears uncomfortable, withdraws, or objects.*

One-to-One Situations

To minimise risk:

- *Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children whenever possible.*
- *Avoid situations where you and a child are out of sight of others.*
- *If you need to speak privately to a child about performance or behaviour, do so in an open area within sight or hearing of others.*
- *When possible, invite another coach, assistant, or appropriate adult to be present, or speak with more than one child at a time.*

Changing Rooms and Bathrooms

- *Before entering changing rooms, announce your intention (e.g. knock and call out), and avoid entering alone where possible.*
- *Aim to have at least one other authorised adult present if staff presence is required.*
- *Do not isolate yourself with a child in a changing room or bathroom area.*
- *Ensure that all children are accompanied on bathroom visits according to the host organisation's procedures. Staff should ideally remain outside or at the entrance to toilets, not inside cubicles or enclosed spaces with children.*
- *No photography, filming, or use of mobile phones is permitted in changing or bathroom areas.*

Avoiding Being Alone with a Child

- *Arrange for a parent, guardian, or other appropriate support person to assist with training where necessary.*
- *Require that this support person remains until all children have been collected.*
- *If you find yourself alone with a child unexpectedly (for example, a late pick-up), move to a public, visible area and inform a colleague or the school immediately, and, where appropriate, contact the parents.*

Prohibited Behaviours

Do not engage in or let others engage in any of the following:

- *Abusive initiation or team bonding activities;*
- *Forcing children into 'macho type' activities;*
- *Rough, physically hurtful or sexually provocative games; and*
- *Regular scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating or taking the 'mickey' out of a child.*

These rules exist to prevent harm to children and to protect staff from being placed in situations that could lead to allegations. The best protection is to always maintain clear boundaries, minimise unnecessary physical contact, and ensure transparency in all interactions.

Staff Awareness and Ongoing Training

Gulf Star will ensure that:

- *All staff, third party providers, and instructors receive safeguarding and child protection information as part of their induction.*
- *Staff are encouraged to refresh their knowledge regularly through training, briefings, and updates on best practice.*
- *Regular reminders and guidance are communicated to staff to reinforce safe practice, reporting routes, and the importance of documentation.*