**```````````````Orwell Panthers Athletics Club –Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children and adults at risk**

Orwell Panthers Athletics Club is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with registered no. 1163145 (**OPAC**). In this policy, a reference to ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ is a reference to OPAC.

OPAC recognises its duty of care (owed to its members, trustees, coaches, coaching assistants and other associated persons) to safeguard children and adults at risk that are participating in its activities. Our trustees acknowledge their responsibility under UK Charities legislation to take reasonable steps to protect all persons who come into contact with our charity from harm.

This policy covers safeguarding of children (being those under the age of 18) and of adults at risk (which includes adults with a learning disability or an illness affecting their mental or physical health).

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[A) Raising awareness and our supportive culture 1](#_Toc47346340)

[B) Commitment 2](#_Toc47346341)

[C) UKA Guidance and general principles 2](#_Toc47346342)

[D) Distinguishing allegations 2](#_Toc47346343)

[E) Guiding principles 3](#_Toc47346344)

[F) Best practice for Club Representatives 3](#_Toc47346345)

[G) Travel/organised trips 4](#_Toc47346346)

[H) Selecting and On-boarding Volunteers or other Club Representatives 4](#_Toc47346347)

[I) Incidents, Allegations, Records, Internal Investigations and Reporting 5](#_Toc47346348)

[J) Safeguarding Officer 8](#_Toc47346349)

A) Raising awareness and our supportive culture

We must ensure that all relevant persons are aware of this policy and aware of their individual duties and rights in relation to safeguarding. Children and adults at risk (and other stakeholders) must feel safe reporting any concerns, trust that they will be supported and that appropriate action will be taken against any allegation. Those persons in positions of responsibility that are exposed to the risk of allegations being made against them must feel confident that any investigations are robust, fair and transparent and be made aware of the processes and practices that are in place to reduce high risk situations and protect individuals from false allegations.

B) Commitment

We shall:

1. promote the welfare, health and development of all individuals and protect them from harm;
2. recognise each individual’s rights and treat each individual with dignity and respect;
3. raise awareness about the protection of children and adults at risk;
4. plan and practice sessions in ways that minimise the risks of harm to children and adults at risk;
5. develop effective procedures to respond to allegations, incidents or suspected incidents of harm or abuse;
6. acknowledge the increased vulnerability of persons with disabilities is to be recognised and appropriate protections are to be put in place, including consideration of facilitating reporting of abuse; and
7. take appropriate measures regarding additional safeguarding issues raised for those children or adults at risk who may have specific needs as a result of medical problems or disabilities.

C) UKA Guidance and general principles

In accordance with UKA guidelines, we must ensure that all members taking part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment. We must:

1. respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of children;
2. recruit, train and supervise volunteers and others with positions of responsibility (together, the **Club Representatives**) to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, as well as themselves from false allegations;
3. adopt and abide by UKA’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the relevant grievance, investigatory and disciplinary procedures prescribed by the UKA from time to time;
4. respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, child protection, and disciplinary and appeals procedures;
5. designate a Safeguarding Officer to be responsible, amongst other things, for ensuring all appropriate DBS checks are completed;
6. review its policies (which are to be made publically available) regularly and at least once every year.

As a club specifically encouraging the participation of disabled children, who the UKA identifies as at a greater risk of all forms of abuse, we acknowledge that we need to be especially alert to the signs of abuse and have appropriate strategies in place to ensure anyone can raise concerns.

D) Distinguishing allegations

For the purposes of this policy, an allegation means that a person: (i) might have behaved in a way that may have or has harmed a child; (ii) possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or (iii) behaved towards a child in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

This is distinct from a concern about the quality of practice, or other complaints.

Allegations shall always be taken seriously, investigated and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

E) Guiding principles

We take note of the following guiding principles applicable to safeguarding:

1. the welfare of the child is paramount;
2. all children have the right to protection from abuse;
3. all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
4. all individuals involved understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer from time to time; and
5. all individuals will be treated equally and in a non-discriminatory way.

F) Best practice for Club Representatives

To reduce high risk situations for Club Representatives, the following behaviours and practices are recommended:

1. being open and conducting all interactions with children and adult at risk in a public place and with appropriate consent;
2. no Club Representative to spend time alone with one child or adult at risk, including travel;
3. challenging bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals;
4. never ignore bullying or allow the use of inappropriate language or contact to take place unchallenged including by other children, coaches, volunteers or parents/carers;
5. investigating, challenging and recording any allegations made by a child or adult at risk
6. maintaining appropriate relationships with children;
7. treating children fairly, with respect and avoiding favouritism;
8. being friendly and open and ensuring relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust;
9. avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances it can be acceptable and appropriate, provided it is not intrusive or disturbing to the athlete concerned and consent for the contact has been provided by the individual or (where appropriate) a parent or carer. A clear explanation of any contact must be provided at the time, for example explaining that you are correcting an athlete’s foot position in a throw or sprint start;
10. being qualified and insured for any activities conducted and ensuring any licences remain valid;
11. ensure that parent(s)/carer(s) collect the child or adult at risk from training. If an older child or an adult at risk is to travel independently to training or a race, written permission from their parent or carer must be obtained;
12. ensuring the activities and practices are appropriate for the age, development and abilities of each athlete ;
13. promote an open and safe culture that respects each individual’s right to privacy but provides a caring atmosphere for children and adults at risk to point out concerns;
14. use common sense when selecting athletes for demonstrations; and
15. be aware that actions might be misinterpreted, no matter how well intentioned and exercise caution appropriately (especially in moments of counselling such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse);

G) Travel/organised trips

Travel to external events or other organised trips can give rise to further safeguarding concerns. Accordingly:

1. a parent or carer must be given full information about any trip or external event, including details of any activities that the child or adult at risk will engage in;
2. consent of each parent/carer must be obtained in writing for the child or adult at risk to be included on the trip and specifically that medical attention can be given to a child or adult at risk in extreme circumstances;
3. the Club Representative involved in the trip must be made aware of any special medical problems, needs or disabilities of each child or adult at risk and OPAC must be satisfied that these can be met;
4. while we recognise our duty of care to each child and adult at risk as regards their safety and welfare while on a trip, the responsibility for their welfare will remain with their parent(s) or carer(s);
5. children or adults at risk must be adequately supervised at all times;
6. a parent or carer must be informed of any incidents requiring discipline in writing along with a report of any such incident being made available to the Safeguarding Officer; and
7. a minimum of two adults must accompany any group of children or adults at risk. It is noted that NSPCC guidance is that for groups of children aged 8 years, one adult is required for every six children; (ii) aged 9 to 12 years, one adult is required for every eight children; and (iii) for children 13 or over, one adult is required for every ten children however that these recommendations should be adapted to ensure that children with specific needs or disabilities are protected and adequately supervised.

H) Selecting and On-boarding Volunteers or other Club Representatives

Applicants joining OPAC as a volunteer or in another position of responsibility shall complete an application form that identifies:

1. their name and address;

Such information, including any special category data such as information regarding an applicant’s criminal record, shall be handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

The application form must be properly processed and a risk assessment conducted, including to identify any gaps in experience or references that may indicate a safeguarding risk.

We will meet with a candidate in person before they are allocated a position of responsibility for any children or adults at risk and ensure appropriate supervision is in place for the role.

If the applicant (or an existing volunteer or person in a position of responsibility) is to supervise or have responsibility over children, they must also complete a self-disclosure form in a similar form to the one appended to this policy at Annex 1 (or otherwise provide the information contained therein) to identify whether they are known to Children’s Social Care as posing an actual or potential risk of harm to children.

If the applicant (or an existing volunteer or person in a position of responsibility) is coaching (or otherwise undertaking a regulated activity in athletics, which includes conducting regular training), a full DBS check must be completed. Each role must be considered on a case by case basis to determine the appropriate level of checks required in accordance with guidance issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service from time to time (for example, an official may need an enhanced level of DBS check but may not require a criminal records search).

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer, with supervision from the trustee board, to ensure that appropriate checks (including the level of DBS check in proportionate to the risks posed in each specific role) are conducted.

If an individual is removed from their role (or would have been so removed if they had not voluntarily left) on the basis that they pose a risk of harm to children then this must be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider whether this information regarding the individual should be recorded. Any such notification shall be investigated fully and considered by a panel of trustees (who may confidentially seek external advice where appropriate) to ensure that it is the appropriate course of action. It is noted that it is a criminal offence to make such a referral without good reason.

I) Incidents, Allegations, Records, Internal Investigations and Reporting

If you suspect abuse:

1. tell the Safeguarding Officer immediately;
2. record all facts known in a Safeguarding Report Form and provide a copy to the Safeguarding Officer;
3. ensure that the child or adult at risk has access to an independent adult; and
4. ensure that no other situation arises which could cause any further concern.

If abuse by another is disclosed to you by a child or vulnerable adult:

1. allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said;
2. do not pass judgement on the issue, but try to alleviate negative feelings such as guilt or isolation;
3. advise that you will try to offer support but explain that you must pass the information on to be able to help;
4. record all facts known in a Safeguarding Report Form and provide a copy to the Safeguarding Officer; and
5. do not investigate any abuse independently.

If abuse is alleged about you and you are made aware of this:

1. immediately notify the Safeguarding Officer
2. record all facts known in a Safeguarding Report Form and provide a copy to the Safeguarding Officer
3. ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise or harm
4. do not investigate any abuse independently

The Safeguarding Officer shall determine and conduct an appropriate investigation into the matter and manage any required reporting.

If any of the following events occur, or any events raising similar safeguarding concerns, the incident should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer (or, if necessary, to another member of the trustee committee who shall in turn ensure the incident is reported to the Safeguarding Officer. A Safeguarding Report Form in the form of Annex 2 to this policy must be completed as a record of the incident and parent(s) or carer(s) should be informed if a child athlete or adult at risk:

1. is accidentally hurt;
2. appears distressed in any manner;
3. appears to be sexually aroused by the actions of another; or
4. misunderstands or misinterprets the actions of another.

Where an allegation is made, the Safeguarding Officer (by however means necessary) must be made aware within one working day of the allegation.

A note of any allegation or incident must be made in the Incident Record Book.

Any allegation or notification of any other incident will be dealt with confidentially (save in respect of any legal or other obligation to notify a third party organisation or body such as England Athletics, the police, or the local authority) and any information obtained in the course of investigations handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Individuals concerned must be given the opportunity to make representations regarding the incident in an appropriate format. Meetings with each individual concerned (including any parent(s)/carer(s) as appropriate), the Safeguarding Officer and at least one other trustee should be conducted and minutes should be recorded of such meetings. The minutes should be agreed following each meeting to represent a proper account of matters discussed. In most cases it will be appropriate to meet with the individual making the allegation (including their parent(s)/carer(s)) in the first instance. Further meetings and confidential discussions should be conducted, or any other course of action, until the Safeguarding Officer and wider trustee team feel that they have sufficient information to assess the allegation or incident and deal with it appropriately, considering their reporting obligations. The Disciplinary and Appeals procedure shall be consulted and relevant steps implemented.

Proportionate steps must be taken to minimise the risk of any further harm.

Reporting requirements should be considered and appropriate action taken, particularly by the Safeguarding Officer in consultation with other trustees. In particular:

1. **Police** - Criminal matters must be reported to the local police
2. **Charity Commission** - Serious incidents may need to be notified to the Charity Commission by way of a Serious Incident Report form (<https://ccforms.charitycommission.gov.uk/report-a-serious-incident>).
	1. the trustees must assess whether such a report is required and, if necessary, complete a report as soon as possible after the incident.
	2. a serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant (i) harm to the charity’s beneficiaries, staff volunteers or others who come into contact with the charity through its work; (ii) loss of the charity’s money or assets; (iii) damage to the charity’s property; (iv) harm to the charity’s work or reputation.
	3. whether or not a risk is ‘significant’ is decided in the context of the charity taking account of its staff, operations finances and/or reputation.
	4. the Charity Commission considers that a report is necessary if a serious safeguarding risk materialises, which will usually be the case if:
		* 1. incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
				1. this happened while they were under the care of the charity
				2. someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual)
				3. other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the charity’s activities
				4. breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk.
			2. the Charity Commission may refer any concern to the DBS however it shall not deal with the incident. Its role is to ensure that the trustees are handling the incident appropriately and managing the risk of future harm by the provision of relevant policies and processes.
	5. It is noted that where OPAC becomes aware of an incident that occurred outside of the charity, reporting to the Charity Commission is not usually required (although reporting to the police or local authority in particular may still be relevant).

**3**. **Local authority safeguarding children or adults** - if someone is concerned about a child or adult at risk, it may be appropriate to escalate the concern to the local authority in some circumstances may be notified by a multi-agency referral form using the Suffolk Children and Young People’s Portal (available at: <https://suffolksp.org.uk/concerned/>)

**4. UKA Athletics –** the Safeguarding Officer shall report any incident in a Reporting a Concern Form from the UKA website which will be reviewed by the UKA Safeguarding Team to decide whether the concern needs to be looked into further.

The matter should be reviewed so that we gain a sufficient understanding to reduce the risk of similar incidents or allegations in future and any policies or procedures should be adapted accordingly.

J) Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer shall be responsible for, amongst other things:

* maintaining and implementing the Safeguarding Policy;
* undertake any relevant training, keep up to date with new guidelines (including those issued by the UKA, the National Care Forum, local authorities, the Charity Commission or the UK government);
* ensuring that other Club Representatives complete relevant forms and agree to adhere to this policy;
* maintain up to date records of relevant qualification of each Club Representative;
* review and advise on reports from Club Representatives or other members;
* ensuring parents, carers, children and adults at risk are aware of their identity and role and their availability to discuss any concerns;
* identify concerns and initiate further action or reporting where appropriate;
* maintain confidentiality in relation to any matter or information;
* maintain proper records;
* ensure that the chairperson and trustee committee are kept appropriately informed.

**Orwell Panthers Athletics Club:**

**Date:**

**ANNEX 1 – Example self-declaration form (CPSU/NSPCC)**

**ANNEX 2 – Sample Safeguarding Report Form**

Name of the child / adult at risk:

Age of the child / adult at risk:

Parent/carer’s name:

Home address and telephone number:

Nature of the concern:

* is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of someone else?
* What has prompted the concern(s)? give dates and times of specific incident(s). Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
* Has the child/adult at risk been spoken to? If so, what was said?
* Have the parent(s)/carer(s) been contacted? If so, what was said?
* Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
* Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.