Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

1. Purpose & Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors working with children within Future Stars Coaching Ltd. It outlines the mandatory process for responding to allegations of abuse or misconduct involving staff and ensures compliance with UK safeguarding laws and best practices.

It must be followed when an allegation suggests a staff member has:

- Harmed a child or put them at risk.
- Committed a criminal offence against a child.
- Behaved in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children.

2. Immediate Actions Upon Receiving an Allegation

2.1 Reporting the Allegation

- Any concern about a staff member must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL – Leanne Selman) or, if unavailable, the Deputy DSL (Frankie Hazeldine).
- If the allegation is about the DSL, it must be reported to the Managing Director, Ben Hazeldine, or another appropriate senior person if the Managing Director is implicated. Staff may contact the relevant LADO directly where the internal route is compromised or concerns are not addressed.
- Where an allegation may meet the LADO harm threshold, the designated senior person must contact the relevant LADO without delay, normally within one working day. Immediate danger must be reported to police on 999; urgent child protection concerns must also be referred to children's social care.

2.2 Confidentiality & Protection

- The staff member concerned must not be informed until advice has been sought from the LADO.
- Staff who raise genuine concerns must not be victimised. Legal whistleblowing protection depends on the circumstances and whether the disclosure qualifies under applicable legislation.
- The child's well-being and safety are the priority, and any necessary protective action must be taken immediately (e.g., removing the staff member from duties).

3. Initial Assessment & Referral

- The DSL or designated senior person will establish only the essential facts needed for immediate safeguarding decisions, without asking leading questions or undertaking an investigation that could prejudice external enquiries.
- Where an allegation may meet the LADO harm threshold, the designated senior person must seek LADO advice without delay, normally within one working day, before conducting any internal investigation. Next steps may include:
    - A police investigation (if a criminal offence may have occurred).
    - A social care enquiry (if the child is at risk).

- An internal disciplinary process (if safeguarding concerns do not meet the threshold for external referral).

4. Managing the Staff Member Concerned

- The LADO and police will advise whether the staff member should be:
  - Suspended pending investigation (suspension is not a presumption of guilt).
  - Placed on alternative duties away from children.
- The staff member has the right to representation and must be treated fairly and confidentially throughout the process.
- A named contact person will be assigned to support the staff member during the investigation.

5. Investigation Process

5.1 Internal Investigation

- If the LADO determines that police/social care involvement is not required, an internal disciplinary investigation will be conducted following employment law guidelines.
- The staff member must be given a fair opportunity to respond to allegations.
- A decision on disciplinary action (e.g., dismissal, retraining, or reinstatement) must be made based on evidence.

5.2 Outcome Decisions

- If the allegation is substantiated, appropriate action may include:
  - Dismissal and, where the statutory referral conditions are met, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
  - Reporting to Ofsted (if required for compliance).
- If the allegation is unsubstantiated, unfounded, or malicious, appropriate support must be provided to the staff member and child involved.

6. Recording & Reporting

- All allegations and actions taken must be documented securely.
- Records of allegations that meet the harm threshold must be retained in accordance with current statutory guidance, data protection requirements and the organisation's retention schedule; applicable exceptions must be considered.
- If the allegation is unsubstantiated, a brief record should still be maintained.

7. Learning & Review

After any case, a review meeting should be held to assess:

- Whether safeguarding policies need updating.

- Whether additional staff training is needed.
- Any improvements to prevent future incidents.

8. Key Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Leanne Selman 07917872718
- **Deputy DSL:** Frankie Hazeldine 07825811147
- **Managing Director:** Ben Hazeldine
- **LADO: Use the relevant local authority LADO contact details on the current venue safeguarding contact sheet (North Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire, as appropriate).**
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285
- **Police (Non-Emergency):** 101 / **Emergency:** 999

Final Notes

- This procedure supports the Future Stars Coaching Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and should be read alongside current statutory safeguarding guidance and relevant local LADO procedures.
- It applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors.
- Any failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary action.

This procedure supports the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and does not replace its reporting or escalation requirements. Concerns about adult conduct that do not meet the LADO threshold must still be reported and recorded under the low-level concerns arrangements.

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