

CASTLE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



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PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

All climbing activities have a risk of serious injury or death. Participants must recognise that even if they follow all good practice there may still be the risk of accident and injury. It is the responsibility of the participant to adhere to the conditions of use.

As with all sporting activities, injuries are possible in climbing and might be sustained despite the safety systems in place.

Castle sessions are supervised by qualified, experienced Instructors/Coaches. Supervised climbers should never belay, climb or boulder without the permission of their Instructor/Coach. They must remain with their Instructor/Coach at all times and follow directions given.

DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding. Safeguarding refers to the action taken to promote the welfare of individuals, particularly children and adults at risk, ensuring they are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect. This includes the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of participants in all activities.

Child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989) within this policy the reference children and young people relates to anyone under the age of 18.

Abuse: Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglect, or any other form of mistreatment that harms the child's wellbeing.

Poor Practice. Behaviour that is inappropriate and may be causing concern/harm to a child.

Coach. A qualified climber whose primary purpose is to help the client achieve their goals usually relating to performance.

Instructor. A nationally qualified supervisor whose primary purpose is the teaching of safety skills or the supervision of inexperienced climbers

DSL. Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Castle Climbing Centre is committed to safeguarding, protecting, and promoting the welfare and well-being of all individuals at the centre, particularly children, young people, and at-risk adults. We recognise our duty to ensure that everyone has a positive and enjoyable experience while participating in our activities and is fully protected from harm, abuse, or exploitation.

Our safeguarding policy, along with the associated guidance and procedures, prioritises the protection of children, young people, and adults at risk. We are dedicated to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of age, ability, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, are provided with a safe environment to engage in our services.

We acknowledge that some individuals—particularly those with disabilities, additional needs, or from ethnic minority communities—may be at increased risk of harm, and we take our responsibility to safeguard them seriously. We are committed to taking all reasonable and appropriate steps to protect and support them.

Everyone associated with The Castle Climbing Centre, including staff, volunteers, and participants, is expected to uphold our safeguarding principles, ensuring a culture of respect, vigilance, and responsibility in maintaining a safe environment for all.

PURPOSE

Safeguarding is a core priority at The Castle. This policy promotes and protects the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and young people, ensuring they are safe from harm or risk of harm.

It sets out The Castle’s commitment to safeguarding, providing clear principles and guidance for all activities. All staff, volunteers and participants must understand and comply with this policy, alongside the Safeguarding Statement and relevant procedures.

Procedures for handling actual or suspected abuse or poor practice are detailed in **CSP02 Castle Safeguarding Procedures**, with staff guidance in **CSPSD03 Castle Safeguarding Guidelines**.

Key Points:

- Safeguard and actively support the welfare, as well as the physical and mental well-being, of children and young people, ensuring they are protected from harm or risk.
- Safeguarding is a central focus in all activities at The Castle.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers, and participants understand and follow this policy.
- Developed in line with legal requirements and safeguarding best practices.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all children and young people under The Castle’s care, including participants in Castle Climbing Club, Comp Squad and other staff-led sessions. It also covers children attending externally run clubs, such as Geckos, where The Castle has some responsibility. All staff must follow the associated CSP procedures and guidelines.

COMMITMENT

The Castle Climbing Centre is committed to providing a safe, positive, abuse-free environment for all children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to protect their well-being and ensure safety from harm, with the support of everyone involved.

Safeguarding is a core focus across all operations. All staff working with children and young people must follow this policy, Castle Codes of Conduct, and relevant guidelines and procedures.

We support anyone who raises concerns in good faith, maintaining confidentiality and sharing information only when necessary.

Key safeguarding principles:

- Any behaviour perceived as poor practice or abuse must be reported to management.
- Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the safety of all children, even if we are not directly responsible.
- Staff will follow safeguarding guidelines to minimise risks of allegations of abuse or poor practice.
- All suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- Accusations will be handled fairly, transparently and confidentially.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding Culture and Responsibility Across the Organisation

At The Castle, safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone including board members, directors, leadership, management and staff, plays a vital role in fostering a strong safeguarding culture and ensuring the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All individuals must understand and follow safeguarding policies and procedures, take an active role in promoting and protecting welfare, and contribute to creating a safe environment, whether or not they work directly with participants. The Castle promotes this Policy and its guidance throughout the organisation, providing advice and support through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly, reported to statutory agencies when necessary, and all staff working with adults, young people and children at risk receive training to understand and uphold their responsibilities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns at The Castle. They provide guidance on welfare and protection, promote best practices, and ensure reporting procedures are clearly communicated. The DSL maintains safeguarding records, manages suspected cases of abuse or poor practice, and helps create a safe, positive environment. They also oversee the recruitment, induction, role allocation, and professional development of instructors and coaches (with HR support), organise safeguarding training for all staff, and review policies and procedures annually to ensure compliance and awareness.

Group Leaders are responsible for acting in *loco parentis* for the children entrusted to their care by their parents. They must ensure they have obtained informed parental consent for all activities and are accountable for the safety of the children and vulnerable adults in their care while in the centre, particularly before and after the climbing session.

Instructors and Coaches are responsible for the safety and welfare of climbers during their sessions, from the moment the session begins until the child or young person is returned to their parent, carer or group leader (who may in some cases also be the group leader).

The Duty Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the centre and may be the first point of contact for addressing suspected abuse or poor practice if the Safeguarding Officer/Courses and Bookings Manager is unavailable.

The Operations Manager must be informed of any actual or suspected abuse or poor practice. They can step in to replace the DSL if unavailable or if the allegations concern them.

The Bookings Team manages both group and individual bookings, ensuring that all necessary information is collected from course participants.

Leadership's Commitment to Safeguarding: Board members, directors and senior leadership set the strategic direction for safeguarding and ensure policies are effectively implemented. Management must maintain

safeguarding as a priority and ensure all staff, instructors, coaches and volunteers are trained and supported to meet their responsibilities.

REGISTRATION

- Children and young people under 18 supervised by a registered adult climber must have parental consent, confirmed on the **Novice Supervision Form**.
- Assessed 14–17 year-olds need parental consent to climb unsupervised.
- 16–17 year-olds may boulder unsupervised with parental consent after completing the **Acknowledgement of Risk: Bouldering Only** form.

PARENTAL CONSENT

Parental consent is required for any child left unaccompanied at the centre. Parents/guardians must be informed that climbing carries the risk of injury or death. Consent forms must include emergency contacts, relevant medical information, and First Aid consent.

- **Under 12:** Parents may allow a child to leave unaccompanied or specify who can pick them up.
- **12 and over:** Children may leave unaccompanied unless parents state otherwise.
- Consent is renewed termly or annually to keep information current.

Online consent forms for Castle Climbing Club, Comp Squad and Kids sessions are collected during booking and stored on **BETA**. Forms for assessed under 18s are kept on BETA; Geckos forms are stored at Reception.

- **School/youth groups:** Group Leaders ensure consent is obtained.
- **Novice climbers:** Supervising Climber ensures consent is in place.

E-safety: Social networking, email and mobile phones

The Castle recognises that social media, messaging apps, and online gaming platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitch, Discord) are common communication tools for young people and adults. These platforms can help promote The Castle Climbing Club, Comp Squad, and other initiatives, but misuse carries risks such as privacy issues, cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online exploitation.

The Castle is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all staff and participants online and offline and provides guidance for staff and parents on e-safety.

THIRD PARTIES

For third parties using the centre for activities with children and young people (e.g., Geckos), The Castle ensures compliance with this Policy, related guidelines, and safeguarding procedures, and requires them to have their own satisfactory Safeguarding Policy.

For school and youth groups, the group leader must obtain parental consent and confirm it on either the online **External Group Leader Form** on BETA or the paper **Group Supervision Form**.

Third parties using the centre for activities not involving climbing (e.g., Babcock, Yoga/Pilates, personal trainers) must also follow this Policy and report safeguarding concerns appropriately.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Casual photography or filming by parents, guardians or peers is allowed. All other photography or filming requires Castle approval and consent from the subject and their parent/guardian if under 18. The Castle will not use images of children or vulnerable adults without consent.

For events (e.g., competitions), consent may be via registration form or prominent notice. All climbers can refuse to be photographed, and Duty Managers, instructors, coaches, or event organisers must enforce this right.

RECRUITMENT, INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Instructors and Duty Managers undergo a thorough recruitment process, including interviews, two references, and verification of ID and qualifications, with copies kept on file. Staff working with children or adults at risk complete a DBS check at least every three years.

New recruits are observed during initial training and complete CSP induction, refreshed annually, with all training recorded by the Courses/Bookings Manager. Instructors and managers also receive annual performance appraisals.

DEPARTMENTAL STANDARDS

All staff members are required to adhere to the Castle CSP guidelines and follow the associated procedures. Additionally, the Castle has a Code of Conduct outlining the expected behaviour for all staff. Non-compliance with these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

SUPPORT

Castle staff have the right to:

- Be supported throughout an investigation into suspected abuse or poor practice, including access to professional support services;
- Access ongoing training and up-to-date information on managing activities for children and vulnerable adults;
- Receive support when reporting suspected abuse or poor practice;
- Be protected from abuse by children, youths, other adults, or parents;
- Work in a safe environment where they are not left vulnerable when supervising or working with children or vulnerable adults;
- Access clear channels for reporting concerns and be assured that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled confidentially

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The Castle has **Castle Safeguarding Procedures (CSP02)** and **Guidelines (CSPP03)** to conform to industry best practice as outlined by the British Mountaineering Council and NSPCC Children in Sport Unit.

REVIEW OF CASTLE CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The policy should be reviewed annually by the DSL for compliance with safeguarding regulations and best practices.

COMMUNICATION

Castle Safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines will be made available to all staff and interested parties on request.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR AT THE CASTLE

DSL: Iwona Kulczynska-Evans
Phone 020 8211 1068
Email iwona@castle-climbing.co.uk

Operations Manager: Viola Bonfanti
Email Viola.Bonfanti@castle-climbing.co.uk

HR Manager: Alejandra Diaz
Email Alejandra@castle-climbing.co.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

NSPCC helpline
Phone 0808 800 500
Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline - An entirely confidential helpline for children
Phone 0800 1111
Web www.childline.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)
Web <https://thecpsu.org.uk/>
Email: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

BMC Safeguarding Team
Phone 0161 438 3305
Email safeguarding@thebmc.co.uk