

# Low-Level Concerns Policy

*Reporting the small things, before they become big things*

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| <b>Document Owner</b>   | Junior Netball                                                                                            |
| <b>Approved by</b>      | Brett Daynes (Designated Safeguarding Lead)                                                               |
| <b>Date approved</b>    | 18 August 2026                                                                                            |
| <b>Next review date</b> | 18 August 2028                                                                                            |
| <b>Applies to</b>       | All Board members, Regional Coordinators, Head Coaches, coaches, volunteers and members of Junior Netball |

**Worried about a child? Contact us straight away.**

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If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. To report a concern about a child to children's social care or the police, you do not need to wait for us.

This policy follows the approach set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), which all sports providers are encouraged to adopt as best practice. It exists so that small worries about an adult's behaviour around children get recorded and looked at, well before they would ever meet the threshold for a formal safeguarding referral.

## What is a low-level concern?

A low-level concern is any concern — however small, even if it's no more than a nagging feeling that something wasn't quite right — that a coach, volunteer or other adult working with Junior Netball has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with our Code of Conduct or the good practice guidance in our Safeguarding Policy, including behaviour outside of sessions, and
- does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral to children's social care, the police or the Designated Officer (formerly LADO).

The word 'low-level' does not mean the concern is unimportant. It means it sits below the threshold of an allegation of abuse — but it still matters and should still be recorded.

## Examples of a low-level concern

- Being overly friendly with a child, or favouring one child over others.
- Being alone with a child, or in an unobserved area, without good reason.
- Using inappropriate language or humour in front of children.
- Giving a child a lift home alone, or contacting a child directly outside of official Junior Netball channels.
- Not following our photography, changing room or transport guidance.
- Losing their temper with a child, or being consistently over-critical.

These examples are not a checklist of what's 'allowed' below a certain line — they're what a concern often looks like when it starts. Any one of them, on its own, may be entirely innocent. That's exactly why it's worth recording: a pattern is only visible once it's written down.

## Why we want you to report these

Left unrecorded, low-level concerns can allow poor practice to continue, or can obscure a genuine pattern of concerning behaviour that only becomes visible once several small reports are put together. Reporting a low-level concern is not making an accusation, and it is not a disciplinary process. It protects children, and it protects coaches and volunteers by giving everyone a fair, consistent way to raise something early.

## How to report a low-level concern

- Speak to your Head Coach, Regional Coordinator, or go directly to the DSL or Deputy DSL — whichever you feel most comfortable with.
- You do not need to be certain, and you do not need evidence. If in doubt, report it.
- If the concern is about the DSL, report it directly to the Deputy DSL instead.
- Report as soon as possible, and always within the same week.

## What happens next

- The DSL keeps a separate, confidential low-level concerns log — kept apart from formal safeguarding case files.
- The DSL will review the concern, talk to the person who raised it, and decide on a proportionate response — this might be an informal conversation, additional guidance or training, a change to how a session is run, or (if a pattern emerges, or the concern turns out to be more serious than first thought) escalation to our full Safeguarding Policy.
- The person the concern is about will normally be told a concern has been raised and given the chance to respond, unless doing so would place a child at risk.
- The DSL reviews the low-level concerns log periodically to check for patterns across coaches, locations or types of concern.
- Records are retained in line with our Data Protection & Safeguarding Records Policy.

## If a concern turns out to be more serious

If, at any point, a low-level concern meets the threshold of a safeguarding allegation, it is immediately treated under our full Safeguarding Children Policy instead, and referred on to children's social care, the police or the Designated Officer as appropriate.

### **No concern is too small to raise.**

Reporting a low-level concern in good faith will never count against you — see our Whistleblowing Policy.