**MEDWAY NETBALL LEAGUE**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT**

Medway Netball League (MNL) acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.  We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects the law, government guidance, complies with best practice and England Netball requirements. MNL acknowledges that children and young people, disabled children and adults and those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

This policy recognises that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.  All who participate in netball organised by MNL should be alert to any issues of abuse or neglect and take action where appropriate.  How this should happen is set out below.

This safeguarding policy follows national guidance as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 20131.*There is a designated officer on the Committee for safeguarding.  MNL will also follow and adhere to the regulation around the safe recruitment of volunteers and committee members, (Disclosure and Barring) to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups and children.

Abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment as set out in the statutory guidance, *Working Together.* It includes physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse as well as neglect and bullying. Emotional abuse can include conveying that a child or vulnerable adult is inadequate and imposing inappropriate expectations on them.

**Medway Netball League – our aim**

Medway Netball League will ensure that there are opportunities for players of all ages and abilities to play and participate in netball. We aim to ensure that, regardless of age, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all players, particularly all children and vulnerable adults:

* have a positive and enjoyable experience of netball  in a safe environment; and
* are protected from all abuse whilst participating in netball organised by MNL( as a player, umpire, coach or volunteer).

To ensure equality of opportunity and maintain a safe environment for play, MNL will offer both a junior and senior league which offers differing levels of play to suit all abilities. The junior league provides opportunities for young people to play netball up to and including 18 years of age. The junior league has their own committee which monitors and regulates their safeguarding policy. MNL adopts child centred principles. This means that the welfare and interests of children and young people are paramount, they are listened to and they have the opportunity to make their wishes and feelings known.  Young players must be 14 years of age to play in the senior league where these principles outlined above will continue to apply to all those under the age of 18 years and to vulnerable adults.

Medway Netball League aims that all players can play the game in a safe environment which:

* promotes and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.  This means all children under the age of 18 years. It also includes vulnerable adults who may be over 18 years of age;
* encourages and guides players, coaches, umpires and volunteers to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour;
* appreciates and values all players, coaches, umpires and volunteers;
* does not allow rough or dangerous play, bullying, or the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour;
* does not over-train young people or exert undue influence over players for personal benefit or reward.

**Specifically our safeguarding policy will:**

* ensure the Medway Committee, volunteers, coaches, umpires and anyone else associated with the running of the league, understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding; that they are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns;
* ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose a concern;
* respond positively to any disclosure made by a child or young person or vulnerable adult;
* ensure that the relevant committee members have been through disclosure and barring checks where appropriate and in accordance with the guidance;
* ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
* prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals and pass on information relating to unsuitable people in an appropriate matter; and
* ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

**If you have a concern about a child or vulnerable person – ACT.**

* If anyone has concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult, they should, in the first instance, speak to a member of the Committee who will pass to the designated lead for safeguarding.
* The safeguarding lead will make a referral to the appropriate agencies, including England Netball, if there is a risk of abuse and neglect to any child or vulnerable adult;
* If at any time anyone thinks that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering harm they should refer immediately to Medway children’s social care or to the NSPCC. Anyone can report a concern to Medway children’s social care.
* If anyone believes that one individual – be it a player/parent/umpire/volunteer/coach is abusing a child or vulnerable adult or has witnessed an incident, they should report this to a member of the Committee immediately.

**Monitoring**

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

* changes in legislation and/or government guidance;
* as required by Medway Local Safeguarding Children Board and England Netball; and
* as a result of any other significant change or event.

**The first review will take place in December 2014.**

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Medway Netball.  Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

**Links**

England Netball    <http://www.englandnetball.co.uk/make-the-game/safeguarding>

NSPCC                    <https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

Medway Safeguarding Children Board      <http://www.mscb.org.uk/>

Medway Children’s Social Care      <http://www.medway.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/childrenandyoungpeople/makinglifebetter/childprotectionchildabuse/whentocontactsocialcare.aspx>