

POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Owner	Head of Interventions / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Policy approved by	Steel Warriors Board of Trustees
Date policy approved	May 2026
Next review date	March 2027, and immediately following any safeguarding incident
Review	In line with Charity Commission guidance, this policy will be reviewed as necessary, always following a serious incident and at least annually.

To report a concern: email safeguarding@steelwarriors.co.uk. If a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 999. Full contact details are in section 12.

VERSION LOG

Date	Owner	Changes
September 2026	Steel Warriors	Contact details updated in section 12: Designated Safeguarding Lead now Sarah Webb; safeguarding@steelwarriors.co.uk added as the main contact for this public version.
May 2026	Jenny Oklikah, CEO	Updated wording on latest legislation; policy review; safeguarding trustee; DSL and deputy DSL; and mental health, and suicide and self-harm.
March 2025	Lyndsey Phillips, DSL	

1. OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The vision of Steel Warriors is to make our communities safer. We use knives that have been taken off the streets by the police and turn them into outdoor street workout gyms which become a positive and safe space for young people and adults alike. Our commitment to supporting those who use our facilities is inherent in everything we do.

Steel Warriors is committed to safeguarding children and young people, meaning anyone under the age of 18, in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines. We will safeguard children and young people by ensuring that activities provided at our gyms are delivered in a way which keeps all children and young people safe.

We are committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm; to understanding risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; to understanding how abuse, exploitation or neglect manifest themselves; and to report safeguarding concerns.

This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Steel Warriors' services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Steel Warriors, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. It should be read alongside our Safeguarding Adults Policy.

The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within Steel Warriors and ensures appropriate policies, resources, and oversight mechanisms are in place.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

We expect our partner organisations, including for example, affiliated clubs, suppliers and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this policy and associated procedures.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- role description for the designated safeguarding officer
- dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- recording concerns and information sharing
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- photography and sharing images guidance
- safer recruitment
- online safety
- anti-bullying
- managing complaints
- whistleblowing
- health and safety

- induction, training, supervision and support
- adult to child supervision ratios.

5. STATEMENT

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004 define the safeguarding and promotion of children and young people's welfare as:

- Protecting children from abuse and/or neglect
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking positive action to support children to have the best outcomes in life.

Steel Warriors believes that all children and young people have the right to enjoy safe, happy and healthy lives without any form of harassment or abuse. We uphold our moral and legal responsibility to protect all children and young people regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or identity.

We understand that young people may be additionally vulnerable, and need additional consideration in Steel Warriors sessions or programmes, if:

- disabled or have Special Educational Needs
- vulnerable to discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity
- vulnerable to being bullied
- associated with gangs or child criminal exploitation
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- experiencing social deprivation
- care-experienced young people (including care leavers)
- young carers
- at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism
- victims or survivors of abuse

We recognise that the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all that Steel Warriors does, and our duty is to:

- Ensure everyone involved with Steel Warriors is aware of our safeguarding procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person
- Ensure any concern that a child or young person is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with Steel Warriors Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Ensure the well-being of those at risk of harm will be put first and they will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve.
- Ensure any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Maintain and securely store confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns.
- Where necessary, Steel Warriors will cooperate with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard a child/young person.

- Ensure all board members, staff, freelancers/contractors, officials and volunteers understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding children and young people and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.
- Steel Warriors uses safer recruitment practices and continually assesses the suitability of volunteers and staff to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in this organisation and within the sporting community.
- Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the Board and senior management team on a quarterly basis and the policy is reviewed by the board every three years.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Steel Warriors is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of all children and young people.
- Access to relevant legal advice.
- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how risks to children and young people safeguarding are being addressed and how any reports have been addressed.
- Safeguarding procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- An appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Deputy.
- A delegated Safeguarding Lead for events/trips/camps/competitions.
- A clear Case Management process.
- Codes of conduct that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- Risk assessments that specifically include safeguarding of children and young people.
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding Children & Young People policy:

✓ Safeguarding Adults ✓ Equality, diversity and inclusion ✓ Safe activities risk assessments ✓ Discipline and grievance ✓ Concerns, Complaints and Compliments	✓ Whistleblowing ✓ Safer recruitment and selection (staff and volunteers) ✓ Contract compliance ✓ Information policy, data protection and information sharing
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7. TRAINING

Staff will be provided with training and learning opportunities appropriate to their roles and responsibilities to ensure that our workforce is alert and aware of indicators of concern and that they have an understanding of contextual and transitional safeguarding, trauma-informed practice and, through an awareness of intersectionality, can better understand the overlapping and interdependent factors impacting young people (race, class, gender, physical appearance, faith/religion, sexuality, trauma, poverty etc).

8. IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT AND HARMFUL PRACTICES

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child or young person is deliberately hurt or injured. This includes hitting, shaking, burning, or any other form of physical harm. It can also involve giving children or young people harmful substances or objects to cause injury.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries, or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a team has been missing from practice sessions and is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance. This could be a player whose appearance becomes unkempt, does not wear suitable sports kit and there is a deterioration in hygiene.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, a participant may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual.
- A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices.
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused, i.e. a disclosure.

Emotional (or psychological) abuse

Emotional abuse involves behaviours that harm a child's or young person's emotional development. This includes bullying, threats, belittling, constant criticism, or deliberately ignoring or isolating a child. This may cause a child to feel frightened, constantly in danger, nervous or withdrawn. Emotional abuse can be particularly damaging as it can affect self-esteem, confidence, and the overall mental health of the individual. In sport, this can also involve unrealistic pressure to perform.

Neglect

Where an adult fails to meet a child's basic needs like food or warm clothing, fails or refuses to give children love, affection and attention. Neglect in a sports situation could include a teacher or coach not ensuring children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat, unnecessary risk of injury including not providing the correct kit or equipment.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as the behaviour or actions of a person, group of people or a whole organisation, which is designed or intended, to cause distress or hurt a person or group of people. It can take place in a variety of settings including face-to-face, via other people, on the phone or Internet, including social networking sites, such as Facebook, Snapchat and TikTok. All staff must be alert to the risk of bullying and take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour. Steel Warriors takes a trauma-informed approach to delivering our programmes and staff should be mindful of a child or young person's past experiences and adapt their practice accordingly.

Sexual abuse

Where girls and boys are abused by adults or other children, male or female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex and fondling or showing pornographic material. In sport, techniques that involve physical contact could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

Domestic abuse

The Government defines domestic violence as "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between people aged 16 years or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality." Where there is evidence of domestic violence, the implications for any children in the household should be considered, including the possibility that the children may themselves be subject to violence, or may be harmed by witnessing or overhearing the violence.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship so the sexual activity may appear consensual. This is called grooming and is a type of abuse. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. CSE does not always involve physical contact, and can also occur through the use of technology.

The potential for Child Sexual Exploitation should be considered if a young person:

- Has unexplained gifts or new possessions such as clothes, jewellery, a mobile phone or money
- Spending excessive amounts of time online
- Becoming secretive about what they are looking at or who they are talking to
- Appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Is being picked up or dropped off in cars driven by unknown adults
- Has a significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'friend' or lots of new friends
- Has a sudden involvement in criminal behaviour or an increase in offending
- Has sexual health problems such as repeated sexually transmitted diseases or urinary tract infections
- Displays a change in behaviour at school including attainment, attendance and friendships

Female genital mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Female Genital Mutilation is a serious criminal offence which carries a penalty of up to 14 years in prison for anyone committing or helping someone to commit it. If Female Genital Mutilation is committed, each person who has been responsible for a child whilst it has been carried out is considered guilty of an offence. There is a legal obligation on all organisations to report FGM and staff must alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns. Symptoms of Female Genital Mutilation include:

- Difficulty urinating
- Incontinence
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems

- Kidney damage and possible failure
- Emotional and mental health problems

County lines

There is an increasing number of children and young people becoming involved in the distribution and supply of drugs through 'county lines', essentially from large cities into suburban areas or coastal towns. This is a form of exploitation and children as young as 11 are being groomed by urban gangs to carry, manufacture and sell drugs. Signs of involvement may include:

- Increased drug and alcohol use
- Missing school and returning home late
- Being found outside the area
- Becoming isolated or withdrawn
- Having relationships with older adults or groups
- Using drug related or violent language
- Having unexplained injuries
- Carrying weapons

Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is defined in "Keeping children safe in education" (2024) as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs... calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.' Some children and young people can often feel, or see themselves, as rejected by society and, although their behaviour and habits can change for several reasons, they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Any significant change of behaviour needs to be recorded and discussed with the designated safeguarding lead. This may include:

- inappropriate language towards particular groups
- possession of extremist literature or accessing extremist websites
- withdrawal from family or friends
- trying to recruit others
- association with known extremists

Honour based violence

Honour based violence can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Honour based violence takes many different forms and can include:

- kidnapping
- forced suicide or honour killings
- physical abuse
- sexual violence

Mental health safeguarding risks

Mental health safeguarding risks refer to situations where an individual's mental health places them at risk of harm, either to themselves or from others. Steel Warriors recognises that poor mental health can present significant safeguarding risks. These may include self-harm, suicidal ideation, neglect, vulnerability to exploitation, or an increased risk of harm from others. All staff have a responsibility to remain alert to signs of mental distress, including changes in behaviour, withdrawal, expressions of hopelessness, or risk-taking behaviours.

Suicide and self-harm response protocols

Suicide and self-harm response protocols are the agreed procedures staff must follow when someone is at risk of intentionally harming themselves or expressing thoughts of suicide. Any disclosure or suspicion of suicidal thoughts or self-harm must be treated as a serious safeguarding concern. Staff must take all such concerns seriously and respond promptly. In the event of an immediate risk to life, emergency services must be contacted without delay. Where there is no immediate danger but concerns remain, staff should:

- Stay with the individual (where appropriate) and ensure they are not left alone if at risk
- Listen calmly and without judgement
- Reassure the individual that support is available
- Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Record all information accurately and factually

The DSL will assess the level of risk and take appropriate action, which may include contacting parents/carers (where appropriate), referring to mental health services, or escalating to external safeguarding agencies.

9. REPORTING, RECORDING AND RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

Reporting procedures

If you or a child is in immediate danger you should always phone 999.

If a child is in immediate danger, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should also obtain the advice of MASH (Tower Hamlets 020 7364 5601; Lambeth 020 7926 5555; Haringey 020 8489 4470 or Newham 020 3373 4600).

If a child is not in immediate danger, in the first instance, staff should use the Incident Report Form located on the Steel Warriors Shared Drive to report any incident or concern. This should include as much information as possible including:

- date and time of disclosure
- names of people involved
- what was said or done (using facts rather than hearsay)
- any action taken to investigate the matter
- any further action needed
- name of person reporting and to who the incident was reported

The Incident Report Form will immediately alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will automatically become the Case Manager, but the submission should be followed up with a call to provide further context and, also, support for the staff member involved.

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are always available for Safeguarding Incidents. The individual members are on duty on rotation over the 7 days in week so that cover is always present. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

We will work with the local authority and the police where needs be to provide more information about any concern, attend any relevant safeguarding meetings, share information about the outcomes of internal investigations and to provide a safe environment for the children and young people to continue to participate within Steel Warriors sessions and programmes.

Guidance on handling disclosures

We understand that this can be distressing for both parties, and will support staff to:

- provide training on scenarios in supportive spaces in preparation
- advise staff to react calmly and give full attention to the young person
- reassure the young person that they are not to blame and are doing the right thing by speaking up
- ask clear questions so an understanding of what is being said can be accurately recorded
- not make promises of confidentiality and explain clearly that Steel Warriors needs to act in a way that best keeps the young person safe
- make a full record of what has been said as soon as possible

10. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE SAFETY

Steel Warriors understands the importance of safeguarding young people from potential risks when using the internet and other related social media channels. Staff are encouraged to keep children and young people safe by following rules and principles such as:

- educate participants about the risks associated with taking and distributing images
- gain informed consent when taking digital or video images to support their work
- parental/carers consent should be obtained at all times for participants under 16
- images may be taken on personal equipment but must be done in a professional manner and should be passed to the Communications Team as quickly as possible and then deleted from personal equipment
- ensure participants are appropriately dressed when taking photos and that images reflect positive aspects of the activity that are taking part in
- do not 'friend' participants under 18 through personal social networking accounts
- if you create a WhatsApp group, think about the rules or guidelines for participants engaging in this

11. SAFER RECRUITMENT

We recognise that our staff and volunteers are our greatest resource. Our recruitment and selection policies are designed to ensure that individuals working with us are not just experienced and qualified, but also suitable and appropriate to work with the wide community of children, young people and young adults we serve. Our safeguarding commitment is clearly communicated through the recruitment and interview process. We require that all applicants undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) screening and are able to provide references to verify their employment history.

All staff, as well as freelancers who are engaged in any way in activities involving responsibilities for our young people, are required to have an enhanced level DBS check and to have undertaken our recommended NSPCC Safeguarding Training package.

12. CONTACT DETAILS

REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

safeguarding@steelwarriors.co.uk

Monitored by our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy. In an emergency, always call 999.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Sarah Webb

07483 659104

safeguarding@steelwarriors.co.uk

DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Simone Ming

07484 556918

safeguarding@steelwarriors.co.uk

NSPCC HELPLINE

0808 800 5000

Free advice for anyone worried about a child.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually and after any safeguarding incident to ensure lessons are captured and protection remains strong. This policy was last reviewed in March 2026.

Steel Warriors is a registered charity in England and Wales (1175317). This is the public version of the policy approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2026, with contact details updated in September 2026. The latest version is always at steelwarriors.co.uk/policies.