



# Bristol Blades Fencing Club: Child & Vulnerable Adult Welfare Policy Statement

## 1. Introduction

Bristol Blades Fencing Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children and **vulnerable adults** involved in the club from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Bristol Blades Fencing Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children through adherence to the Child Welfare guidelines adopted by the club, the **British Fencing (BF) Safeguarding Policy**, and the **BF Code of Conduct**. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)

## 2. Key Contacts

- **Bristol Blades Welfare Officer:** Yvonne Hopkinson
- **Telephone:** 07903932322
- **Email:** [safeguardingbristolblades@gmail.com](mailto:safeguardingbristolblades@gmail.com)
- **British Fencing Equality and Safeguarding Manager:** Liz Behnke
- **BF Telephone:** 07717740125 or (urgent) 07526003030
- **BF Non-Serious Welfare Reporting Tool:** [Link to Tool](#)

## 3. Policy Aims & Best Practice

The aim of this policy is to promote best practices that provide children with appropriate safety and empower staff to make confident responses to child protection issues.

### Best Practice Guidelines

- **Environment:** Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- **Relationships:** Maintain a safe and appropriate distance; avoid intimate relationships or shared rooms.
- **Conduct:** Treat all young people equally with respect. Be an excellent role model, avoiding smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

- **Physical Support:** If manual or physical support is necessary, it should be provided openly, after consultation and with consent from the fencer and parents.
- **Anti-Bullying:** The club recognizes that bullying and peer-on-peer abuse must be challenged and follows the **BF Anti-Bullying** standards.

### **Practices Never to Be Sanctioned**

- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative games/horseplay.
- Allowing inappropriate touching or making sexually suggestive comments.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Inviting children to stay unsupervised in your home.

## **4. Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment**

Bristol Blades recognizes that video equipment is a legitimate coaching tool.

- Coaches must inform fencers and parents if video recording is part of the coaching program.
- **Consent:** Parental consent must be obtained before using photos/videos on the club website or social media.
- **Opt-Out:** Parents and fencers have the right to **opt out** of photography or filming at any time.
- Any footage must be stored securely or deleted once no longer needed.

## **5. Recruitment and Training**

Bristol Blades follows strict recruitment procedures to prevent unsuitable people from working with young people.

- **Pre-selection:** All staff and volunteers must complete an application with self-disclosure, provide proof of identity, and submit two confidential references (one relating to previous work with children)
- **Vetting:** All applicants must consent to checks through the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**.
- **Training (Coaches):** All coaching staff must attend **British Fencing Safeguarding Core Training** and national first aid training
- **Training (Non-Coaching):** Only those in specific roles (e.g., those in regular contact with children) are required to complete recognized child protection training

## **6. Responding to Allegations or Suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of club personnel to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is a statutory responsibility to report concerns.

- **Poor Practice:** Allegations of poor practice will be handled by the Welfare Officer as a misconduct issue.
- **Suspected Abuse:** Any suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Welfare Officer, who will ensure the child's safety and report to Children's Services or the police.
- **Confidentiality:** Information will only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis with the Welfare Officer, parents, social services/police, and relevant BF officers

## 7. Document Administration

- **Author/Owner:** Bristol Blades Management / Welfare Officer
- **Date of Publication:** January 11, 2026
- **Date of Next Review:** January 2027