



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders/Talent Central recognises the importance of its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care.

This Policy is for and applies to:

- Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
- Talent Central Cheer & Dance

Hereafter, the above will be referred to as “The Group”.

As an organisation working with children and young people, The Group has a responsibility to act if abuse comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect children from the possibility of being abused within The Group.

It is the responsibility of the AEC Board of Trustees to appoint a designated Child Protection person to oversee the implementation of this policy. This position will be held for a one year term and then be reviewed by the Board when appropriate. If and when required, the named nominated person will work with the statutory agencies and other organisations.

The policy is to be reviewed by the board annually and will be updated in accordance with any update in law or safeguarding procedure, factoring in societal changes e.g. the use of social media and any changes in the cheerleading industry.

Nominated Child Protection Employee:	Robert Horton
Contact no:	07714631336

1.2 Mission Statement

As part of its mission The Group is committed to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all staff/coaches/volunteers Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse Encouraging and supporting parents/carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting those affected by abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make links with statutory childcare authorities and other organisations if and when required.



1.3 Policy

This policy covers all activities run by The Group for children and young people under the age of 18. It sets out what action will be taken in various circumstances in order to reassure parents, carers and funders that all possible steps will be taken to protect children involved in any aspect of The Group's activities. The procedures within this policy take the following into consideration:

- The Children's Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Government guidance: working together to safeguard children 2015.

The policy is consistent with the London Child Protection Procedures and the London Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. In line with these procedures and guidelines, this policy acknowledges that:

- Child abuse exists and can present itself in any of its forms - physical, emotional, neglect, sexual - alone or in combination
- Children may be abused and/or neglected by parents, carers, guardians or other trusted adults as well as strangers
- Abuse may be perpetrated by individuals, groups or networks of individuals.
- Children may also be abused by other children.

The Group is committed to on-going child protection training for all staff/coaches/volunteers to develop their understanding of the signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures of abuse. All new staff will be given a copy of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. Anyone in leadership who has contact with children/young people will complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application form. Any guest coaches or choreographers that work with athletes must show their enhanced DBS or background check.

Anyone under the age of 18 years cannot be counted in the ratio as a helper and should never be left in charge of a group of children.

In undertaking our responsibility of care we will:

- adhere to the Newham Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance on referring children if there are concerns about possible abuse
- keep written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- ensure our records are kept confidentially and securely
- provide support to children by encouraging self-esteem and confidence
- promote a positive and caring environment in The Group premises of operation
- liaise with relevant agencies if there is a significant concern
- only disclose information to other staff on a need-to-know basis
- provide support to staff in coping with situations of abuse that cause them stress or anxiety
- keep the safety & wellbeing of the children as a priority when considering procedures.

Registered address: Ascension Church Centre, Baxter Rd, Custom House, London, E16 3HJ

Registered Charity No: 1106766 Company Ltd. By Guarantee 4197666

t. 07854487309 director@ascensioneagles.com www.ascensioneagles.com



1.4 Signs of Abuse: indicators

Physical signs:

- Unexplained or untreated injuries or cuts
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls etc.
- Cigarette burns, bite or belt marks
- Covering their arms or legs unnecessarily
- Flinching when they are touched

Emotional signs

- Changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws
- Self-harming
- Sudden speech disorders
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and / or adults.

Neglect signs

- Regular poor hygiene
- Dishevelled appearance
- Constantly hungry
- Under-weight

Sexual signs

- Inappropriate (sexually explicit) language or behaviour
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour
- Fear of a particular person
- Pain, itching bruising or bleeding in the genital area /stomach pains.

1.5 Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a staff member/coach/volunteer carry out their own investigation into the allegations or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of the information should do the following:

Write down what you have been told or seen as quickly as possible after the incident. Sign and date your notes. Do not add your thoughts or feelings. This record must be factual and as accurate as possible. Use the words expressed by the individual.

Inform the nominated person as soon as possible. If this person is not available, speak to the Director (providing the allegation is not against them or another member of staff). Any concerns about the Director should be reported directly to the trustees by email:

trustees@ascensioneagles.com

- If an allegation is made against anyone in the organisation/The Group (including the Director) **do not** speak to this person about the allegation.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than the nominated person or Trustees.
- If a referral needs to be made to Social Services or police, do not delay if the nominated person is not available.



- Where the level of risk or concern remains unclear, consultation should be sought from Social Services who will seek to clarify the nature of the concern and whether immediate action is needed to make the child safe from harm or whether a referral is appropriate.
- **Do not** question the child/young person to enable you to obtain more information.
- Concerns should be discussed with the parent or carer and, where possible their agreement should be sought before making referrals to Social Services **unless this places a child at increased risk of significant harm.**

The role of the child protection officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information to Social Services. It is Social Services' task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

1.5.1 Guidelines for responding to an allegation of abuse from a child

When there are concerns regarding a child's welfare, staff will do the following:

- Keep calm, do not appear shocked or disgusted; do not tell them you are shocked
- Accept what the child says without passing judgment (however unlikely the disclosure may sound)
- Look directly at the child
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else; don't promise confidentiality
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened and fear reprisals for having spoken to you
- Never push for more information as this may undermine any subsequent investigation
- Show acceptance of what the child says – e.g. "I take what you are saying very seriously" or "I am pleased that you have told me"; "I am sorry that happened to you"; "I will help you"
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you
- Let the child know what you will be doing next and what will happen at each stage
- Immediately after the conversation, prepare a record of the allegation/ incident/ suspicion including date, time, place of conversation and anyone else who was present detailing exactly what the child has said. Record the date and time the concern was reported to the authorities.

1.5.2 Allegations against Staff

Any complaint against a member of staff or volunteer must be made to the nominated person who will make contact with Children's Services, and the Police if so required, in accordance with 'Working Together' 2015. Once the referral has been made complaints will go to the Board for relevant in house investigations.

In accordance with the AEC Disciplinary Procedure, the complaint will be treated as gross misconduct. The member of staff involved will be suspended from duty during investigation of the complaint. Whilst other members of staff should show due courtesy and respect the confidentiality of colleagues, the needs, welfare and protection of the children will at all times be paramount.

1.6 Appointment, Support and Training

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Each person is expected to complete an Enhanced DBS application form as required in the AEC Job Descriptions and give the names of 2 referees. References will be taken up by the nominated person or Director. Clearance from the DBS is required before the individual can begin working with children/young people.

Re-checking for DBS clearance will take place when advised by the Director or nominated person.

Each person working with children/young people must attend a child protection training course at least once every 2 years.

1.7 Children’s activities

Any planned activities must follow the good practice and health and safety guidelines contained in the separate AEC Health and Safety Policy and Standards of Behaviour for All Staff guidelines for activities on and off premises. The adult/child ratio must be observed for activities involving children under 8 years of age. Where appropriate, written parental permission must be given.

1.8 Support for those who have been abused

Further support from trained internal sources or external qualified sources (e.g. NSPCC, counsellors) and working with statutory agencies as appropriate should be offered to children who have been abused. If you have any concerns for a child/young person in relation to any child protection matter then speak to the nominated person for advice about what to do.

Every adult working with children on behalf of The Group must have access to a copy of this policy.

1.9 AEC child protection contact details

AEC/TC Child Protection Officer:	Robert Horton Mobile: 07714631336
Registered address:	Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders Ascension Church Centre Baxter Road Custom House London E16 3HJ
Office address:	Unit 27a Gallions Reach Shopping Park 3 Armada Way Beckton E6 7ER

1.10 Other useful numbers



Children's Triage Service	0207 373 4600
Newham Safeguarding Children Board	0207 373 3392
AEC director	Angela Green Mobile: 07854 487309 Email: director@ascensioneagles.com

This policy was last updated: November 2018