

Safeguarding Policy

Loughborough Judo Club | Version 2.0 | March 2026 | Next review: March 2027

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, call 999 immediately.

Club Safeguarding Officer: Alasdair Walker

Phone: 07772 120 290 | Email: safeguarding@loughboroughjudo.com

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Paula Miller

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AJA Safeguarding Lead: Phil Smith

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1. Purpose and Scope

Loughborough Judo Club (the Club) is a not-for-profit judo club based in Loughborough, affiliated to the Amateur Judo Association (AJA). This policy sets out the Club's commitment to safeguarding and protecting children, young people, and adults at risk who take part in our activities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, young people, and adults at risk from harm while participating in Club activities.
- Provide coaches, volunteers, and all Club personnel with clear, practical guidance on identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Set out the Club's reporting and recording procedures and its escalation routes to the AJA and statutory authorities.
- Reflect the Club's obligations under relevant legislation and the AJA and BJA safeguarding frameworks.

This policy applies to all people connected with the Club, including coaches, volunteers, administrators, participants, parents, carers, and visitors, regardless of their role or membership status.

2. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation and guidance:

Primary Legislation

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014 (England) - adults at risk
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (England and Wales)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (including Position of Trust amendments 2022)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

Statutory Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) - for contextual awareness

Sport and Sector Guidance

- British Judo Association SafeLandings safeguarding framework (January 2025)
- BJA Safeguarding Adults Policy (April 2024)
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) guidance
- Ann Craft Trust: Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework

3. Principles

The Club's approach to safeguarding is grounded in the following principles:

Children and Young People

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount and must always take precedence.
- All children, regardless of age, ability, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from harm.
- Working in partnership with children, parents, carers, and statutory agencies is essential for effective child protection.
- Children have a right to be heard and to have their views taken seriously.

Adults at Risk

The six Care Act 2014 principles of adult safeguarding underpin our approach to adults at risk:

- Empowerment: supporting adults to make informed decisions about their own safety and protection.
- Prevention: acting early before harm occurs.
- Proportionality: responding in the least intrusive way appropriate to the risk.
- Protection: providing support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership: working with local services and communities to prevent and respond to harm.
- Accountability: maintaining transparency in how safeguarding is delivered and recorded.

The Club recognises that adults at risk may include members with physical or mental health conditions, acquired disabilities, or needs for care and support. Vulnerability is not static and ability can change over time.

General Principles

- Coaches hold a position of trust and authority. This relationship must never be exploited.
- Parents and guardians place trust in the Club to keep their children safe. The Club takes that responsibility seriously.
- Judo involves inherent physical contact. This should always be appropriate to coaching need, openly conducted, and respectful of participant dignity.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just the Safeguarding Officer's.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Key Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name / Contact	Details
Club Safeguarding Officer	Alasdair Walker	Tel: 07772 120 290 Email: safeguarding@loughboroughjudo.com
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Paula Miller	Phone: 07813 125 259 Email: p.miller80@yahoo.co.uk
Venue Safeguarding Contact (URC)	Una Hubbard	Tel: 01509 215 660 Email: safeguarding@loughboroughurc.co.uk
AJA Safeguarding	Phil Smith	Tel: 07712 863 309 Email: philsmith52@hotmail.co.uk .
BJA Safeguarding	Safeguarding Team (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)	Tel: 0121 728 6920 Email: safeguarding@britishjudo.org.uk
LADO (Leicestershire)	Local Authority Designated Officer	Tel: 0116 305 0005 ladocontact@leics.gov.uk
NSPCC Helpline	24-hour helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000
Emergency services	Police / Ambulance	999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency police)

If a concern relates to the Club Safeguarding Officer: contact the Deputy Safeguarding Officer directly, or contact the AJA Safeguarding Team.

4.2 Responsibilities of Club Personnel

The Club will:

- Ensure all coaches and volunteers complete appropriate AJA or BJA-recognised safeguarding training before working with participants and renew this training as required.
- Maintain up-to-date records of safeguarding concerns, incidents, and actions taken, stored securely and in compliance with UK GDPR.
- Ensure all coaches and volunteers who work with children or adults at risk hold a current enhanced DBS check.
- Operate safe recruitment procedures for all roles that involve regular contact with children or adults at risk.
- Review this policy annually and whenever relevant legislation or guidance changes.
- Display safeguarding contact information at the venue and make this policy available to all members.

Every coach and volunteer must:

- Be familiar with this policy and the Club's reporting procedures.
- Report any safeguarding concern to the Club Safeguarding Officer without delay.
- Never attempt to investigate a concern themselves before reporting it.
- Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all participants.
- Complete required safeguarding training and keep it up to date.

5. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Abuse can happen in any context and may be carried out by anyone - a fellow participant, a coach, a family member, or someone outside the Club entirely. The following categories apply to both children and adults at risk.

5.1 Categories of Abuse (not an exhaustive list)

- Physical abuse: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint, or inappropriate use of sanctions. In a coaching context this includes intentionally striking an athlete.
- Emotional abuse: persistent criticism, threats, humiliation, isolation, or behaviour that damages a person's self-worth.
- Sexual abuse: any non-consensual sexual act or behaviour, including inappropriate touching, sexual comments or innuendo, sharing sexual images, or exploitation. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended 2022) makes clear that coaches are in a position of trust and that any sexual relationship between a coach and a participant they coach is a criminal offence, regardless of apparent consent.
- Neglect: failing to meet someone's basic physical, emotional, or medical needs. In a coaching context this includes failing to provide adequate water or rest breaks.
- Domestic abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse within a personal relationship or family setting.
- Discriminatory abuse: abuse based on race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- Financial or material abuse: theft, fraud, or misuse of someone's money or possessions.
- Organisational abuse: poor practice or ill-treatment resulting from the structure or culture of an organisation.
- Online and cyber abuse: cyberbullying, sharing of harmful or sexual images, grooming via social media or messaging platforms.
- Radicalisation: attempts to draw a person into extremist views or activities.
- Self-neglect: a person failing to care for their own health, hygiene, or wellbeing in a way that puts them at risk.

5.2 Signs and Indicators to Look Out For

These are not exhaustive but are indicators that may prompt a concern:

- Unexplained or inconsistently explained injuries.
- Significant changes in behaviour, mood, or attendance.
- Withdrawal, fearfulness, or apparent fear of a particular person.
- Unkempt appearance, poor hygiene, or signs of weight loss or neglect.
- Disclosure by the person themselves or by someone else.
- Inappropriate or sexualised behaviour for the person's age or development.
- Unexplained money or possessions going missing.
- Signs of distress when picked up or dropped off by a particular person.
- Repeated, similar concerns about the same individual from multiple sources.

Coaches and volunteers do not need to be certain that abuse is occurring to make a report. A concern, suspicion, or 'nagging doubt' is sufficient reason to report. It is not your role to investigate - it is your role to report.

6. Responding to and Reporting Concerns

6.1 If Someone Discloses Abuse to You

If a child or adult discloses abuse or a concern to you:

1. Stay calm and listen carefully without expressing shock or judgement.
2. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you may need to share what they tell you.
3. Use open, non-leading questions if you need to clarify what has been said.
4. Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in speaking up.
5. Do not attempt to investigate or gather further information.
6. Write down what was said as soon as possible, using the person's own words. Record the time, date, location, and who was present.
7. Report to the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, and without delay.

6.2 Reporting Escalation Route

The standard reporting route is:

1. The concern is raised with or observed by a coach, volunteer, or parent.
2. That person reports to the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately.
3. The Safeguarding Officer assesses the concern and determines whether to refer to the AJA, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, or the police.
4. If the concern involves the Safeguarding Officer, report directly to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer or the AJA.

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child or adult: call 999 without delay. Do not wait to speak to the Safeguarding Officer first.

After contacting emergency services, notify the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as it is safe to do so.

6.3 Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern - however small, even if no more than a nagging doubt - that an adult connected with the Club may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Club's code of conduct or values, but does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation.

Examples include: being overly friendly with a child in a one-to-one situation, using inappropriate language, or behaving in a way that is inconsistent with expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should still be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer. They will be recorded and monitored. A pattern of low-level concerns about the same individual may cumulatively meet the threshold for a formal allegation and referral to the LADO.

Club personnel are encouraged to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted, or if on reflection they feel they have behaved in a way that fell below expected standards.

6.4 Allegations Against Club Personnel

If an allegation is made against a coach, volunteer, or other Club personnel:

- The Club Safeguarding Officer will refer to the LADO (or equivalent) within 24 hours and follow LADO guidance on next steps.
- The AJA Safeguarding Team will be notified.
- The matter will be kept confidential and the subject of the allegation informed as appropriate, following advice from statutory agencies.
- Suspension of the individual will be considered, but is not an automatic response. It must be proportionate to the assessed risk.
- If the allegation concerns the Club Safeguarding Officer, the Deputy will take responsibility and the AJA will be notified directly.

Allegations found to be malicious will not be recorded on an individual's personnel record. For all other outcomes, a clear and comprehensive record will be retained, as this may be needed for future DBS references or if an allegation re-surfaces.

7. Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Accurate recording is essential. When recording a concern or incident:

- Record what was said or observed using factual, non-judgmental language.
- Clearly distinguish between fact, observation, direct speech, allegation, and opinion.
- Record the date, time, location, who was present, and who you reported to.
- Do not alter or destroy records once made.
- Submit a written record to the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Officer will maintain a confidential safeguarding log. All records are stored securely, accessible only on a need-to-know basis, and retained in line with the Club's data retention policy and UK GDPR requirements. Safeguarding records are retained indefinitely in line with BJA and IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) obligations.

8. Safe Practice and Professional Boundaries

The following standards of safe practice apply to all coaches and volunteers at all times. Physical contact in judo coaching is sometimes necessary and appropriate; the principles below govern when and how it should occur.

8.1 Good Practice

- Always coach in open, visible spaces. Do not conduct coaching sessions where a coach and participant are completely unobserved.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Contact during coaching should be necessary for the technique, openly delivered, and respectful of the participant's dignity. The participant's permission should be sought or evident.
- Never use physical contact as a punishment, reward, or means of control.
- Maintain appropriate emotional and social boundaries with participants. Do not form personal friendships with participants that blur the coach-participant relationship.
- Do not communicate privately with children outside of the Club, including by social media or messaging, except through a parent or guardian.
- Be aware of medical conditions, existing injuries, and medicines being taken. Keep written records of any injury or accident that occurs during Club activities, together with details of any treatment given.
- Ensure that someone with current knowledge of emergency first aid is always present at training sessions and events.
- Always carry out a pre-session safety check of the mat and venue.

8.2 Poor Practice - Things to Avoid

The following behaviours are considered poor practice and must be avoided. If any of these occur in exceptional circumstances, seek the Safeguarding Officer's approval in advance and keep a written record.

- Spending excessive time alone with a child or adult at risk outside of normal Club activity.
- Taking a participant alone in a car for any journey, however short.
- Inviting or taking a participant to your home.
- Sharing accommodation with a participant without other adults present.
- Using inappropriate, offensive, or sexually suggestive language or humour.
- Engaging in roughhousing, horseplay, or sexually provocative activities.
- Taking or sharing photographs or video of participants for personal use, or outside of the Club's photography consent framework.

Position of Trust: Coaches are in a position of trust. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended in 2022 to include sports coaches), any sexual relationship between a coach and a participant they coach under the age of 18, or an adult they coach who meets the position of trust criteria, is a criminal offence regardless of apparent consent or relative ages.

9. Safe Recruitment

The Club is committed to safe recruitment practices for all roles that involve regular contact with children or adults at risk. This includes:

- Requiring a completed application for all new coaching and volunteer roles, including a self-declaration of suitability to work with children and adults at risk.
- Obtaining an enhanced DBS check (with children's barred list check where applicable) for all coaches and volunteers before they begin working unsupervised with participants. This must be renewed at least every three years or when the Club has reason to request an earlier check.
- Verifying identity and relevant qualifications before a person begins coaching.
- Obtaining references and following them up for coaching and leadership roles.
- Ensuring all coaches hold a current, AJA or BJA-recognised safeguarding qualification appropriate to their role.

A DBS check confirms only that a person has not previously been identified as a risk. It is not a guarantee of suitability. Ongoing monitoring, supervision, and low-level concern reporting are essential complementary measures.

10. Online Safety and Social Media

The Club recognises that online and social media risks are a significant and growing area of safeguarding concern. The following standards apply:

- Coaches and volunteers should not have personal social media connections with child participants. Club communications with members should use official club channels.
- Group communications with junior members should include a parent or guardian in all messages.
- Photography and video of participants may only be taken by authorised Club officials and only in accordance with the photography consent given on membership forms. Images of under-18s may not be shared publicly without appropriate parental consent.
- Any concern about inappropriate online contact, sharing of images, or online bullying involving a Club member should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer as a safeguarding concern.
- Coaches and volunteers should model positive online behaviour and not use the Club's social media presence to make negative comments about individuals, coaching decisions, or competitions.

11. Anti-Bullying

Bullying in any form - including physical, verbal, emotional, and cyber bullying - will not be tolerated at Loughborough Judo Club. Bullying between participants, or by adults towards participants, is a safeguarding concern and will be treated as such.

Any person who believes they or another member are experiencing bullying should report it to the Club Safeguarding Officer. The Club will investigate all reports promptly and proportionately, and take action in accordance with its code of conduct and disciplinary procedures. Where bullying meets the threshold for a safeguarding concern, it will be reported through the standard safeguarding route.

12. Whistleblowing

The Club is committed to a culture of openness in which all members, coaches, parents, and volunteers feel safe to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

If you have concerns about safeguarding practices within the Club, or about the conduct of any Club personnel including the Safeguarding Officer, you may:

- Report to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- Report directly to the AJA Safeguarding Lead.
- Report directly to the BJA Safeguarding Team.
- Contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 (for concerns about children in sport).
- Contact the LADO (Leicestershire): 0116 305 0005 (for concerns about Club personnel who work with children).
- Contact the local authority adult safeguarding team for concerns relating to adults at risk.

All whistleblowing concerns will be taken seriously. The identity of the person raising the concern will be protected as far as is possible, consistent with the Club's duty to investigate.

13. Training and Awareness

The Club requires:

- All coaches to complete AJA or BJA-recognised child safeguarding training before coaching independently, and to renew this at least every three years.
- All coaches and volunteers in regular contact with adults at risk to complete training in safeguarding adults in sport.
- The Club Safeguarding Officer to complete an appropriate Club Welfare Officer training course (AJA or BJA-recognised) and to keep this training current.

Training records will be maintained by the Club Safeguarding Officer. The Club will review training needs annually as part of the policy review process.

The following free resources are recommended for parents and guardians:

- NSPCC / CPSU free e-learning for parents: the cpsu.org.uk/keeping-your-child-safe-in-sport/
- NSPCC free e-learning for coaches: learning.nspcc.org.uk

14. Photography and Imagery

Photography, video, and other imagery of participants is subject to the Club's consent framework set out in the membership forms. The key principles are:

- Photography and video may only be taken by authorised Club officials.
- Consent is required from parents or guardians for images of under-18s to be used on social media or shared with external parties. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- Images of participants should not be stored on personal devices without the Club's knowledge and consent framework being in place.
- Any misuse of participant imagery should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer immediately.

15. Code of Conduct for Coaches and Volunteers

All coaches and volunteers at Loughborough Judo Club are expected to:

- Treat all participants with dignity and respect at all times.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all interactions with participants, including outside of Club sessions.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact and ensure any contact in coaching is appropriate, openly conducted, and respectful.
- Not use language that is offensive, discriminatory, sexually suggestive, or belittling.
- Not shout at, intimidate, or humiliate participants as a form of motivation or discipline.
- Never be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when coaching or supervising participants.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly and without delay.
- Not attempt to investigate concerns themselves before reporting.
- Assess and minimise risks to the health and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Follow all Club policies, including this safeguarding policy and the codes of conduct in the membership forms.

Breach of this Code of Conduct: Failure to comply with this code may result in suspension from coaching, removal from Club roles, referral to the AJA or BJA, referral to the LADO, or a DBS referral, depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, by March 2027 at the latest, and earlier if:

- Relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes.
- There is a significant safeguarding incident within the Club.
- The AJA or BJA updates its safeguarding framework in a way that requires policy changes.

The Club Safeguarding Officer is responsible for maintaining this policy and for overseeing its implementation. The policy will be made available to all members and displayed at the Club venue.

The Club will conduct an annual safeguarding self-assessment to review whether its practices remain current and effective, covering training compliance, DBS renewal, incident log review, and policy currency.

17. Related Policies and Further Resources

This policy should be read alongside:

- Junior Information and Consent Form with Code of Conduct (March 2026)
- Senior Information and Consent Form with Code of Conduct (March 2026)
- BJA SafeLandings Safeguarding Framework
- BJA Safeguarding Adults Policy (April 2024)
- BJA Allegations Policy (April 2024)
- BJA Low Level Concerns Policy (April 2024)

Further information and guidance:

- NSPCC: nspcc.org.uk | Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- CPSU (Child Protection in Sport Unit): thecpsu.org.uk
- Ann Craft Trust (adults in sport): anncrafttrust.org
- United Reformed Church Safeguarding: urc.org.uk/safeguarding
- BJA Safeguarding: britishjudo.org.uk/safeguarding | Tel: 0121 728 6920

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	December 2024	Alasdair Walker	Original policy
2.0	March 2026	Alasdair Walker	Expanded legal framework, full adults at risk section, low-level concerns, allegations, safe recruitment, online safety, anti-bullying, position of trust, LADO referral route, DBS requirements, version control.