Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedures

V5.9 Revised: September 2026

Policy review record: Version 5.9 was reviewed in September 2026 for the 2026–2027 academic year in line with the newly published Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Prevent duty guidance, statutory guidance on female genital mutilation and current local safeguarding partnership procedures. The policy was approved for use from September 2026 and will next be reviewed by August 2027, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, commissioner requirements or local procedures change.

Responsibility

Overall and final responsibility for child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding is that of:

Andrew Crossley

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Andrew Crossley is Cycle North's Designated Safeguarding Lead and has overall responsibility for child and adult safeguarding, including ensuring that allegations concerning adults working with children are referred to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer where appropriate.

Should Andrew not be available contact Graham Creaton, graham.creaton@cyclenorth.co.uk, 07879450095.

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to all staff.

Statement

We all have a legal and moral responsibility to protect the children, young people and vulnerable adults, with whom we come into contact, from abuse. All individuals involved in cycle training for Cycle North Ltd, agree to abide by this policy.

This policy will also apply to the safeguarding vulnerable adults and concerns should be addressed through this policy. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' is a person who is 18 years or over who is in need of community care services by reason of mental health or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

General principles

- Everyone who participates in cycling is entitled to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- All Cycle North instructors and other staff must follow the policies defined in this document.
- Cycle North is committed to helping everyone in cycling accept their responsibility to safeguard children from harm and abuse and support them to do so.

This document sets out the procedures you need to follow to protect children and vulnerable adults and what you need to do if you have any concerns.

Current standards and guidance

This policy is intended to align with current national and local safeguarding standards and must be read alongside the latest applicable guidance. This includes Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which came into force on 1 September 2026 and replaced the 2025 edition, where Cycle North staff work in or with schools and colleges; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Disclosure and Barring Service guidance on regulated activity, barred-list checks and barring referrals; the Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales; and the local safeguarding children partnership procedures for each area in which Cycle North works. Cycle North currently works across Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Kirklees, and staff must follow the relevant local procedures for the area where the child lives, attends school, or where the safeguarding concern has arisen.

Cycle North will review this policy at least annually and sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, Bikeability requirements, commissioner requirements or local safeguarding procedures in any of the areas in which Cycle North works.

Scope

These policies apply to all instructors, assistants, volunteers, and anyone involved in cycling, whether or not they are Cycle North employees. All these people have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and prevent their abuse.

Why these policies are needed

Abuse can occur in many situations including the home, school and the cycling club. We know that some individuals will actively seek access to children and vulnerable adults through sport in order to harm them.

Policy statement

Cycle North is committed to:

- making the welfare of children and vulnerable adults paramount. This means that the need to ensure that they are protected is a primary consideration and may override the rights and needs of those adults working with them

- enabling everyone whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity to participate in cycling in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- taking seriously all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse and responding swiftly and appropriately to them in accordance with current procedures
- ensuring that all Cycle North employees who work with children and vulnerable adults are appropriate for that role and responsibilities and provided with relevant training
- recognising that children and families from minority group backgrounds may face barriers to accessing help and reporting concerns in respect of safeguarding issues

Good practice, poor practice and abuse

It can be difficult to distinguish poor practice from abuse, whether intentional or accidental. It is not the responsibility of any individual involved in cycling to make judgements regarding whether or not abuse is taking place, however, all Cycle North personnel have the responsibility to recognise and identify poor practice and potential abuse, and act on this if they have concerns.

Good practice

The role of instructor enables that individual to potentially develop a close relationship with children and vulnerable adults. All instructors have a responsibility to maintain high standards of professional practice.

Cycle North requires that instructors:

- are qualified to N.S.I. National Standards
- have completed Safeguarding and Protecting Children and vulnerable adults training
- are suitably educated in safeguarding and First Aid as a minimum standard.

They should:

- act as excellent role models, including demonstrating proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times, and not smoking, drinking alcohol or using, or being under the influence of, prohibited or illegal substances while working with children, young people or adults at risk;
- put the welfare, safety and dignity of children and adults at risk before personal achievement, performance outcomes or convenience;
- treat everyone fairly and respectfully, irrespective of age, disability, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, development stage, religion or belief, race, colour, culture, language or any other personal characteristic;
- ensure that children and adults at risk can participate without fear of harassment, intimidation, bullying, discrimination, degrading treatment or abuse;
- give similar attention, encouragement, time and respect to participants with different levels of ability, adapting support to individual needs;

- conduct a risk assessment before undertaking any cycling-related activity and ensure training takes place in as safe an environment as possible;
- make the experience of cycling safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable, using encouragement rather than shouting, humiliation or pressure;
- ensure that training intensity, session length and demands are appropriate to the participant's age, ability, health, fitness, development stage, confidence and weather conditions;
- watch for signs that a child or adult at risk is too wet, cold, hot, tired, thirsty, hungry, distressed, ill or otherwise unable to continue safely, and take appropriate action;
- try to ensure participants are appropriately dressed and equipped for the activity and conditions, including clothing, footwear, helmets and any necessary medication or support needs;
- build relationships based on trust, respect and clear professional boundaries, maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with trainees at all times;
- work in an open and observable environment wherever possible and avoid being alone or completely unobserved with a child;
- where one-to-one training is necessary, ensure parents, carers or those responsible for the child understand the arrangement, are invited to observe if they wish, and that training does not take place in a secluded area;
- hand over care of a child to an appropriate adult at the end of a session and never leave a child alone, unsupervised, or in a situation that staff cannot control;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact; where contact is necessary for safety, instruction or first aid, explain what is needed, seek agreement where possible, keep contact appropriate and stop if the participant objects or appears uncomfortable;
- avoid personal electronic communication with children or young participants, including personal email, text messages, messaging apps and social media, unless this is through approved Cycle North, school, commissioner or parent/carer channels;
- gain appropriate consent before administering first aid or emergency medical treatment where this is possible, while ensuring urgent medical help is sought without delay where needed;
- be aware of relevant medical conditions, existing injuries, disabilities, additional needs and medication, and keep a written record of any injury, accident, treatment or significant incident;
- ensure someone with appropriate and current emergency first aid knowledge is available during training;
- report any injury suffered by a child to the school, parent, carer, course organiser or Cycle North manager as appropriate;
- report any witnessed, suspected or disclosed safeguarding concern, poor practice or abuse in accordance with Cycle North procedures, and explain to a child who discloses abuse that the information must be passed on to people who can help keep them safe;
- take photographs or video of children only where Cycle North has authorised this and appropriate consent has been obtained for the image and intended use.

Personal Care

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people, particularly if they are very young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the young person and the parents

and/or school staff. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them to school staff or parents:

- if you accidentally hurt a trainee;
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner;
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.

Late collection

When working with groups of children outside of a School based situation late collection of children can present instructors with a potentially difficult situation. Cycle North will make clear that it is not their responsibility to transport children home on behalf of parents who have been delayed.

Cycle North will:

- promote a staff contact number for parents/carers to phone if there is any likelihood of late collection. Although it is unlikely that instructors will be able to answer their phone during training it should be possible to leave a message.
- ask all parents/carers to provide an alternative contact name and number to be used if they can't be reached on their usual numbers.

In cases of late collection, staff and volunteers **should:**

- attempt to contact the child's parent/carer on their contact number;
- use the alternative contact name/number if possible;
- wait with the child at the training / activity location, with other staff or parents present if possible;
- remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection.

In cases of late collection, staff and volunteers **should not:**

- take the child home or to any other location without speaking to their parents;
- send the child home with another person without permission from a parent or carer;
- ask the child to wait in a vehicle or building with you alone.

Photography

Cycle North is committed to ensuring young people are protected from the inappropriate use of their images. No images should be taken during training sessions or at events without the necessary consent being obtained first including for how the images will be used, especially if this is on websites and in other publications. Instructors should never take photos or video of trainees except following the specific direction of Cycle North management who will obtain the appropriate consent from the relevant parties. Instructors should discourage the taking of photos and video by participants, e.g. on smartphones, and not accept images taken by participants in this way.

Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided:

- contacting children or young participants outside the training session, activity or event through personal email, text, messaging apps, phone or social media;
- spending excessive time alone with children away from others, working in secluded areas, or allowing situations where an adult and child are completely unobserved without clear authorisation and safeguards;
- leaving a child alone, unsupervised, with an unsuitable person, or in any situation staff cannot control or where another person could abuse them;
- taking children alone in a car, inviting them into a vehicle, home or other building, or moving them to another location without appropriate permission and safeguards;
- engaging in rough, physical, humiliating, violent or sexually provocative games or behaviour;
- hitting, striking, shaking, pushing, grabbing, restraining unnecessarily or using physical punishment or force against a child;
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching, unnecessary physical contact, or contact that has not been explained where explanation is possible;
- using inappropriate language, sarcasm, put-downs, bullying, discriminatory comments, sexual references or sexually suggestive comments, even in jest;
- shouting at, intimidating, humiliating, threatening, ridiculing or reducing a child to tears as a form of control;
- putting children under excessive pressure to achieve or continuing training when a child is clearly too wet, cold, hot, tired, thirsty, hungry, distressed, ill or otherwise unable to continue safely;
- failing to consider whether children are appropriately dressed, equipped or supported for the activity and conditions;
- doing personal care tasks that children can do for themselves, except where agreed, necessary, safe and appropriate under the Personal Care section of this policy;
- taking photographs or video of children without Cycle North authorisation and appropriate parent, carer, school or commissioner consent;
- letting allegations, disclosures, injuries, signs of distress, suspected abuse or poor practice go unreported, unrecorded or not acted on;
- returning a child who cannot safely continue to a group without appropriate action; where a child cannot be safely managed, they must be returned to the care of the teacher, parent, carer, course organiser or other responsible adult.

Note: In exceptional circumstances it may be impractical to avoid some examples of poor practice, such as unavoidable one-to-one contact at collection or during an emergency. To protect the child, adult at risk and staff member, the situation must be made as open and observable as possible, host school or course organiser agreement and parent/carer consent should be sought where practical, and the instructor must inform their line manager or Cycle North's Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

If, while in your care, a child is accidentally hurt, appears distressed, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done, discloses abuse, reports poor practice, or

raises any concern about another person's behaviour, report the matter as soon as possible to the host school, parent/carer, course organiser, your line manager or Cycle North's Safeguarding Lead as appropriate, and record the concern in line with this policy.

Abuse

Abuse is a broad term in the context of safeguarding children. There are many degrees of abuse and it can take many forms. This can range from low-level name calling or ridiculing of a rider, which may be considered "poor practice" to serious neglect or physical attacks which would likely lead to a child protection investigation being conducted.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that without appropriate intervention, they may continue to have a very negative impact upon an individual into adulthood.

An individual who has been abused may:

- find it difficult, or impossible to maintain a stable, trusting relationship
- become involved with drugs or prostitution
- attempt suicide or self-harm
- go on to abuse another child.
- show angry or volatile behaviour without reason

Those who belong to a group that may be considered additionally vulnerable such as those with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as:

- stereotyping
- prejudice
- discrimination, including ethnic or racial
- isolation
- powerlessness to protect themselves
- inability to communicate that abuse has occurred.

Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. It is not the responsibility of those working in cycling to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries or an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- someone else, a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- unexplained changes in a child's behaviour, e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, displaying sudden outbursts of temper or behaviour changing over time
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour

- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with other children
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Abuse may be classified under the following headings:

Neglect

In a cycling context this could include:

- an instructor not keeping children safe by exposing them to undue cold, heat or the unnecessary risk of injury e.g. allowing cyclists under their supervision to train inappropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions
- a parent consistently leaving a child without adequate provisions e.g. food, water, clothing, sun protection.

Physical Abuse

In a cycling situation this could include:

- hitting a child in your care
- shaking a rider who has misbehaved during a session
- using violent, physical or humiliating punishments;

Sexual Abuse

In a cycling situation indicators could include:

- allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching
- making sexually suggestive comments even in fun
- an inappropriately close relationship developing between a rider and a coach
- do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves

Emotional Abuse

In a cycling situation this could include:

- a parent or instructor subjecting a rider to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying or racism

- a parent or instructor putting a rider under unrealistic pressure in order to perform to high expectations.
- reduce a person to tears as a form of control

Responding to suspicions and allegations of abuse

Introduction

Although most cases of child abuse take place within the family setting, abuse can and does occur in cycling.

- It is essential that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken.
- It is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse is taking place.
- It is your responsibility to report your concerns to the Cycle North management team- no matter how trivial the concern may appear.
- Not acting is not an option.

Receiving evidence of possible abuse

You may have concerns about abuse/poor practice because:

- you see it happening
- you recognise signs such as those listed in Section 2.4.1
- someone reports it to you
- a child approaches you directly.

If a child says or indicates that they are being abused, or you have concerns about their welfare you should:

- react calmly so as not to frighten them
- tell them they are not to blame and that it was right to speak up
- take what they say seriously
- recognise that there may be inherent difficulties in interpreting what is said by someone who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- reassure them, but do not promise to keep the matter secret – explain that to resolve the problem it will be necessary to inform other people as appropriate
- the safety of the child is paramount - if the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- record all information
- report in accordance with Cycle North's procedures.

Female genital mutilation

FGM is child abuse and is illegal. Any concern that a child may be at risk of FGM, or has had FGM carried out must be reported immediately to the school's designated safeguarding lead, and then Cycle North's Safeguarding Lead. This includes circumstances where a girl under 18 discloses that FGM has been carried out, or you observe physical signs appearing to

show that it has been carried out. Staff must record the concern and actions taken without examining the child or investigating the allegation themselves. Please refer to our Safeguarding – FGM guidance note for further details.

Extremism, radicalisation and the Prevent duty

Cycle North treats concerns that a child may be susceptible to radicalisation, terrorism or extremist influence as safeguarding concerns. Staff must notice possible indicators, check the concern with the school's designated safeguarding lead, and share relevant information promptly. Staff must not investigate the matter themselves. The school Safeguarding Lead will consider the local Prevent referral pathway and whether advice or a referral to the police Prevent team is required. All staff working with children must complete Prevent awareness training appropriate to their role as part of induction, or ongoing CPD.

Recording information: confidentiality and information sharing

All concerns that you may receive should be recorded.

You are recording this information for:

- yourself, so you have a record of what happened
- the Cycle North Management Team so that they can advise you
- the Police/Children's Social Care Services if appropriate.

It is not appropriate to share sensitive and confidential information with other people, e.g:

- your colleagues who are unconnected to the incident
- other acquaintances outside Cycle North

Any information relating to child protection should be held under secure conditions and made available on a need-to-know basis only.

When recording information you should:

- confine yourself to the facts – what you have observed/seen, heard or had reported to you
- distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people
- not include your own opinions on the matter. Be clear where you are giving either your own or others' interpretation of events and the reasons for this (e.g. context, individual's response to challenge).

Reporting the concern

The discovery that someone you know may be abusing a child will raise strong feelings and concerns. Although it can be difficult to report such matters, you must remember that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- being vigilant helps to protect children
- everyone has a duty of care to report any concerns they have immediately
- a good reporting structure ensures that concerns are dealt with fairly.

Cycle North's Whistle Blowing Policy assures all members, staff, and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

Involving parents or carers

Cycle North is committed to working in partnership with parents. In most situations, it is important that parents are allowed to clarify any initial concerns e.g. if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced a recent bereavement.

Where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or may not be able to respond to the situation appropriately they should not be involved, as it may place the child at greater risk.

Involving Cycle North

Cycle North must be informed of all allegations of abuse and persistent poor practice as soon as possible in order to decide the following:

- what further action should be taken by Cycle North
- whether further action, advice or investigation is needed by/from the Police, Children's Social Care Services or the NSPCC.

Passing on this information is important because the matter may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern.

Involving statutory agencies

If a child is in immediate danger, or there is an immediate risk of serious harm, call the police on 999. If urgent medical attention is needed, call an ambulance and make clear that there is a safeguarding concern.

- For concerns about a child, staff must contact the children's social care front door, MASH, safeguarding hub or duty and advice service for the local authority area where the child lives, attends school, receives Cycle North provision, or where the safeguarding concern has arisen. If there is uncertainty about which area is responsible, contact the authority where the concern has arisen and follow their advice.
- Cycle North currently works in Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Kirklees. Staff must use the current published contact details and referral routes for the relevant local safeguarding children partnership or local authority children's social care service. Contact details can change, so staff must check the relevant local authority or safeguarding partnership website at the time of the concern.
- In West Yorkshire areas, this will usually mean following the relevant local arrangements for Leeds, Wakefield or Kirklees and the West Yorkshire Consortium inter-agency safeguarding and child protection procedures. In South

Yorkshire areas, this will usually mean following the local arrangements for Sheffield, Rotherham or Doncaster and the relevant safeguarding children partnership procedures.

Before contacting the relevant local authority service, staff should normally discuss the concern with Cycle North's Safeguarding Lead or line manager, unless the child is at immediate risk or delay would increase risk. Parents or carers should normally be informed and consent sought before making a referral, unless doing so would place the child at increased risk, prejudice a police investigation, or make the situation unsafe. If the concern arises during school-based delivery, staff should also inform the school's designated safeguarding lead unless doing so would increase risk or delay urgent action.

- The police should be contacted where a crime may have been committed, where there is immediate risk, or where police protection or urgent investigation may be required. Record any incident, log or crime reference number provided.
- The NSPCC helpline can be used for safeguarding advice and support on 0808 800 5000 or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk. If risk increases or immediate action is needed, contact the police or local authority children's social care directly.

Where an allegation or concern relates to a Cycle North employee, instructor, assistant, volunteer, contractor or other adult working with children, Cycle North's Safeguarding Lead must consider whether the Local Authority Designated Officer threshold is met. The relevant LADO is normally the LADO for the local authority area where the person works, where the child lives, where the incident occurred, or where the organisation is delivering the activity; if there is uncertainty, seek advice from the local authority where the concern arose. LADO procedures across local authorities are based on the same national threshold: concerns that a person has harmed, or may have harmed, a child; may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; may pose a risk of harm to children; or may not be suitable to work with children. LADO advice or referral should be sought within one working day where the threshold may be met.

Area	Child safeguarding referral route	LADO route
Leeds	Duty and Advice / Children's Social Work Services, using current Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership and Leeds City Council guidance.	Leeds LADO service, using current Leeds published contact details and notification process.
Wakefield	Wakefield children's social care front door / MASH arrangements, using current Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.	Wakefield LADO process and referral form, using current Wakefield published guidance.
Kirklees	Kirklees Duty and Advice / children's social care arrangements, using current Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.	Kirklees LADO service, contact or referral form, using current Kirklees published guidance.
Sheffield	Sheffield Safeguarding Hub / children's social care referral route, using current Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership guidance.	Sheffield LADO route through Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, using current Sheffield published guidance.

Rotherham	Rotherham MASH / children's social care route, using current Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.	Rotherham LADO referral process, using current Rotherham published guidance.
Doncaster	Doncaster children's social care / child at risk referral route, using current Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.	Doncaster LADO referral process, using current Doncaster published guidance.

All telephone referrals or contacts with statutory agencies should be recorded and, where required, followed up in writing within 24 hours. The record should include:

- the name, role and agency of the person spoken to;
- the time and date of the call or contact;
- the information shared, including the child's details, the nature and immediacy of the concern, any known family context, and whether parents or carers have been informed;
- the advice received, decisions made, agreed actions, reference numbers and who is responsible for taking the next steps.

Allegations of previous abuse

Where information indicates that a person may be barred from regulated activity with children, Cycle North will check their status and must not permit them to undertake regulated activity if they are barred. Relevant convictions, cautions, safeguarding findings and other suitability information will be considered through safer recruitment, disciplinary, referral and risk-management procedures, in accordance with applicable law and statutory guidance.

Barring individuals from working with vulnerable groups

Individuals working in cycling may be or become barred from working with vulnerable groups. This means they can no longer engage with these groups. This will occur in a number of ways:

- Cycle North may refer an individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the legal referral duty applies, including where the individual has been removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- The individual may be barred due to reasons outside of cycling

Actions and sanctions

Cycle North may take action to restrict a member's involvement in cycling during an ongoing investigation. This is a neutral act and does not pre-empt any decision. At a later point the individual may be subject to action under the Cycle North Disciplinary Rules.

Summary

As outlined elsewhere in this document everyone involved in delivering cycling activities has a duty to act if they have a concern about a child. There are a variety of actions that can be taken. As a minimum the person concerned should contact Cycle North management for help and guidance on how to progress their concerns.

Additional information on child safeguarding and safeguarding adults must be obtained from the relevant local safeguarding children partnership, local authority children's social care service, safeguarding adults board or local multi-agency procedures for the area in which the concern arises. For Cycle North this may include Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster or Kirklees.

Staff must use current local authority and safeguarding partnership websites and procedures at the time of the concern, because contact details, forms and referral routes may change.