



## Low Level Concern Policy

### 1. Introduction

Everyone who participates in Netball Portugal activities is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Netball Portugal and its clubs have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, and in working with adults at risk, coaches, other employed staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Netball Portugal is committed to devising and implementing policies that support and assist everyone in the sport, to accept their legal responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children and adults at risk and to report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities. Netball Portugal have designated safeguarded officials when hosting events and encourage all clubs across Portugal to become safe guarded approved. Currently there is a 3-course offered free on charge at Europe Netball: <https://netball.sport/game/safeguarding/>

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice for reporting lower-level concerns.

#### 1. We are committed to:

- Creating and promoting a positive culture.
- Ensuring the Netball Family are aware of what they can report.
- Ensuring children and young people are listened to and heard.
- Promoting peer-on-per-person support within Clubs.
- Ensuring all individuals, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in Netball in a fun and safe environment.

- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm. This category includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill treatment, neglect, bullying or discriminatory abuse. The child should have a voice that is heard and their rights, wishes and feelings should be considered with respect.
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse shall be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, no matter the level of concern.

## 2. What we mean when we say...

2.1. **A child** is defined as a person under the age of 18 (CHECK IF COUNTRY HAS A LEGAL AGE DEFINITION) therefore the term child encompasses young people.

2.2. **An adult at risk**, is defined as an adult who: - (CHECK IF COUNTRY HAS A LEGAL AGE DEFINITION)

- a) Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- b) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of these needs) and
- c) As a result of these needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

2.3. **Netball Family**: This means everyone involved in the sport of netball at all levels of the game. It includes all individuals, affiliated bodies, clubs, associations, and other organisation's involved in any capacity in the game of netball – whether or not they are members of Netball Portugal. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes all players and anyone working within netball (in a paid or voluntary capacity or whether they are an employee or are self-employed or working on any other basis). It includes all coaches, umpires, referees, and other officials.

2.4. **A lower-level concern** is any concern, doubt, or uneasiness about a person or situation. No matter how small you may think a concern is, these concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer to support and help resolve these issues before they become a serious safeguarding concern.

## 3. Lower-level concerns

A lower-level concern is any concern, doubt, or sense of unease, no matter how small, that someone may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with an organisations code of conduct. This includes inappropriate behaviour outside of work, volunteering, or being an athlete. These concerns are often not considered serious enough to refer to a statutory service such as the police

or children's services and are sometimes referred to as poor practice.

A lower-level concern may not be seen as immediately threatening or intentionally harmful to an individual, but it may have the potential to become a bigger and more serious safeguarding concern.

Netball Portugal want everyone within the Netball Family to be aware of lower-level concerns and how to report them.

#### 4. Examples of lower-level concerns

Here are some examples of lower-level concerns – this list is not exhaustive, and concerns can develop from different forms of behavior:

- An adult being over friendly with children.
- An adult or young person swearing, shouting, or being aggressive.
- Someone walking through the changing rooms whilst young people are changing.
- A Coach has a favourite and not focussing on the whole team.
- Someone taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.
- A youth leader offering a child a lift home or waiting alone with a child for their parent to arrive.
- A captain enforcing a humiliating team bonding activity.
- A match official or coach verbally complimenting an athlete whilst giving their arm a squeeze.

#### 5. What to do...

To ensure that children, young people, and adults at risk are able to play netball in a safe environment, we want all lower-level concerns raised with your Club Safeguarding Officer immediately. To help us make this happen, it is essential for everyone to understand that concerns, no matter what level, need to be addressed straight away and feel confident to report them if they feel 'something isn't quite right'.

To report a lower-level concern, speak with your Club Safeguarding Officer. They will have a confidential chat with you about your concern and will log and observe/investigate the concern.

Clubs need to make sure they are letting their club know who their Club Safeguarding Officer is at the beginning of every season – it is vital that your members know who they need to speak to if they have a concern.

If you aren't confident speaking to your Club Safeguarding Officer, you can email [info@netballportugal.com](mailto:info@netballportugal.com) and Netball Portugal will speak to you directly.