



CM Sports – Key Person Policy	
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1. Policy Statement

CM Sports recognises the importance of children having trusted and consistent adults who they can approach when they need support.

Where appropriate, CM Sports will operate a **Key Person approach**, ensuring children have access to a named member of staff who can provide consistent support, help children feel safe and settled, and act as an important point of communication.

The Key Person approach supports CM Sports' wider commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, wellbeing and child-centred practice.

The welfare and **best interests of the child** will remain central to all decisions.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide children with a trusted adult within CM Sports;
 - support children to feel safe, valued and included;
 - help staff understand children's individual needs;
 - promote positive relationships between children and staff;
 - support communication with parents/carers;
 - identify concerns at an early stage;
 - support children who may be anxious, unsettled or vulnerable;
 - provide additional support for children with SEND or other individual needs; and
 - strengthen CM Sports' safeguarding culture.
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3. Who Is a Key Person?

A Key Person is a member of CM Sports staff who has an identified responsibility for supporting a particular child or group of children.

The Key Person should be:

- approachable;
- trustworthy;
- professional;
- consistent;
- respectful;
- attentive to children's needs;
- aware of safeguarding responsibilities; and
- able to communicate appropriately with children and parents/carers.

The Key Person is **not** expected to deal with safeguarding concerns alone.

Where a child discloses a safeguarding concern or the Key Person identifies a concern about a child's welfare, the concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay.

4. Allocation of Key Persons

CM Sports will consider the needs of children when allocating Key Persons.

Where appropriate, allocation may take account of:

- age;
- communication needs;
- SEND;
- disability;
- medical conditions;
- emotional wellbeing;
- additional support needs;
- language or communication requirements;
- previous experiences;
- known vulnerabilities; and
- the child's own preferences where appropriate.

Children should, wherever practicable, have access to a familiar adult rather than being expected to repeatedly explain their needs to different members of staff.

5. The Child's Voice

CM Sports recognises that children should be listened to and supported to express their views.

Key Persons should:

- listen carefully;
- take children seriously;
- provide age-appropriate explanations;
- encourage children to express concerns;
- respect children's feelings and experiences;
- avoid dismissing concerns; and
- ensure concerns are passed to the appropriate person.

Children should never be made to feel that they are responsible for resolving adult concerns.

6. Supporting Children's Wellbeing

The Key Person should help children feel:

- welcomed;
- safe;
- respected;
- included;
- listened to; and
- supported.

They may help children with:

- settling into a new activity;
- separation from parents/carers;
- anxiety;
- friendship difficulties;

- changes in routine;
- confidence;
- emotional regulation;
- participation in activities; and
- accessing additional support.

The Key Person should remain alert to significant changes in a child's behaviour or presentation.

7. Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Key Person approach forms part of CM Sports' wider safeguarding arrangements.

Key Persons must understand that they have a responsibility to identify and report safeguarding concerns.

Concerns may include:

- abuse or neglect;
- bullying;
- child-on-child abuse;
- sexual harassment or sexual violence;
- exploitation;
- online safety concerns;
- domestic abuse;
- mental health concerns where there may also be a safeguarding risk;
- changes in behaviour or presentation;
- unexplained injuries; or
- anything else that causes concern about a child's welfare.

Concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL **without delay**.

Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

8. Responding to a Disclosure

If a child chooses to speak to their Key Person about something worrying them, the Key Person should:

1. listen calmly;
2. allow the child to speak without interruption;
3. take the child seriously;
4. reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking;
5. explain that the information may need to be shared to keep them safe;
6. avoid promising confidentiality;
7. avoid leading questions;
8. record the concern using the child's own words where possible; and
9. report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

The Key Person must not attempt to investigate or determine whether an allegation is true.

9. Confidentiality

A Key Person must maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Children should understand that staff cannot promise to keep information secret if it relates to their safety or the safety of another person.

Information will only be shared with appropriate people who need it to safeguard or support the child.

Safeguarding information must be recorded and stored securely.

10. SEND and Additional Needs

CM Sports recognises that some children may require additional support to communicate their needs or feel safe.

Key Persons should consider reasonable adjustments for children with:

- SEND;
- disabilities;
- communication difficulties;
- sensory needs;

- learning difficulties;
- medical conditions; or
- other additional needs.

Staff should use appropriate communication methods and allow children sufficient time to express themselves.

Where a child has an individual support plan, healthcare plan or other agreed arrangement, staff should follow the relevant procedures.

11. Medical Needs

Where relevant, the Key Person should be aware of essential information relating to a child's medical needs.

This may include:

- allergies;
- medication;
- emergency medication;
- medical conditions;
- activity restrictions; and
- individual healthcare arrangements.

Medical information must be treated confidentially and only shared with staff who need the information to keep the child safe.

12. Supporting Children During Activities

Key Persons should support children to participate safely and confidently.

They should:

- encourage participation;
- identify barriers to involvement;
- support reasonable adaptations;
- encourage positive relationships;
- monitor children's wellbeing; and

- communicate concerns to the appropriate member of staff.

A Key Person should never pressure a child to participate in an activity where doing so may compromise their safety or wellbeing.

13. Parent and Carer Communication

Where appropriate, the Key Person may act as a familiar point of communication for parents/carers.

Communication should:

- remain professional;
- relate to the child's wellbeing, participation or support;
- respect confidentiality;
- follow CM Sports communication procedures; and
- be recorded where the information is significant.

Safeguarding concerns must be managed through the appropriate safeguarding procedures and should not be dealt with informally with parents/carers where doing so could place a child at further risk.

14. Professional Boundaries

Key Persons must maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.

Staff must not:

- form inappropriate personal relationships with children;
- communicate with children through personal social media accounts;
- use personal messaging accounts unless specifically authorised;
- meet children privately outside CM Sports activities;
- give inappropriate gifts;
- show favouritism;
- encourage secrecy; or
- behave in a way that could compromise professional boundaries.

All communication and relationships must remain professional and appropriate.

15. Vulnerable Children

CM Sports recognises that some children may require additional support because of their circumstances.

Additional consideration may be required for children experiencing:

- family difficulties;
- bereavement;
- domestic abuse;
- bullying;
- exploitation;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- mental health difficulties;
- attendance concerns;
- social or emotional difficulties; or
- other circumstances affecting their welfare.

The Key Person should communicate relevant concerns to the DSL or appropriate manager.

16. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Key Persons should be alert to significant changes in a child's emotional wellbeing.

Possible indicators may include:

- withdrawal;
- persistent sadness;
- unusual aggression;
- anxiety;
- changes in behaviour;
- loss of interest;
- significant changes in participation;
- changes in relationships; or

- expressions of hopelessness or distress.

A wellbeing concern should not automatically be treated as a safeguarding concern, but staff must consider whether there may also be a risk of harm.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, the DSL must be informed without delay.

17. Online Safety

Key Persons should remain aware that children's experiences outside CM Sports may affect their wellbeing and safety.

Where a child raises concerns about:

- social media;
- cyberbullying;
- online grooming;
- inappropriate messages;
- exploitation;
- harmful content; or
- online relationships,

the concern must be reported through CM Sports safeguarding procedures.

Staff must not attempt to investigate children's online accounts themselves.

18. Recording

Where a Key Person identifies a significant concern about a child's wellbeing or safeguarding, an appropriate record must be made.

Records should be:

- factual;
- accurate;
- objective;
- dated;
- completed promptly; and
- stored securely.

Where a safeguarding concern is recorded, the record should identify, where appropriate:

- the concern;
 - actions taken;
 - decisions made;
 - reasons for decisions;
 - information shared;
 - advice received; and
 - outcomes or follow-up actions.
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19. Information Sharing

CM Sports recognises that effective safeguarding may require information to be shared with appropriate people and agencies.

Information may be shared with:

- the DSL;
- Deputy DSL;
- parents/carers where appropriate;
- the child's school;
- children's social care;
- the police;
- health professionals; or
- other relevant safeguarding partners.

Information should be shared when necessary, proportionate and appropriate to protect or support the child.

Data protection must not prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing where a child may be at risk.

20. Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, CM Sports will cooperate with relevant professionals and agencies to support children.

This may include:

- schools;
- children's social care;
- health services;
- police;
- safeguarding partners; and
- other professionals involved in supporting the child.

The Key Person should cooperate with agreed support arrangements while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and professional boundaries.

21. Change of Key Person

CM Sports recognises that staffing changes may occur.

Where a Key Person leaves, changes role or is unavailable for an extended period, CM Sports will make reasonable arrangements to ensure the child continues to have access to appropriate support.

Where appropriate, children and parents/carers should be informed of significant changes.

22. Staff Training

Key Persons will receive appropriate information and training relevant to their responsibilities.

Training may include:

- safeguarding;
- child protection;
- communication with children;
- SEND awareness;
- wellbeing;
- professional boundaries;
- information sharing;
- recognising signs of abuse and neglect; and

- responding to disclosures.

All staff must understand that safeguarding remains the responsibility of everyone, regardless of whether they are a child's Key Person.

23. Allegations or Concerns About a Key Person

If a concern or allegation is made about a Key Person, the matter must be managed in accordance with CM Sports safeguarding procedures.

The Key Person's role must never prevent a concern from being reported.

Where appropriate, concerns may involve:

- the DSL;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- children's social care;
- the police; or
- another relevant agency.

Staff should also refer to the **Whistleblowing Policy** where appropriate.

24. Monitoring

CM Sports will monitor the effectiveness of the Key Person approach through:

- feedback from children;
- feedback from parents/carers;
- staff observations;
- safeguarding records;
- wellbeing concerns;
- incident reviews; and
- management review.

Where concerns or weaknesses are identified, CM Sports will consider appropriate changes.