NNL YOUTH SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE POLICY

Applies to: Netbal Nederland, affiliated clubs, coaches, volunteers, officials, parents/carers and all persons involved in Netbal Nederland youth activities

Children and young people: Anyone under 18 years of age

1.0 Purpose and Commitment

Netbal Nederland is committed to ensuring that every child and young person has the right to participate in netball in a safe, positive, inclusive and child-centred environment.

We recognise that participation in sport can provide children and young people with opportunities to develop physical skills, confidence, friendships, resilience and a sense of belonging. These benefits can only be achieved when the welfare, dignity and wellbeing of children are placed at the centre of our sport.

Netbal Nederland therefore adopts a child-centred approach, where the needs, rights, safety and wellbeing of children take priority over competitive outcomes. Winning and losing are important elements of sport, but they must always be kept in a healthy perspective.

No sporting result, selection decision, performance expectation or competitive objective is more important than the safety and welfare of a child.

This policy establishes the minimum safeguarding standards expected of Netbal Nederland and all affiliated clubs.

Netbal Nederland expects every club to actively promote safeguarding, prevent harm, respond appropriately to concerns and create an environment in which children feel safe, respected, heard and able to participate.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

a. Netbal Nederlands directors, employees and volunteers.
b. All affiliated Netbal Nederlands clubs.
c. Coaches and assistant coaches.
d. Team managers and volunteers
e. Umpires and officials working with children.
f. Parents, carers and guardians participating in club activities.

g. Club committee members and safeguarding contacts.
h. Anyone else acting on behalf of, or representing, Netball Netherlands or an affiliated club in activities involving children.
i. Children and young people participating in Netbal Nederland activities.

2.2 For the purposes of this policy, a child means any person under the age of 18.

2.3 Although this policy focuses on children and young people, the principles may also provide an appropriate framework for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

3.0 Safeguarding Principles

Netbal Nederland is committed to the following principles:

3.1 The right to safety

Every child has the right to participate in netball without abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, discrimination, violence or other forms of harm.

3.2 The child's best interests

The welfare and best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all decisions concerning youth netball.

3.3 Equality and inclusion

Regardless of:

a. age;
b. gender or gender identity;
c. religion or belief;
d. ethnicity or cultural background;
e. disability;
f. sexual orientation;
g. social or economic background; or
h. any other characteristic,

All children must have fair and equal opportunities to participate in netball. Netbal Nederland recognises that some children may experience additional vulnerabilities and barriers to participation and that appropriate additional safeguarding measures may therefore be required.

3.4 Children should participate in an environment that is:

a. safe;
b. positive;
c. nurturing;

d. inclusive;
e. respectful; and
f. appropriate to their age, development and individual needs.

3.5 Netbal Nederland does not tolerate physical or psychological abuse, maltreatment, neglect, violence, exploitation, harassment, bullying, discrimination or any other behaviour that places a child at risk of harm.

4.0 Definition of Grensoverschrijdend Gedrag (GOG)

4.1 Netbal Nederland adopts the NOC*NSF definition of grensoverschrijdend gedrag (GOG):

"Grensoverschrijdend gedrag is elke vorm van handelen en/of nalaten dat als doel en/of gevolg heeft dat de waardigheid en/of veiligheid van één of meerdere personen wordt aangetast."

In English:

Boundary-crossing behaviour is any form of action and/or omission that has the purpose and/or consequence of affecting the dignity and/or safety of one or more people.

This definition applies to all participants in Netbal Nederlands activities.
Examples may include, but are not limited to:

a. physical abuse;
b. sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
c. emotional or psychological abuse;
d. neglect;
e. bullying;
f. harassment;
g. discrimination;
h. intimidation;
i. humiliation or degrading treatment;
j. inappropriate physical contact;
k. inappropriate relationships or communication between adults and children;
l. misuse of authority or power;
m. online abuse;
n. inappropriate use of images or personal information; and

o. behaviour that otherwise compromises the dignity, wellbeing or safety of a child.

4.2 A safeguarding concern does not need to involve proven abuse before action is taken. Any concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child should be taken seriously and reported through the appropriate safeguarding procedure.

5.0 Responsibilities of Netbal Nederland

5.1 Netbal Nederland will:

1. Establish and maintain national safeguarding standards for youth netball.
2. Provide affiliated clubs with appropriate safeguarding guidance, policies and resources.
3. Promote a culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
4. Maintain appropriate records of coaches, volunteers and relevant qualifications in accordance with applicable privacy and data-protection requirements.
5. Promote appropriate training and education for coaches, volunteers and officials.
6. Monitor clubs' compliance with this policy.
7. Provide an appropriate route for safeguarding concerns to be escalated to Netball Netherlands.
8. Review safeguarding procedures regularly.
9. Ensure safeguarding policies reflect relevant Dutch legislation, NOC*NSF guidance, Europe Netball guidance and recognised international safeguarding principles.
10. Take appropriate action where a club or individual fails to meet safeguarding requirements.

6.0 Requirements for Affiliated Netball Clubs

6.1 Every affiliated club providing activities for children must adopt this safeguarding policy and maintain a safe sporting environment. At a minimum, each club must:

1. Formally appoint at least one certified Confidential Advisor (VCP).
    a. If it is not possible, then the NNL VCP can be contacted.
2. Ensure their VCP completes the official NOC*NSF VCP training modules.
3. Clearly share the VCP’s identity and contact details with all members, players, and parents.
4. Ensure all youth coaches, board members, and relevant volunteers have a verified VOG before starting their roles.

6.2 Every club must have a written Youth Safeguarding Policy or equivalent safeguarding guidelines.

The policy must:

1. be accessible and understandable;
2. be communicated to coaches, volunteers, parents/carers and young people where appropriate;
3. identify the club's safeguarding responsibilities;
4. identify the club's safeguarding contact person;
5. explain how concerns and complaints are reported;
6. outline expected standards of behaviour;
7. explain how safeguarding concerns are handled; and
8. be reviewed regularly.

7.0 Recruitment and Suitability of Adults Working with Children

7.1 Clubs must take appropriate steps to ensure that adults working with children are suitable for their role.

This includes, where appropriate:

1. verification of identity;
2. relevant references;
3. appropriate recruitment procedures;
4. completion of required declarations;
5. appropriate screening and checks; and
6. consideration of previous safeguarding concerns or disciplinary matters.

7.2 All coaches, volunteers and other individuals who work directly with children under the age of 18 must hold a valid Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag (VOG) in strict compliance with the *Netbal Nederland VOG Policy*. In line with Section 4.2 of the VOG policy, no coach, volunteer, umpire, or administrator may commence or perform unsupervised or independent activities until their valid VOG has been formally verified and recorded by the designated VOG administrator.

7.3 Clubs are responsible for ensuring that VOG requirements are monitored and kept up to date.

7.4 A VOG is one part of safe recruitment and does not replace appropriate recruitment, supervision, training or ongoing safeguarding responsibilities.

8.0 Coaching Qualifications and Education

8.1 Netball Netherlands expects adults responsible for coaching children to have appropriate coaching knowledge and skills.

Coaches and volunteers working with children should:

a. hold an appropriate Netbal Nederlands or recognised coaching qualification; or
b. be working towards an appropriate qualification.

Where applicable, this may include beginner coaching awards and recognised coaching levels 1, 2 or 3.

Clubs should ensure that coaches understand not only technical coaching requirements but also:

a. child development;
b. positive coaching;
c. inclusion;
d. appropriate boundaries;
e. safeguarding;
f. recognising concerns;
g. responding to disclosures; and
h. creating a positive sporting environment.

9.0 Safeguarding and Pedagogical Training

9.1 Netbal Nederland encourages clubs to make use of appropriate NOC*NSF safeguarding and pedagogical education. NOC*NSF's *A Little Educator* online training provides a basic level of pedagogy and integrity for novice trainer-coaches and supports the creation of a socially safe sporting environment.

9.2 Where a club's existing coach education does not sufficiently address safeguarding, pedagogy and integrity, clubs should ensure that coaches complete appropriate additional training.

9.3 Safeguarding education should be refreshed regularly.

10.0 Club Safeguarding Contact Person

10.1 Every affiliated club must appoint a certified Confidential Advisor (VCP) who has successfully completed the NOC*NSF VCP training modules.

10.2 The VCP operates as an independent, confidential first point of contact, completely separated from the club's executive disciplinary board.

10.3 If a club has not yet appointed a local VCP, members have direct, unhindered access to the Netbal Nederland Federation VCP.

10.2 The identity and contact details of the club safeguarding contact person must be made available to members and parents/carers.
The safeguarding contact person must not attempt to investigate allegations beyond their role or put themselves or others at risk.

11.0 Reporting Concerns and Disclosures

11.1 Every adult involved in Netbal Nederlands has a responsibility to act when they are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child.

A concern may arise from:

a. something a child says;
b. something a child does;
c. something an adult observes;
d. a report from another person;
e. changes in a child's behaviour;
f. signs of bullying or harassment;
g. suspected abuse or neglect; or
h. an online or social-media incident.

11.2 Responding to a Disclosure
If a child tells an adult that something has happened to them, the adult should:

a. Stay calm.
b. Listen carefully.
c. Take the child seriously.
d. Allow the child to speak in their own words.
e. Avoid asking leading or unnecessary questions.
f. Do not promise absolute confidentiality.
g. Explain that the information may need to be shared with someone who can help keep them safe.
h. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
i. Record the concern accurately and as soon as possible.
j. Report the concern through the club's safeguarding procedure.

Adults must not:

a. blame or judge the child;
b. dismiss the concern;
c. investigate the allegation themselves;
d. confront an alleged perpetrator;
e. make promises that cannot be kept; or
f. delay reporting because they are uncertain whether the concern is serious enough.
g. If a child is in immediate danger, appropriate emergency services should be contacted without delay.

12.0 Complaints and Safeguarding Concerns

12.1 Every club must have a clear complaints and safeguarding reporting procedure. The procedure must explain:

a. who a concern should be reported to;
b. how concerns can be reported;
c. what happens after a report is made;
d. how confidentiality is managed;
e. how records are kept;
f. when concerns are escalated to Netball Netherlands or external authorities;
g. how the person raising the concern will be supported; and
h. how decisions or disciplinary outcomes may be challenged where appropriate.

12.2 Complaints involving the club's safeguarding contact person should be reported directly to Netbal Nederland through the NNL Complaints Procedure or another designated independent person.

12.3 Where a concern involves a serious safeguarding issue, criminal behaviour or an immediate risk to a child, the appropriate external authority should be contacted in accordance with Dutch law and relevant safeguarding guidance.

12.4 Where allegations involve structural, financial, or severe psychological and physical *Grensoverschrijdend Gedrag*(GOG), the case must be escalated within 24 hours to **Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland**. Disciplinary follow-up will be conducted under the jurisdiction of the **Instituut Sportrechtspraak (ISR)**, whose rulings are binding upon Netbal Nederland and all affiliated entities.

13.0 Standards of Behaviour and Codes of Conduct

13.1 Every club must have clearly documented standards of expected behaviour. These should apply to:

a. coaches;
b. volunteers;
c. officials;
d. players;
e. parents/carers;
f. committee members; and
g. other adults involved in club activities.

13.2 Codes of conduct should promote:

a. respect;
b. dignity;
c. inclusion;
d. sportsmanship;
e. positive communication;
f. appropriate boundaries;
g. child-centred coaching; and
h. responsible behaviour.

They must also clearly identify unacceptable behaviour.

13.3 This safeguarding policy works directly with the Netbal Nederland Code of Conduct, which everyone in our community must follow. We also fully adopt the national NOC*NSF Codes of Conduct for players, coaches, and volunteers. These rules set the standard for how we treat each other. Breaking any of these codes means breaking this safeguarding policy. Serious violations will lead to immediate disciplinary action and will be reported directly to Centrum Veilige Sport Nederland.

14.0 Positive Discipline

14.1 Clubs must use positive and age-appropriate approaches to managing children's behaviour. Physical punishment, humiliating treatment, degrading treatment, intimidation and other forms of harmful discipline are prohibited.

Disciplinary measures should:

1. be proportionate;
2. be appropriate to the child's age and development;
3. focus on learning and positive behaviour;
4. be applied consistently; and
5. never compromise a child's dignity or safety.

15.0 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

15.1 Netbal Nederland does not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination. This includes behaviour occurring:

a. during training;
b. during matches;
c. at tournaments;
d. on club trips;
e. in changing facilities;
f. through messaging services;
g. on social media;
h. through online gaming or other digital platforms; or
i. in any other environment connected to netball.

15.2 Clubs must have procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to bullying and harassment.

15.3 Children must be encouraged to report concerns without fear of punishment or retaliation.

16.0 Physical Contact and Appropriate Boundaries

16.1 Physical contact may sometimes be necessary in coaching or sport, including for safety, instruction or legitimate sporting reasons.

Any physical contact must:

a. be appropriate to the situation;
b. be proportionate;
c. be respectful;
d. take the child's age and individual needs into account;
e. never be sexual or inappropriate; and
f. never be used as punishment or intimidation.

Adults must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children at all times.

17.0 One-to-One Situations

17.1 Adults should avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations with children where possible.

Where one-to-one interaction is necessary, clubs should consider:

a. visibility;
b. location;
c. duration;
d. communication methods;
e. parental/carer awareness where appropriate; and
f. the child's safety and comfort.

17.2 Adults should avoid creating situations in which a child is isolated from other adults or participants without a legitimate reason.

17.3 Adults should consult with the safeguarding appointed person when speaking to the child. If this is not possible then maintain clear open spaces, open doors and document all information at the time of the discussion or straight after. Communicate this information with the designated safeguarding person or authorities if believed necessary.

17.4 Education should be received by the person to allow them to know when to escalate to authorities.

18.0 Digital Communication, Mobile Phones and Social Media

18.1 Clubs must establish clear rules regarding communication between adults and children.

Digital communication should:

a. be appropriate and professional;
b. be related to legitimate netball activities;
c. respect children's privacy;
d. avoid inappropriate personal communication;
e. avoid communication that could reasonably be interpreted as secretive or inappropriate; and
f. comply with applicable privacy and data-protection requirements.

18.2 Where practical, clubs should use official club communication channels rather than personal accounts.

18.3 Adults must not use digital communication to engage in inappropriate, sexual, threatening, discriminatory or abusive behaviour towards children.

19.0 Photography, Video and Images

19.1 Clubs must have clear procedures governing the photography and recording of children.

These procedures should address:

a. parental/carer consent where required;
b. appropriate use of photographs and video;
c. storage and access;
d. publication on websites and social media;
e. identification of children;
f. removal of images where consent is withdrawn where applicable; and
g. safeguarding considerations.

19.2 Children should not be photographed, filmed or otherwise recorded in circumstances that compromise their dignity, privacy or safety.

20.0 Trips, Tournaments and Travel

20.1 Clubs must undertake appropriate safeguarding planning for trips, tournaments, camps and other activities away from the normal club environment.

Planning should consider:

a. supervision ratios;
b. accommodation;
c. transport;
d. insurance;
e. venue safety;
f. emergency procedures;
g. medical and individual needs;
h. parental/carer communication;
i. safeguarding contacts;
j. appropriate adult/child boundaries; and
k. arrangements for responding to incidents or concerns.

Additional risk assessments should be completed where activities involve overnight stays, travel outside the Netherlands or unusual environments.

21.0 Changing Rooms and Facilities

21.1 Clubs must take reasonable steps to ensure that changing facilities are safe and appropriate for children.

Arrangements should consider:

a. age differences;
b. privacy;
c. supervision;
d. disability and individual needs;
e. mixed-age groups;
f. adults changing alongside children; and
g. access by people who are not involved in the activity.

21.2 Adults should respect children's privacy and dignity when using changing and shower facilities.

22.0 Health, Wellbeing and Mental Health

22.1 Clubs should recognise that safeguarding includes children's physical and psychological wellbeing.

Coaches should be alert to signs of:

a. psychological distress;
b. anxiety;
c. excessive pressure;
d. burnout;
e. loss of confidence;
f. withdrawal;
g. unexplained changes in behaviour;
h. disordered or unhealthy approaches to training or performance; and
i. dropout or disengagement.

22.2 Performance expectations must be appropriate to the child's age, development and ability.

22.3 Children should never be pressured to participate when doing so would place their health or safety at risk.

23.0 Listening to Children and Young People

23.1 Netbal Nederland believes that children should have an active voice in matters that affect them.

Clubs should create opportunities for children and young people to:

a. provide feedback;
b. express concerns;
c. contribute to club decisions;
d. influence their sporting environment;
e. report bullying or inappropriate behaviour; and
f. suggest improvements to safeguarding arrangements.

23.2 Children should be provided with information about who they can speak to if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

24.0 Parents and Carers

24.1 Parents and carers play an important role in creating a safe sporting environment.

Clubs should provide parents/carers with information about:

a. the club's safeguarding policy;
b. codes of conduct;
c. the club safeguarding contact person;
d. complaints procedures;
e. expectations for behaviour;
f. photography and social-media policies;
g. travel and tournament arrangements; and
h. how concerns can be reported.

24.2 Parents and carers are expected to support the club's commitment to respectful and child-centred sport.

25.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

25.1 Netbal Netherland is committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in netball free from discrimination. Clubs must not discriminate against children on the basis of protected or personal characteristics.

25.2 Clubs should consider whether additional safeguarding or accessibility measures are necessary for children who may be particularly vulnerable, including disabled children, children from minority communities or children experiencing social or economic disadvantage.
Reasonable adjustments should be considered to support meaningful participation.

26.0 Confidentiality and Data Protection

26.1 Safeguarding information must be handled sensitively and securely.

26.2 Netbal Nederland and affiliated clubs must comply with applicable Dutch data-protection and privacy requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR/AVG). Also see Netbal Nederlands “policy for handling and use of data”.

Safeguarding records should:

i. be accurate;
j. be securely stored;
k. only be accessible to appropriate individuals;
l. be shared only where there is a legitimate reason;
m. be retained in accordance with applicable requirements; and
n. be handled with appropriate confidentiality.

26.3 Confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where doing so is necessary to protect a child from harm or where required by law.

27.0 Safeguarding Records

27.1 Clubs must maintain appropriate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

Records should include, where appropriate:

a. the date and time;
b. the nature of the concern;
c. relevant factual information;
d. who reported the concern;
e. action taken;
f. referrals or escalations;
g. decisions made; and
h. follow-up actions.

27.2 Records must be factual and avoid unnecessary speculation or personal opinions.

27.3 All safeguarding reports and incident details recorded under Section 27.1 constitute special categories of personal data under the AVG. These files must be digitally encrypted, stored away from general membership databases, and remain accessible solely to the designated person. Safeguarding case files will be automatically destroyed 24 months following the complete resolution of the matter, unless ongoing statutory or civil litigation mandates extended legal retention.

28.0 Training and Continuing Development

28.1 All adults working with children should understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Clubs must ensure that appropriate individuals receive training covering:

a. safeguarding principles;
b. recognising signs of abuse and neglect;
c. bullying and harassment;
d. GOG;
e. responding to disclosures;
f. reporting procedures;
g. codes of conduct;
h. safe recruitment;
i. appropriate boundaries;
j. online safety; and
k. complaints and disciplinary processes.

28.2 Individuals with specific safeguarding responsibilities should receive additional appropriate training and keep their knowledge up to date.

29.0 Monitoring and Compliance

29.1 Netbal Nederland will monitor the implementation of this policy through appropriate mechanisms.
Affiliated clubs may be required to demonstrate that they have:

a. a current youth safeguarding policy;
b. an appointed safeguarding contact person;
c. appropriate VOG arrangements;
d. appropriately trained coaches and volunteers;
e. codes of conduct;
f. complaints procedures;
g. safeguarding reporting arrangements; and

h. appropriate records and review processes.

29.2 Failure to meet safeguarding requirements may result in Netball Netherlands requiring an improvement plan, additional safeguards, suspension of activities or other appropriate action.

30.0 Policy Review

30.1 This policy will be reviewed at least annually by Netball Netherlands and sooner where necessary.
A review should take place following:

a. changes in Dutch legislation;
b. changes to NOC*NSF guidance;
c. changes to Europe Netball or international safeguarding guidance;
d. significant safeguarding incidents;
e. changes in the needs of children participating in netball;
f. relevant learning or safeguarding developments; or
g. significant organisational changes.

31.1 The review should consider feedback from children, parents/carers, coaches, volunteers and clubs.

31.2 This policy will be reviewed annually, and following any significant change in legislation, guidance or safeguarding practice.

31.3 Changes come into effect the day after Council approval.

31.0 Related Guidance and Standards

31.1 This policy is intended to align with relevant Dutch, European and international safeguarding principles, including:

a. NOC*NSF safeguarding and socially safe sport guidance;
b. NOC*NSF principles concerning grensoverschrijdend gedrag;
c. Europe Netball safeguarding guidance;
d. UNICEF International Safeguards for Children in Sport;
e. relevant Dutch legislation and safeguarding requirements;
f. GDPR/AVG and applicable data-protection requirements.

31.2 Where applicable legislation or authoritative safeguarding guidance provides a higher level of protection for children than this policy, the higher standard should be followed.

32.0 Definitions

Child: Any person under 18 years of age.

Safeguarding: The actions taken to ensure that children are safe from harm when participating in netball activities.

Child Protection: Specific actions and interventions required to protect children who are at risk of, or are experiencing, significant harm.

Abuse: Acts or omissions that cause or expose a child to harm.

Harm: The negative impact or consequence of an act or omission upon a child.

Violence: The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or a group or community that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, impaired development or deprivation.

Grensoverschrijdend Gedrag (GOG): Any form of action and/or omission that has the purpose or consequence of affecting the dignity and/or safety of one or more people.

Volunteer: A person who provides services or assistance to Netball Netherlands or an affiliated club without being employed in that role.

33.0 Minimum Club Safeguarding Standard

33.1 As a minimum requirement, every Netbal Netherland affiliated club providing activities to children must have:

a. A written Youth Safeguarding Policy.
b. A named and accessible safeguarding contact person.
c. Appropriate VOG arrangements for adults working with children.
d. Appropriate recruitment and suitability procedures.
e. Appropriate coach education and safeguarding training.
f. A code of conduct for adults and participants.
g. A complaints and safeguarding reporting procedure.
h. A procedure for responding to disclosures and safeguarding concerns.
i. Procedures addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination.
j. Appropriate rules for digital communication and social media.

k. Appropriate photography and image-consent arrangements.
l. Safeguarding procedures for trips, tournaments and travel.
m. Secure safeguarding record-keeping.
n. Regular review of safeguarding arrangements.
o. Clear escalation routes to Netball Netherlands and, where necessary, appropriate external authorities.

34.0 Statement of Commitment

34.1 Netbal Nederland believes that every child has the right to enjoy netball in an environment where they are safe, respected, included, listened to and supported.

34.2 Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved in our sport.

34.3 Netbal Nederland and its affiliated clubs will work together to prevent harm, respond appropriately to concerns and continually improve the safeguarding environment for children and young people.

34.4 The safety and wellbeing of children will always come before sporting performance or competitive success.

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