



# SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN POLICY

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Valor Combat Systems recognises that welfare of the child is paramount and will adopt guidance given by relevant Authorities. All organisations working with children should have a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in line with Home Office 'Safe from Harm' guidelines (1993) and enshrining the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', published by the Government in 1999 reinforces this (paragraph 6.13).**
- 1.2. The need for standards within organisations was originally identified in the 2000 National Action Plan for Child Protection in Sport. Initial work was carried out by Sport England Governing Body Services, including consultation with stakeholder groups. This work was then taken forward and built on by the Sport Task Force on Policy and Standards, co-ordinated by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (C.P.S.U.). The C.S.P.U. produced 'Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, which provide a national benchmark of good practice for sports organisations to work towards. Their implementation by an organisation helps raise awareness among staff and volunteers and minimise avoidable risks. When the standards are fully implemented, this is likely to increase confidence among parents and carers about the children's safety.**
- 1.3. Valor Combat Systems wholeheartedly supports the Standards and recognises the areas for development as Policy, Procedures and Systems, Prevention, Codes of Conduct, Equality, Communication, Education & Training, Access to Advice and Support, Implementation and Monitoring.**
- 1.4. Any reference to staff will include a Coach, Assistant Coach, Administrator whether paid or otherwise.**
- 1.5. We recommend all organisations affiliated to Valor Combat Systems adopt this policy in order to implement the information at the earliest opportunity.**



## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1. Valor Combat Systems recognises the importance of responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted into its care. All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.**
- 2.2. Valor Combat Systems will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Martial Arts through adherence to Safeguarding and Child Protection guidelines.**
- 2.3. Valor Combat Systems is committed to: -**
  - **Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.**
  - **Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the workers.**
  - **Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.**
- 2.4. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.**
- 2.5. All staff working within Valor Combat Systems have a responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead.**
- 2.6. Staff require professional advice as they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse, or to decide if abuse has occurred.**
- 2.7. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).**

## **3. POLICY AIMS**

- 3.1. The aim of the Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice: -**
  - **Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of its coaches. Encourage a child to speak freely if you suspect a vulnerability.**
  - **Allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.**
  - **Promoting Government directives for Covid-19 procedures (refer to Valor Combat Systems Risk Assessment and Covid-19 Dojo Guidelines for each respective club).**
  - **Code of Conduct for Students, Parents/Guardians and Coaches.**
  - **Anti-bullying.**



#### **4. PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE**

- 4.1. The Valor Combat Systems will appoint a Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding with responsibility for Valor Combat Systems policy and guidelines, ensuring that they are up to date. The Safeguarding Leads will have responsibility for adherence to and implementation of the policy and guidelines, as well as other responsibilities outlined in this policy.**

**The designated Safeguarding Lead who will take the lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection issues is: -**

- Mr Reece Sutton Phillips**

**The designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead is: -**

- Mr Steve Mascarenhas**

- 4.2. Valor Combat Systems and each affiliated organisation will nominate their own Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Safeguarding Lead with similar local responsibilities pertinent to their own organisation.**
- 4.3. Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can cause strong emotions in those facing such a situation. To understand these feelings is important, whilst not allowing them to interfere with your judgement for the appropriate action.**
- 4.4. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and sporting environments.**
- 4.5. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Staff will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection.**
- 4.6. All cases of suspected poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.**
- 4.7. When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, Valor Combat Systems can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances, the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support. All information will be safeguarded using a confidential file locked in a secure unit.**



## **5. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

**5.1. Staff should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.**

### **5.2. Good practice means: -**

- **Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).**
- **Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, with respect and dignity.**
- **Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.**
- **Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff to have an intimate relationship with a child or share a room with them).**
- **Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.**
- **Making Martial Arts fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.**
- **Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the coaching programme. Care is needed, as there can be difficulty in maintaining hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents/guardians are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.**
- **Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance within Valor Combat Systems.**
- **Involving parents/guardians/carers whenever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/guardians, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.**
- **Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember the same gender abuse can also occur.**
- **Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.**
- **Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.**
- **Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.**
- **Recognising the development needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.**
- **Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.**
- **Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of treatment given.**
- **Requesting written parental consent, if staff are required to transport young people in their cars.**



**5.3. Practices to be avoided: -**

**5.1. The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or their parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to arrive to pick their child up at the end of the class: -**

- **Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.**
- **Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event.**

**5.4. Practices never to be sanctioned: -**

**Staff should never: -**

- **Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.**
- **Share a room with a child.**
- **Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.**
- **Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.**
- **Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.**
- **Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.**
- **Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.**
- **Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, which they can do for themselves.**
- **Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.**

**5.5. N.B. Sometimes it may be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student(s) involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on a member of staff, they should talk with them about what they are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if there is any involvement in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Staff should not be expected to take on responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained.**

**5.6. Incidents that must be reported/recorded: -**

**If any of the following occur, staff should report this immediately to another staff member and record the incident. They should also ensure the parents/guardians of the child are informed if: -**

- **They accidentally hurt a student.**
- **The student seems distressed in any manner.**
- **The student appears to be sexually aroused by the actions of a member of staff.**
- **A student misunderstands or misinterprets something that the staff has done.**



## **6. USE OF IMAGE RECORDING EQUIPMENT**

- 6.1. A sensible policy in respect of the use of photographic and recording equipment ensures that the needs of all persons involved with the child are catered for. It is unnecessary to prevent parents from recording images to keep as a memento of their child's achievements, as it is the need to prevent organisations from using images for promotion purposes.**
- 6.2. There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of sports websites and other publications. The use of today's modern digital cameras, often with video, and now the new generation of mobile phones present the opportunity for misuse. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information – this is X who lives at X is a member of the X club and who likes X band. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' the child for abuse. Secondly, the content of the photo could be used or adapted for inappropriate use.**
- 6.3. The Child Protection in Sport Unit has issued advice to the organisers of sporting events and presentations.**
- 6.4. Taking notice of this advice, Valor Combat Systems recommends that the use of recording equipment is allowed only with the permission and each organisation should have a written procedure in place. Prospective photographers must obtain permission prior to using their camera or other device to take pictures.**
- 6.5. There should be clarity that photography and the recording of images of any kind is only allowed with written authorisation.**
- 6.6. The procedure for obtaining permission should be written down on a form and recorded. The form devised should contain the following details: -**
- **The name, address and phone number of the person using the camera.**
  - **The name(s) of the subject.**
  - **The relationship of the photographer and subject.**
  - **The reason or use that the images are being or intended to be put to (family record).**
  - **Assigned declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.**
  - **A sequential number to enable a date order log to be kept.**
- 6.7. Incorporated within these procedures should be a list of those areas where photographic and recording equipment including mobile phones is forbidden under all circumstances e.g. changing areas including – swimming pool, sports facilities, team changing facilities, health suite, sauna areas, sunbed areas, fitness suite and gyms, toilet areas, aerobic/fitness classes, crèche, play scheme facilities.**
- 6.8. Once permission had been granted, it may be helpful if the person concerned is given a dated signed card or form of approval that they can show to supervising staff when challenged.**





#### **6.9. Photographs and images of children used for promoting and advertising**

Images should be suitable to appropriately represent the Martial Art, without putting children at increased risk. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of students, the most important factor is the potential of inappropriate use of images of children. Parental support for this policy is essential.

#### **6.10. To reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside of Valor Combat Systems, in line with Child Protection in Sport Unit advice, recommends: -**

- Use of models or illustrations for promoting an activity should be considered.
- Avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph.
- If the student is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the student.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the Martial Art. A parental permission form is one way of achieving this and is appended.
- Only use images of students in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Create recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risk to students, ensuring the Safeguarding Lead and the Social Services and/or the Police are informed.

#### **6.11. Use of photographic filming equipment at sporting events**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople.

#### **6.12. If professional photographers or the press are invited to an activity or event, it is important to ensure that they are clear about your expectations of them, in relation to child protection.**

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.
- Inform students and parents/guardians that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to students or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a student's home.

#### **6.13. If parents/guardians/other spectators are intending to record images at an event, they should also be made aware of your expectations.**

- Spectators should be asked to register at an event, if they wish to use photographic equipment.
- Students and parents/guardians should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the organiser.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.



#### **6.14. Respect the rights of others**

There should be a general requirement of the person given approval, that should any parent/guardian/student/staff complains or expresses concern, they must respect the rights of others and cease taking photographs.

#### **6.15. Vigilance by the general public**

No matter what arrangements are put in place to prevent the use of cameras, videos or mobile phones with digital image recording, the very nature of 'peeping tom type photography' makes it difficult to detect. In recognition of this fact staff should ask their users to be alert to any suspicious activity, particularly where children may be involved and encourage them to report any such incidents at the earliest opportunity. This form of vigilance should be encouraged by the use of appropriate signage.

#### **6.16. Child protection procedures and training**

A fundamental requirement, particularly significant where members of the public are asked to be vigilant and report their suspicions, is to ensure that child protection procedures are in place which are appropriate to the situation and that all staff are trained in these procedures and know how to respond.

#### **6.17. Recorded images as a coaching aid**

There is no intention to prevent club coaches using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must consent and be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such recordings should be stored safely.

### **7. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

**7.1. Valor Combat Systems recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following: -**

- All staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Services (D.B.S.).
- Two confidential references, preferably including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

**7.2. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (R.O.A.), there are some exceptions to the general principle, whereby spent convictions are declared. When assessing the suitability of a person for certain positions of trust, an employer is entitled to ask a candidate to reveal details of all convictions, whether spent or not. This in part will help ensure that children and other vulnerable groups are protected from those who may wish to do them harm by helping to prevent such people from being appointed to positions of authority and/or trust over them.**



**7.3. Positions which involve working with children fall within an R.O.A. Exceptions Order. So, a person assessing the suitability of a candidate to work with children is entitled to ask that candidate to reveal details of spent and unspent convictions. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act defines 'working with children' as 'regulated positions' and provides guidance on interpretation. Guidance notes to this act can be found on the D.B.S. website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>) or by contacting the D.B.S. Information line on 03000 200192. Email: [customerservices@db.s.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@db.s.qsi.gov.uk).**

**7.4. Valor Combat Systems will ensure that D.B.S. checks are made on all prospective coaches and current coaches when their coaching qualifications are due for renewal. The appropriate check will be at a level as recommended by the D.B.S. at the time of the check. This is currently the level of Enhanced Disclosure, which is recommended for those posts that involve a far greater degree of contact with children and vulnerable adults. In general, the type of contact involves regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people.**

**7.5. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.**

#### **7.6. Interview and Induction**

**All staff will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All staff should receive formal or informal induction, during which: -**

- **A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including criminal records and self-disclosures).**
- **Their qualifications should be substantiated.**
- **The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.**
- **They should agree to the organisation's Code of Conduct.**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures are explained and trained needs are identified.**

#### **7.7. Training**

**In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff to: -**

- **Analyse their own practice against established good practice, to ensure their actions could protect them from false allegations.**
- **Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.**
- **Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.**



## **7.8. Work safely effectively with children**

**Valor Combat Systems requires: -**

- **Coaching staff to attend approved Valor Combat Systems Coaching Development Training Courses which will cover safeguarding and child protection issues, to raise their awareness and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.**
- **Relevant other staff to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.**
- **Coaching staff must hold a current national Emergency First Aid at Work qualification.**
- **Attend update training every three years.**

## **8. SPECIFIC LEGAL DUTIES TO REPORT**

**(Be aware of additional updates concerning Child Protection Laws)**

**New legislation has recognised and criminalised the following types of abuse and placed duties on organisations working with children to report offences to the authorities: -**

### **1. Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty**

**The Government set out its definition of British Values in the 2015 Prevent Strategy – this promotes the values of: -**

- **Democracy.**
- **The rule of law.**
- **Individual liberty.**
- **Mutual respect.**
- **Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.**

**Valor Combat Systems promotes these values to ensure that children build resilience.**

**If a member of staff has a concern about a particular student/students, the normal safeguarding procedures will be followed, including discussion with the Club Safeguarding Lead as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

**The Club Safeguarding Lead should then contact West Mercia Prevent Team: -**

**The Prevent Team email is: [prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@warwickshireandwestmercia.pnn.police.uk)**



## **2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

If we become aware of any cases where females are at risk of FGM or have actually been harmed, Valor Combat Systems will contact the Police immediately and follow up with a referral to Compass to ensure that we are meeting our reporting duties. Please refer to: - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-leaflet>

We may not seek parental consent if this may put the female at increased risk.

## **3. Domestic abuse and honour based violence**

Children living in households where there is domestic abuse which could be coercion or violence, including honour based violence, could be at significant risk of harm. Valor Combat Systems will seek support for victims and their children through Compass.

Depending on the level of risk, we may or may not consult parents before contacting Compass.

## **9. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS**

9.1. The responsibility of deciding whether or not abuse has taken place, does not lie with anyone working within Valor Combat Systems, in a paid or unpaid capacity. Therefore any concerns must go through the appropriate contact and authorities.

9.2. Under no circumstance should staff carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse.

9.3. Valor Combat Systems will fully support all staff and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

9.4. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation: -

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

9.5. The results of the Police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **9.6. Action if there are concerns about suspected abuse**

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff, or anyone else, should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.



- 9.7. The Club Safeguarding Lead will refer to the allegation to the Social Services department who may involve the Police (telephone: 999), or go directly to the Police. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Club Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Lead or a Deputy Lead should not delay referral to the Social Services Department or the Police.
- 9.8. Any individual has the right as a citizen, to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or the Police, although Valor Combat Systems hopes that members will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Child Safeguarding Lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement, it is a demonstration of the commitment of Valor Combat Systems to effective child protection.
- 9.9. The role of the Club Safeguarding Lead is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department or the Police. The matter lies with the Social Services to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 9.10. Dependent upon the circumstances, advice from the Social Services Department or the Police may need to be sought before contacting the parents or the carers of the child.
- 9.11. The Club Safeguarding Lead should also notify the relevant Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding Lead, who in turn, will inform the Valor Combat Systems Administration Department, to deal with any media enquiries.
- 9.12. If the Club Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Club Deputy Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, the Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding Lead who will refer the allegation to the Social Services or the Police.
- 9.13. Guidelines regarding the definition of abuse are contained in section 10.
- 9.14. Concerns outside the immediate Martial Art environment (e.g. parent or carer) should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Lead, who should contact Social Services to the Police as soon as possible.
- 9.15. If the Club Safeguarding Lead is not available, the person being told of/or discovering the abuse should contact Social Services or the Police immediately.
- 9.16. The Sensei (Club Coach) in charge should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role within Valor Combat Systems and act accordingly.



#### **9.17. Information for Social Services or the Police about suspected abuse**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following: -

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation – include dates, times, any special factors and any other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/guardians been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been contacted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

**9.18. If staff have worries about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, they can contact Social Services or the Police direct, or the N.S.P.C.C. Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 11 11.**

#### **9.19. Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure the confidentiality is maintained for all concerned and must be on a need to know basis only. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Relevant parties may include: -

- The Club Safeguarding Lead.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- The Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding Lead.
- The alleged abuser (and parents, if the alleged abuser is a child).

**9.20. Seek Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.**

**9.21. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with Data Protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).**

**9.22. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.**



**9.23. Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse: -**

Children, young people and families may require support from Shropshire Community Partnership Multi-Agency Guidance on Threshold Criteria. If unsure, where to seek advice, contact <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help>.

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents, guardians and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from the British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk), Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>

**9.24. Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.**

**9.25. Allegations of a previous abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is currently working with children).**

**9.26. Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Social Services or the Police. This is because other children, either within or outside Valor Combat Systems, may be at risk from this person.**

**9.27. Internal enquiries and suspension**

The Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about any individual accused of abuse, who should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries.

**9.28. Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police inquiries, the Valor Combat Systems Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police.**

**9.29. Action if there are concerns about poor practice**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Club Safeguarding Lead will treat it as a misconduct issue and report to the Safeguarding Lead.

**9.30. If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Safeguarding Lead, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, a report should be made to an Safeguarding Lead who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary procedures.**

**9.31. Action if bullying is suspected**

If bullying by staff is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out above.





**9.32. Bullying is a form of abuse and when practised by other students, can have a detrimental effect of the self-confidence of the student, as well as affecting others within the classes. Below are actions to help the victim and prevent bullying in Valor Combat Systems: -**

- **Take all signs of bullying seriously.**
- **Encourage children to speak and share their concerns (should anyone mention suicide, seek professional advice immediately). Help the victim speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.**
- **Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.**
- **Staff should reassure the victim that they can be trusted and will help them, although they cannot promise to tell no one else.**
- **Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when) in a separate file and locked away.**
- **Report any concerns to the Club Safeguarding Lead or the School (wherever the bullying is occurring).**

**9.33. Action towards the bully(ies): -**

- **Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).**
- **Inform the bully's parents.**
- **Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.**
- **Provide support for the victim's coach.**
- **Impose sanctions as necessary.**
- **Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.**
- **Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.**
- **Inform all organisation members of action taken.**
- **Keep a written record of action taken.**



## **10. CLUB GUIDELINES**

Here are some practical ways for your staff to help safeguard the children and young people who take part within Valor Combat Systems: -

### **10.1. Staff ratios**

- Staff/participant ratios should be based on the age of the children involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are disability needs.
- The lower the age of the participants, the greater the need for supervision.
- If the activity is mixed gender, male and female staff should be available.

### **10.2. Changing rooms**

- When children and young people use changing rooms, they should be supervised by two members of staff.
- Adult staff should not change or shower at the same time using the same facilities.
- For mixed gender activities, separate facilities should be available for boys and girls.
- If a child feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Instead they should be encouraged to shower or change at home.
- If children with disabilities use a club, make sure they and their carers are involved in deciding how they should be assisted. Ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered.

### **10.3. Injuries and illness**

- Valor Combat Systems have guidelines and report forms for any injuries children sustain during activities.
- Where staff witness an injury, the parents must be told as soon as possible.
- If the child needs medical attention, it must be arranged immediately and the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) informed as soon as possible.
- Staff must always ensure you have up-to-date contact details at any Martial Arts activity or event and information about any relevant medical conditions.

### **10.4. Collection by parents/carers**

- For arrival and departure, please refer to our details found on our Bookwhen website: - [www.bookwhen.com/valorcombatsystems](http://www.bookwhen.com/valorcombatsystems).
- Valor Combat Systems develops and publicises policies about the collection of children and young people from their clubs. These policies are based on the age of the children and the location, time and type of activity.
- Make sure permission is received from parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) for children and young people to participate in any of the games, competitions, training or practice sessions you run.



### **10.5. Late collection of children**

Late collection of children by parents presents clubs, schools and coaches with a potentially difficult situation. Clubs should develop written guidelines for parents explaining the policy for dealing with late collection of children.

The guidelines should: -

- Make clear that it is not your organisation's responsibility to transport children home on behalf of parents who have been delayed.
- Include a staff contact number and an instruction to parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) to phone if there is any likelihood of late collection.
- Ask parents to provide an alternative contact name or number, for staff to use when they are not available on their usual number.

In cases of late collection, staff should: -

- Attempt to contact the child's parent or carer on their contact number.
- Use the alternative contact name/number if necessary.
- Wait with the child/young person at the facility, with other staff/parent(s)/guardian(s) present, if at all possible or in an area where people can see you.
- Remind parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) of the policy relating to late collection.

In cases of late collection, staff should not: -

- Take the child home or to any other location.
- Send the child home with another person without permission from a parent or carer.
- Ask the child to wait in a vehicle or facility with you alone.

### **10.6. Discipline**

When discipline is used, there should be clear intention of teaching or reinforcing appropriate behaviour. This must not be used impulsively, to gain power, or to embarrass or humiliate a child/young person.

Discipline should be used only to: -

- Develop a sense of responsibility for behaviour.
- Develop respect for others and their property.
- Reinforce the rules and values of the Martial Art.
- Reinforce positive behaviour or attitudes.
- Reinforce awareness of health and safety aspects of the activity.



### 10.7. Physical contact

Martial Arts require a degree of physical contact between coaching staff and children or young people. Coaches may need to use it to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. Note, the below guidelines about physical contact require adhering to, so that adults and children/young people understand what are the appropriate types of touching and their appropriate contexts.

Physical contact during Martial Arts should always be intended to meet the child's needs, not the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to: -

- Develop skills or techniques.
- To treat an injury.
- To prevent an injury.
- To meet the requirements of the Martial Art.
- The adult should explain the reason for the physical contact to the child. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.
- Physical contact should not take place in secret or out of sight of others.
- All injuries should be fully recorded by staff.

### 10.8. Sexual activity

Within Martial Arts, as within other activities, sexual relationships do occur. These guidelines address sexual activity both between children and young people and between adults and young people.

Sexual activity between children/young people involved in Martial Arts should be prohibited during team events, in Martial Arts facilities or social activities organised by the club/organisation. Inappropriate or criminal sexual behaviour committed by a young person may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Valor Combat Systems guidance.

Sexual interactions between young adults and young people (16+) involved in Martial Arts raise serious issues given the power imbalance inherent in the relationship. Where a young person is of the age of consent, the power of the adult over that young person may influence their ability to genuinely consent to sexual activity. A coach or other adult in a position of authority may have significant power or influence over a young person.

Sexual activity between adults and young people (16+) involved in the same Martial Art should be prohibited, when the adult is in a position of trust or authority (coach, official). Inappropriate or criminal sexual behaviour committed by an adult should lead to suspension and disciplinary action by Valor Combat Systems.

Sexual activity between adults and children under the age of 16 is a criminal act and immediate action must be taken to report it.



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#### **10.9. Participants with disabilities**

**Children or young people with disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities as others involved in sport, to have fun and be safe. Their particular vulnerability to abuse or neglect requires Martial Arts clubs/organisations to take additional steps to safeguard them.**

**Information relating to club policies and procedures should be fully accessible to children and young people with communication difficulties.**

**Specialist training or advice should be sought by clubs/organisations which involves children/young people with disabilities in Martial Arts. For example, when staff need to guide blind or partially sighted children, training will help ensure that they use the most appropriate methods. If training is not available, ask the child for advice or seek the advice of parents or carers.**

**When transporting a child with disabilities, the vehicles used should meet the needs of the children and be roadworthy. Appropriate and trained escorts should be in attendance in the vehicle.**

**When children with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, the individual child should be treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the child and those assisting. We recommend that those assisting receive appropriate training.**



## **11. EXAMPLES OF CHILD ABUSE**

**Child abuse can take many forms.**

### **11.1. Physical abuse: -**

- **Physically hurting or injuring a child.**
- **When the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.**

### **11.2. Neglect: -**

- **Failure to provide a training environment which caters for a child's basic physical needs (e.g. lighting, heating and toilet facilities).**
- **Leaving a child unsupervised.**
- **Exposing a child to undue risk of injury.**

### **11.3. Sexual abuse: -**

- **Inappropriate physical contact with a child.**

### **11.4. Emotional abuse: -**

- **Shouting at, or verbally abusing a child.**
- **Constantly criticising a child, or creating unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.**
- **Where there is neglect, sexual or physical abuse.**
- **Cyber bullying from any student before/after class**

### **11.5. Signs which may indicate abuse include: -**

- **Unexplained bruising or injuries.**
- **Sexually explicit language or actions.**
- **Sudden changes in behaviour.**
- **Something a child has said.**
- **A change observed over a long period of time (e.g. loss of weight and becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt).**



### **ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT**

**If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Club Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead will: -**

- **Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.**
- **Will not tell the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.**
- **Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.**
- **For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), advice of the Social Services should be sought, but not if this places the child at risk of injury.**

### **ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

**In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Club Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead will: -**

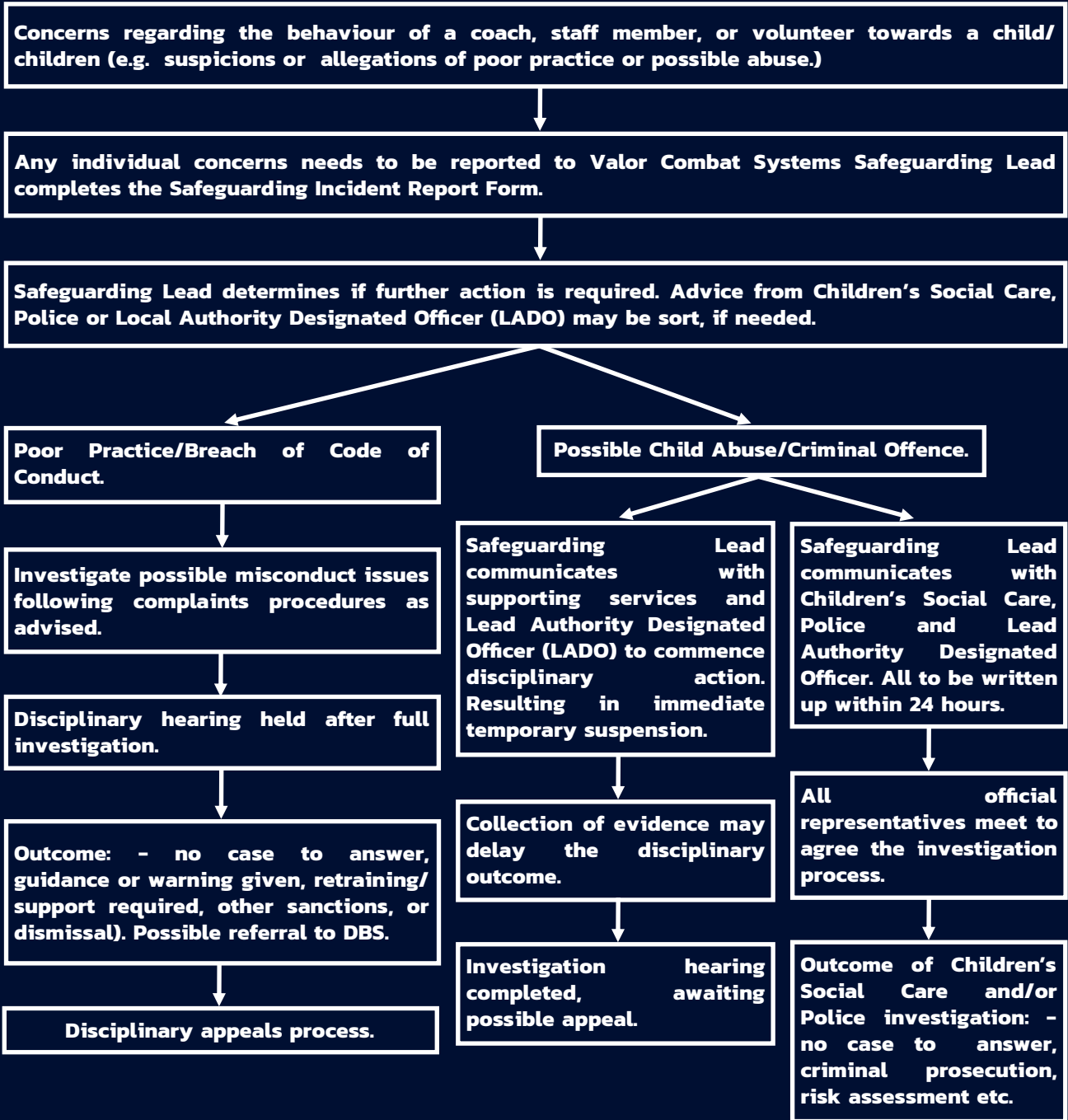
- **Contact the Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will not speak to the parent/carers or anyone else.**





## SAFEGUARDING REPORT PROCEDURES

### 1. Behaviour of a Valor Combat Systems coach, staff member or volunteer (e.g. allegation about a coach's behaviour towards a child).





## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT PROCEDURES**

2. Behaviour of another organisation's coach, staff member or volunteer (e.g. allegation a coach's behaviour towards a child).

Concerns regarding the behaviour of a coach, staff member, or volunteer towards a child/ children (e.g. suspicions or allegations of poor practice or possible abuse.)

Any individual concerns needs to be reported to Valor Combat Systems. Safeguarding Lead completes the Safeguarding Incident Report Form.

Safeguarding Lead determines if further action is required. Advice from Children's Social Care, Police or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) may be sort, if needed.

**Poor Practice/Breach of Code of Conduct.**

Co-ordinate with the other organisation's Safeguarding Lead re: their procedures within Safeguarding Policies and notify them of complaint. Inform the individual of the complaint and that the matter has been passed onto their Safeguarding Lead.

Investigate possible misconduct issues following complaints procedures and co-ordinate with other organisation involved.

Disciplinary hearing held after full investigation.

Record actions and agree on possible disciplinary action. Inform the individual in writing within 24 hours of proposed intentions.

Outcome: - no case to answer, guidance or warning given, retraining/support required, other sanctions, or dismissal). Possible referral to DBS.

Disciplinary appeals process.

**Possible Child Abuse/Criminal Offence.**

If situation is deemed high risk to a child/ children, contact Children's Social Care or Police direct.

Or: -  
Contact the Safeguarding Lead of the individual's organisation to forward the information. Record their agreement of referral to Children's Social Care or Police direct. Confirm when effective. If no agreement, contact Children's Social Care or Police direct.

Safeguarding Lead records all decisions and addresses written referrals within 24 hours.

Outcome of Children's Social Care and/or Police investigation: - no case to answer, criminal prosecution, risk assessment etc.



### SAFEGUARDING REPORT PROCEDURES

3. About children and young people arising outside of the Dojo (e.g. at home, school, or in the community).

**Coach, member of staff, or volunteer informed of concerns about a child's welfare or safety (e.g. bullying or family abuse etc).**



**If there is evidence of physical harm, contact the Police to investigate further.**



**Any individual concerns needs to be reported to Valor Combat Systems. Safeguarding Lead completes the Safeguarding Incident Report Form.**



**Safeguarding Lead needs to send the written Safeguarding Incident Report Form within 24 hours of verbal contact to Children's Social Care, Police or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).**



## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE FORM**

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following: -

Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter the Club Safeguarding Lead telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_ who is nominated by the (Organisation) \_\_\_\_\_ to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

The Club Safeguarding Lead may also be required by conditions of the Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company. They may also be required as part of their policy to inform strategic personnel within their Organisation (Name) \_\_\_\_\_, telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_.

In the absence of the Club Safeguarding Lead, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Club Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (hereafter the Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead), telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Social Services telephone number between 9.00am and 5.00pm is \_\_\_\_\_.  
The out of hours emergency number is \_\_\_\_\_.  
The local Police telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance within Valor Combat Systems procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Club Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Club Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead should not delay referral to the Social Service Department.

Valor Combat Systems will support the Club Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the Child Protection Agencies or Police, although Valor Combat Systems hope that staff will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Club Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Club Safeguarding Lead, as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that Valor Combat Systems demonstrates its commitment to effective child protection.

The role of the Club Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Club Safeguarding Lead is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.



**INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR THE POLICE ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE**

<b>CHILD'S NAME:</b>	
<b>AGE:</b>	
<b>DATE OF BIRTH:</b>	
<b>HOME ADDRESS:</b>	
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	
<b>PERSON MAKING THE REPORT:</b>	
<b>PERSON EXPRESSING THE CONCERN:</b>	
<b>THE NATURE OF THE ALLEGATION(S):</b>	
<b>DATE(S) OF ALLEGATION(S):</b>	
<b>TIME(S):</b>	
<b>SPECIAL FACTORS OR OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION OF ANY VISIBLE INJURIES:</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF WITNESSES:</b>	
<b>THE CHILD'S ACCOUNT, IF IT CAN BE GIVEN, OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND HOW ANY BRUISING OR OTHER INJURIES OCCURRED:</b>	



**INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR THE POLICE ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE**

<b>HAVE THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS BEEN CONTACTED?</b>	
<b>IS SO, WHAT HAS BEEN SAID?</b>	
<b>HAS ANYONE ELSE BEEN CONSULTED?</b>	
<b>WHO IS ALLEGED TO BE THE ABUSER?</b>	
<b>NAME OF PERSON TO WHOM REPORTED (I.E. CLUB SAFEGUARDING LEAD, POLICE, AND SOCIAL SERVICES), INCLUDE DATE AND TIME OF REFERRAL:</b>	

**WHERE POSSIBLE REFERRAL TO THE POLICE OR SOCIAL SERVICES SHOULD BE CONFIRMED IN WRITING WITHIN 24 HOURS. IF STAFF HAVE WORRIES ABOUT SHARING CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE WITH A SENIOR COLLEAGUE, THEY CAN CONTACT SOCIAL SERVICES OR THE POLICE DIRECT, OR THE N.S.P.C.C. CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE ON 0808 800 5000, OR CHIDLIN ON 0800 11 11.**



**SAMPLE CONSENT FORM FOR THE RECORDING OF IMAGES/VIDEO**

<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>	
<b>Valor Combat Systems recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all our students, irrespective of age.</b>	
<b>In accordance with our Safeguarding Policies, photographs/videos will not be permitted to be taken without the Student's/Parent(s)/Guardian (s) consent. Do you consent for Valor Combat Systems to take photographs, or videos for promotional purposes?</b>	<b>(YES/NO)</b>
<b>Valor Combat Systems will endeavour to ensure they are used solely for the purposes they are intended. Any inappropriate usage should be reported to Valor Combat Systems immediately.</b>	
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>  <b>(Signature of Parent/Guardian required if student is under the age of 18, please state relationship)</b>	
<b>PARENT/GUARDIAN:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	



## USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Valor Combat Systems Safeguarding Lead**  
Name: Mr Reece Sutton Phillips  
Email: [recephillips@valorcombatsystems.co.uk](mailto:recephillips@valorcombatsystems.co.uk)  
Telephone: 07794577797
- **Valor Combat Systems Deputy Safeguarding Lead**  
Name: Mr Steven Mascarenhas  
Email: [mascarenhassteve@hotmail.com](mailto:mascarenhassteve@hotmail.com)  
Telephone: 07421883960
- **CHILDLINE** — Line for children to talk about anything. No problem is too big or too small.  
Telephone: 0800 11 11  
Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- **NSPCC** — Help for adults concerned about a child.  
Telephone: 0808 800 5000  
Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- **SUPPORT LINE** — Support for children, young adults and adults including those affected by sexual, emotional and physical abuse.  
Telephone: 01708 765200  
Website: [www.supportline.org.uk](http://www.supportline.org.uk)
- **EMERGENCY SOCIAL WORK TEAM**  
Telephone: 0345 678 9040 (Select Option 1)  
Website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/emergency-social-work-team/>
- **LEAD AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) - Ellie Jones**  
Telephone: 0345 678 9021  
Email: [lado@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:lado@shropshire.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.shropshire.gov.uk/childrens-social-care-and-health/notifying-us-about-a-looked-after-child/](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/childrens-social-care-and-health/notifying-us-about-a-looked-after-child/)