

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a soccer ball. The ball is white with yellow and black panels. The person is wearing a black wristband. The background is blurred, showing red and blue colors.

**U18 REFEREES  
HAVE FUN, KEEP SAFE**



**YOUNG  
REFEREE  
GUIDANCE**



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# YOUNG REFEREE GUIDANCE

The health, well-being, safety and welfare of U18s is paramount. All adults working within football have a duty of care to all young people. This guidance is designed to maximise the enjoyment and wellbeing of young referees and to minimise risks.

Middlesex FA wants to ensure you are aware of the support you can access should you have any concerns over your safety and welfare while carrying out your refereeing duties. This document outlines some key guidance. Please read the information below in full and keep it, and the contact details, safe in case you need them.

It is important to remember that the vast majority of football is played in safe and friendly environments where everyone can enjoy taking part. However, we appreciate that there may be occasions when you would like additional help and support.



# MATCH DAY GUIDANCE

## TRANSPORTATION

What if I need / am offered transportation to a game?

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Your parent / carer / guardian must give written consent that they agree to you travelling with the adult.

Avoid one to one situations – best practice is 2 x U18 per adult.

Ensure the driver has a valid driving licence and is in a suitable condition to drive.

Ensure contact details of your parent / carer / guardian are shared with the responsible adult in case of emergencies.

Where can I get ready for the game?

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## CHANGING ROOMS

You should be offered a place to change at the facility.

If you are with other officials you may have to share a changing room.

If the other officials are over 18, do not share the changing room whilst you are getting changed. Ask them to leave the room whilst you change and vice versa.





# MATCH DAY GUIDANCE

## CONTINUED

### INCIDENTS

#### What should I do if I feel threatened?

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In the unlikely event you feel threatened whilst refereeing, your own safety must be your priority.

Find a supportive adult and ensure you can leave the venue safely. Avoid doing or saying anything that might make things worse.

At the first opportunity, please report these events to our Disciplinary and Designated Safeguarding Officer department. A member of the Middlesex FA team will contact you when he/she has been informed about the incident.

#### What if I feel excluded from officiating matches?

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If you have a disability or impairment or believe there are restrictions in place preventing you from fully accessing and enjoying refereeing then please inform us. Football is inclusive and that applies to refereeing too.

If you would like to chat about this, please contact the County FA Workforce Development Officer or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and we can help to remove the barriers to your full participation.

To learn more about The FA For All, visit:

<http://www.thefa.com/about-football-association/for-all>

### INCLUSION



# COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### What if I am contacted on social media?

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Do not invite adults in a 'Relationship of Trust' (referee / mentor / observer / coach) to become friends on social media.

Be mindful of 'liking' comments - these can be viewed as serious as writing them yourself.

Do not post, text or email inappropriate language, pictures, jokes or items of a personal nature that are derogatory, sexist, racist, threatening, abusive or sexualised. If you receive any of these, report this to the Middlesex FA DSO.

## PERSONAL DETAILS

### What if someone asks for my number?

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Do not give out your personal details, mobile number or email address to people you do not know.

Your details may be needed for a Young Referee Developer (YRD) to contact you regarding observations. Written consent from your parent / carer / guardian must be given and the purpose of why it is needed should be outlined. You should only be contacted for the purposes your parent / carer / guardian has signed for.

Advise the Middlesex FA DSO if you receive messages or images from a YRD or club that you find upsetting, threatening or offensive.



## CONCERNED ABOUT **SOMETHING** YOU'VE HEARD?

Tell an adult you trust if you are concerned about something you have seen or heard, if something doesn't feel right, or if you are worried about comments someone has made to, or about, you via text or social media.

It's really important that if you are concerned about your own safety, or the safety of another child or young person, that you let the **County FA DSO** or the **County FA Referee Staff Members** know as soon as possible to ensure we can support you.

If you or someone else is in immediate risk of harm, then this should be reported to the police via 101 or 999 phone numbers.

You can also contact ChildLine for advice and support on 0800 11 11 or go online to [www.childline.org.uk/get-support/](http://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/)





# REPORTING YOUR CONCERN

If I have a concern, how do I report it?

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It is vitally important that you report any concerns you have. Use the following steps to report your concern:

1. By contacting the Middlesex FA DSO – Sharon Porter.
  2. By emailing The FA Safeguarding Team at [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com) or by calling and asking for the team on 0800 169 1863.
  3. If urgent and you cannot contact the County DSO, you should call the NSPCC 24 hour helpline on 0808 800 5000.
  4. If is an emergency because you or another young person are at immediate risk, then call the Police or Children's Social Care in your area.
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Make a note of the name and contact details of the Middlesex FA DSO and pass on to your parent/carer/guardian:

**Sharon Porter**

**[sharon.porter@middlesexfa.com](mailto:sharon.porter@middlesexfa.com)**

**07739980164**

**[safeguarding@middlesexfa.com](mailto:safeguarding@middlesexfa.com)**





## ATTENDING A DISCIPLINARY HEARING

During the course of your refereeing career you may need to attend a disciplinary hearing to give evidence. Don't worry about this as you will be offered guidance and support by a member of the Discipline team.

We take your age into account and ensure the environment is as supportive as possible. Referees under 18 should be accompanied by a parent/guardian or colleague. If you prefer, a member of our Refereeing Team or Designated Safeguarding Officer can be on hand to offer this assistance.

Where referees are involved in disciplinary cases, they should refer to Handbook, Appendix II 'County and other affiliated associations – Hearings before disciplinary commissions' page 231, under the heading of 'Attendance of children within disciplinary hearings.'

The FA Judicial Services team has produced the below guidance for young people attending disciplinary commissions. The following practices must be followed to best protect the interest of young people where they are providing evidence.

## ATTENDING A DISCIPLINARY HEARING CONTINUED

1. Evidence should only be received from young people (accompanied by a responsible adult) in front of the Commission Members, Commission Secretary, participant charged and his/her representative.
2. All other occupants of a Commission will be asked to leave whilst a young person is giving evidence.
3. The asking of questions would be restricted to the Chairman only.
4. At the end of the questioning the representative or participant charged would be asked whether there are any other questions that they believe should be asked of the witness.
5. If required, additional questions could be put to the witness but again by the Chairman only.
6. Once all the questioning has been completed the young person would then leave the Commission room and will not be required to remain for the remainder of the hearing.

For more information on hearings, visit:

<http://www.middlesexfa.com/about/rules-and-regulations/discipline>



# NEED TO KNOW MORE?

## Need to know more?

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This is a brief guide to Safeguarding for U18s and may not have answered all your questions. More detailed information on the following topics can be accessed via the links below:

### **Safeguarding area of TheFA.com**

*[TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding)*

### **Best Practice Downloads**

*[TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness---downloads-section](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness---downloads-section)*

### **Information for Under 18's**

*[TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/be-on-the-ball](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/be-on-the-ball)*

### **Online Safeguarding Service**

*[TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/online-safeguarding-service](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/online-safeguarding-service)*

### **Reporting Concerns**

*[TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/dealing-with-concerns](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/dealing-with-concerns)*



## **MIDDLESEX FA STAFF CONTACTS**

**DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

**sharon.porter@middlesexfa.com**

**0208 515 6909 / 07739980164**

**FOOTBALL SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR (REFEREES)**

**daniel.may@middlesexfa.com**

**0208 515 6910**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

**katie.phillipson@middlesexfa.com**

**0208 515 1927**

**safeguarding@middlesexfa.com**

**Please remember that if you are in immediate danger,  
always call 999.**