

# Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football

Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Implementation Guidance for Grassroots Football



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## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL



### Foreword

Football is indisputably the number one sport in England, for both adults and children. It is part of our national culture, and our daily lives.

An estimated four million children play the game in clubs and schools up and down the country, and a further half million adults give their time and energy to organise and run the game for them. The future health of the game relies on making football a safe and enjoyable experience for children and young people, whether they are playing, watching, refereeing or pumping up balls and putting up nets.

The FA is totally committed to this goal. With so many people involved in the game, it is our responsibility as the governing body to have a clear safeguarding policy that is accessible to and adopted by everyone in the football community. We can be really proud of our achievements in protecting young players and turning best practice into everyday practice.

The cornerstones of this commitment are our Child Protection and Best Practice Policy and Procedures, supported by clear and effective guidelines and ensuring that The FA has a proactive and integrated approach to safeguarding everyone in football. It is also backed up by a comprehensive training programme which is mandatory for everyone taking FA qualifications.

We are very conscious of the need to stay proactive and not rest on our laurels. We review our safeguarding strategy on a regular basis in line with the NSPCC/Sport England National Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport.

The safety and welfare of children involved in football relies on The FA leading the way. So does the long-term future of the national game. We are determined to fulfill, and exceed, this most important of responsibilities.

**Brian Barwick**  
Chief Executive, The FA

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, representing the name Brian Barwick.

## Acknowledgments

The FA would like to thank the following for their support and enthusiasm in assisting the development of this revised Policy and Procedures document.

County Football Association, Child Protection Officers  
CPSU, Anne Tiivas, National Development Officer  
FA CRB Unit Manager, Elizabeth Hubbard  
NSPCC, Jenny Myers and Ron Lock (Associate Consultant)  
FA Child Protection Manager, Rachel Tarr  
FA Head of Equality and Child Protection, Sue Law  
FA Case Manager, Lisa Wilkins

The FA has also drawn from work undertaken by the Amateur Swimming Association, All England Netball Association, The Rugby Football League and England and Wales Cricket Board. We would like to thank these governing bodies for their support and kind permission to adapt some of their materials.

## Glossary

CDM	County Development Manager
CFA	County Football Association
CFA CPO	County Football Association Child Protection Officer
CPSU	Child Protection in Sport Unit
CPT	Child Protection Teams
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CWO	Club Welfare Officer
DfES	Department for Education and Science
FDO	Football Development Manager
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Boards
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
The FA	The Football Association
The FA CRB Unit	The Football Association Criminal Records Bureau Unit
YLWO	Youth League Welfare Officer

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### Endorsement from the NSPCC

The FA's commitment to safeguarding children and young people involved in football is to be applauded. As the country's largest governing body of sport they have an unenviable task. The professionalism with which they have approached the NSPCC/Sport England National Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport is commendable.

We trust The FA will continue to be an advocate for collaborative working with the statutory agencies and sport as a whole. The NSPCC is delighted to endorse The FA's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for grassroots football which is both comprehensive and inclusive.

**Mary Marsh**  
CEO, NSPCC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Marsh'.

### Section 1.0 - Introduction/Policy

The FA continues to be committed to ensuring all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm those children and young people who participate in football at all levels. This policy together with the Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines and educational programme sets out The FA's position, role and responsibilities, and clarifies what is expected of other organisations and individuals involved in football. Further details regarding The FA's Safeguarding Policies can be obtained from The FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual, which can be accessed via [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)

#### 1.1 Child Protection Policy statement

Every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18, who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in football.

The FA recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. The FA is therefore committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children and young people to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities for as long as they choose to do so.



## 1.2 Key principles

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents and carers is essential.

The FA is committed to working in partnership with the Police, Social Services Departments, and local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) Committees (ACPC) in accordance with their procedures. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect all children and young people.

For further details about The FA's safeguarding policy statements aims and objectives please refer to the Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual which can be accessed via [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)

Football has substantial links with both schools and colleges. In addition to the comprehensive English Schools Football Association activities there are numerous after school clubs and community teams using educational facilities. Many of these school based football activities come under the Physical Education and School Sport Club Links (PESSCL) initiative and as such are required to follow the guidelines developed by the NSPCC CPSU, DfES, Sport England and PESSCL funded National Governing Bodies. For further information please refer to the Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual via [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)

It is essential that everyone is clear about how to report a concern about the welfare of a child or young person. In summary this means following the guidelines set out in this policy.

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## Section 2.0 - Safeguarding in Football

### 2.1 Recruitment of volunteers and staff

Grassroots football wouldn't exist without the many thousands of volunteers involved today. Ensuring that we encourage those individuals that are suitable for the many roles football has to offer is essential. Remember that a friendly, well run club is more likely to be successful in encouraging additional volunteers.

However, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and young people. Therefore all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people. Sound recruitment and selection procedures will help to screen out those who are not suitable to work in football.

#### 2.1.1 Planning and advertising

- Draw up a role profile which highlights key responsibilities of the role
- Decide upon the skills and experience that an individual will need
- Draw up a person specification
- Identify the aims of the club or league
- Reflect the club or leagues positive stance on child protection and equal opportunities
- Use application forms to collect information on each applicant
- Ensure that more than one official looks at each application form
- Ask for identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence.

For examples of the forms detailed in section 2 refer to [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal) for the best practice guidelines.

#### 2.1.2 Interviewing

- Meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decisions are made
- Ensure more than one official is present.

The meeting/interview will enable the club or league to explore further the information provided in the application form. The questions to be asked should be prepared in advance and should provide the applicant with the opportunity to recount previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations.

It's important to elicit information regarding an applicant's technical capabilities and is also necessary to explore their attitudes and commitment to child welfare. Listed below are examples of questions that could be used to discover this information:

- Tell us about any previous experience you have working with children or young people
- Give a child related scenario and ask the applicant what they would do e.g. 'it's a winter evening and the training sessions finished. A parent has not arrived to pick up their child – what would you do?' The applicant would be expected to say they would stay with the child and contact the parents to find out where they were
- Is there anything we should know that could affect your suitability to work with children or young people?

### 2.1.3 References

Request at least two references from individuals who are not related to the applicant. One reference should be associated with the applicant's place of work and, if possible, one that demonstrates the individual has been involved in sport, particularly children's football, previously. References should be followed up prior to any offer of appointment being made. If the references raise any concerns you are advised to contact The FA Child Protection Department for advice and guidance on 0207 745 4649.

### 2.1.4 Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosures

CRB checks are another tool in the recruitment procedure. A CRB Enhanced Disclosure tells The FA about a person's recorded offences. It can indicate that a person is not suitable to work with children, for example if they have a history of sexual offending. It may also tell The FA that further investigations are required, for example if the person has a history of drug dealing or racist offending.

The FA will take into account the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and only consider offences which are relevant to the care, supervision and training of children.

The FA is not allowed to tell the club or County FA about the actual offending and so applicants can be assured of confidentiality. The FA will however tell the club and County FA whether or not the person is considered suitable to work with children.

Applications for CRB checks should be dealt with by the CWO. Further information about this process can be obtained from [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal) or [crb@TheFA.com](mailto:crb@TheFA.com). If an applicant claims to already have an FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure the club should seek advice from The FA CRB Unit or the Goal website on how to proceed.

*Please note, The FA will not accept third-party party disclosures. For further information visit the website address detailed above.*

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### 2.1.5 Appointing staff and volunteers

Clubs should consider all the information they receive via the application form, confirmation of identity, the outcome of the take up of references and The FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure. This information should then be considered alongside the outcome of the meeting/interview to make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept the applicant into their club.

### 2.1.6 Post appointment decisions

It is important that once a new volunteer has been recruited follow up action is taken:

- Any qualifications should be substantiated e.g. requesting photocopies of coaching certificates
- New volunteers are made aware and sign up to the club's child protection policy and procedures, best practice guidelines and codes of conduct
- Training needs are established and actioned
- The roles and responsibilities of the new volunteer are signed up to
- A period of supervision/observation or mentoring is used to support the new volunteer
- The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop is completed.

Further information about The FA's CRB Unit Policy and Procedures can be accessed via the Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual.

## 2.2 Promoting best practice

### 2.2.1 Getting the essentials in place

Every football club and youth, mini soccer and girls' league must have a child protection policy. For that policy to be effective members need to understand what it means and how it's integrated into daily football activities. A child protection policy is the foundation of a well-run and effective club or league. By signing up to The FA's Child Protection Policy (see Appendix 1) and implementing the key policies and procedures outlined below, best practice will soon become common practice.

Policies check list

- Child protection policy statement
- Selection and recruitment policy
- A whistle-blowing policy
- Health and safety policy
- Anti bullying policy



- Equality policy
- Codes of conduct for coaches, players, officials and parents/spectators
- A clear club philosophy that is shared at the start of the season.

#### Procedures check list

- A Club Welfare Officer appointed
- Procedures for reporting concerns about the welfare of a child or young person
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures
- A system for gathering player and parental consent
- An avenue for young people to express their views and have them heard
- Information for parents, carers and players
- A committee representative of the wider local community, one that is inclusive representing current members and potential members (e.g. representing age, gender, disability and ethnicity)
- Travel and overnight stay procedures.

For further guidance on how to implement the key safeguarding building blocks (see Appendix 2).

### 2.2.2 Risk management

We naturally assess the potential for risks when planning activities. However, to ensure the welfare of children and young people within our care it is important to always ask the following basic questions:

- What is the activity?
- What are the ages involved?
- Where is the activity going to take place?
- Are there any special needs within the group?
- Are there mixed groupings?
- What experience and qualifications do the organisers have?
- Do you require someone who has appropriate first aid training?

It's important to also consider your familiarity with the venue and the level of responsibility to have for the activity e.g. at your home ground (which may or may not have access to telephone, toilet and changing facilities, first aid provision, secure perimeters) or an unknown ground that your club has to travel to. Local sports centres or community playing fields will have guidelines on use and types of facilities, which you may or may not have access to. Also be mindful of social activities at a non-football venue, which may or may not be known to you.

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The principles for assessing potential risks remain the same whatever the activity, therefore you need to consider these and decide what ratio of adults to children or young people you consider to be appropriate to ensure their safety.

If the group is aged over eight years there should always be two adults and a minimum of one adult to ten children. More adults are required when working with younger age groups.

Remember that an adult is anyone over the age of 18. You may have volunteers or even FA Level 1 Coaches who are not yet 18. They cannot be considered an adult legally, therefore this affects the ratio of adults to children/young people. However, you can ask parents to come along in such circumstances. It is also important to consider the experience of the adults involved. Clearly it is best practice to have FA Qualified Coaches, however it is likely that there will be a mixture of qualified and unqualified coaches.

### 2.2.3 Relationships of trust

The power and influence an older colleague (where an U18 has taken on a leadership role) or member of staff has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and the older person is responsible for the young person's success or failure to some extent, then the dependency of the younger member upon the older will be increased. It is therefore vital for volunteers to recognise the responsibility they must exercise in ensuring that they do not abuse their position of trust.

Genuine relationships do occur between different levels of volunteers and participants in a group, however no intimate relationship should begin whilst the member of staff or volunteer is in a position of trust over them.

The FA acknowledges that intimate relationships between teenagers take place and often no harm comes from them. However, it is also acknowledged that children and young people who suffer abuse often do so at the hands of other children or young people. It must be understood that the notion of 'relationships of trust' applies as much to young people who have taken on a leadership role as it does to adults involved in football.

"The inequality at the heart of a relationship or trust should be ended before any sexual relationship begins". Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? Guidance for preventing abuse of trust (Home Office 1999).

Please note: young people aged 16-18 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity; however, in some provisions of legislation (under the Children's Act 1989) they are classified as children.

The FA is currently awaiting the outcome of consultation re the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which currently applies to teachers to see if this law is also applied to coaches.

"It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people (Sexual Offences Act 2003)".

The principle of this section of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 will be applied by The FA thus if you engage in an intimate or inappropriate relationship with a young person it is a breach of The Football Association Regulations (see Appendix 3) and as such will result in disciplinary action.

### **Section 3.0 - Poor Practice and Abuse**

Child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken. It is also important that child abuse and child protection are openly discussed as this helps create an environment where people are more aware of the issues and sensitive to the needs of children. Open discussions also create environments that deter abusers.

Child abuse both within and outside of the family can occur anywhere. This includes sport, leisure, cultural, religious and care environments and on the transport to and from these places. Recent inquiries have also indicated that abuse which takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. This means that if abuse is detected, it is highly unlikely to be the first time it has happened. It is therefore crucial that all allegations and suspicions are treated seriously and appropriate actions taken. An environment that explicitly attempts to identify and report abuse helps create a safer culture for children and young people.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult's or a peer's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person within a football setting. Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes existing Codes of Conduct, infringes an individual's rights and/or reflects a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable in football and will be treated seriously with

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appropriate actions taken. Sometimes a child or young person may not be aware that practice is poor or abusive and they may tolerate behaviour without complaint. An example of this is a child with a disability who is used to being excluded from activities or a bullied young person who is used to being mocked. Children may also be used to their cultural needs being ignored or their race abused. This does not make it acceptable.

Many children and young people will lack the skills or confidence to complain and it is therefore extremely important that adults in the club advocate for the children and young people. Advocating for children and young people who find it hard to speak out is part of creating a safer culture for them.

For information about the categories of abuse and signs and indicators (see Appendix 4).

### 3.1 Raising awareness of potential vulnerability

This child protection policy is inclusive and the same actions should be taken regardless of the needs and background of the child or young person. The FA recognises however that some children and young people are disadvantaged by their experiences and would want to highlight the following.

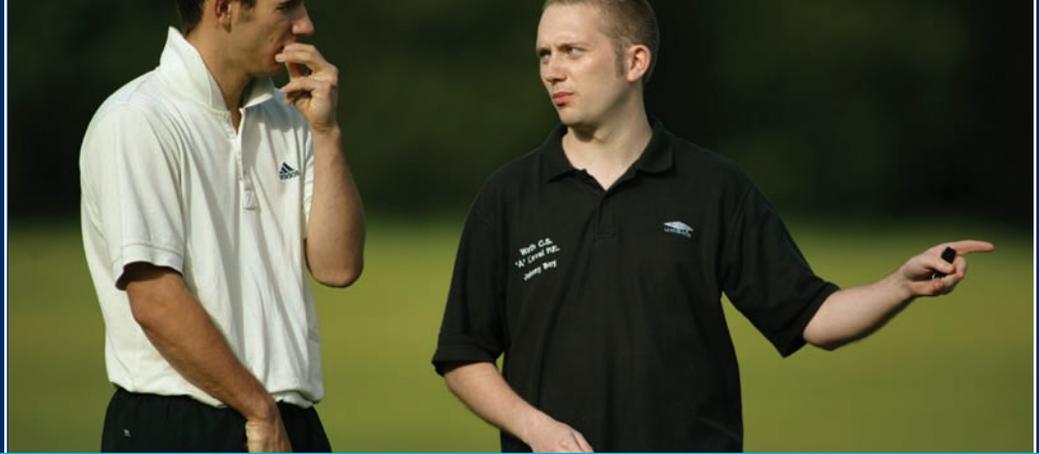
#### 3.1.1 Children and young people with disabilities

Children and young people with disabilities might be additionally vulnerable because they may:

- Lack a wide network of friends who support and protect them
- Have significant communication differences - this may include very limited verbal communication or they may use sign language or other forms of non-verbal communication
- Require personal intimate care
- Have a reduced capacity to resist either verbally or physically
- Not be believed
- Depend on the abuser for their involvement in sport
- Lack access to peers to discover what is acceptable behaviour
- Have medical needs that are used to explain abuse.

#### 3.1.2 Children and young people from minority ethnic groups

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may be:



- Experiencing racism and racist attitudes
- Experiencing racism being ignored by people in authority
- Afraid of further abuse if they challenge others
- Subjected to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture are good with or hit their children
- Wanting to fit in and not make a fuss
- Using or learning English as a second language.

### 3.1.3 Children and young people who take on leadership roles

Taking on a leadership role within football is intended to be an enjoyable and positive learning experience. However, coaches, club officials, players, parents/spectators in both adult and junior football often lose sight of the fact that an individual in a leadership role who is under 18 is still legally a child. As a consequence young coaches, medics and referees are open to experiencing abusive behaviour verbally, physically and emotionally. This behaviour is not acceptable in adult or youth football. The increased potential harm that verbal, physical and emotional abuse can cause to children and young people in these roles needs to be recognised.

It is important that clubs acknowledge their role in ensuring that club officials, players and spectators behave appropriately towards young people who take on such roles. It is necessary to recognise that, like adults, children and young people can and do make mistakes when they are learning, and overly critical and unsupportive responses may constitute verbal and or emotional abuse. Some young match officials have experienced physical abuse from coaches, spectators and players.

### 3.1.4 Reducing the potential for vulnerability

Bearing in mind that children and young people can be and are disadvantaged by these and other experiences, it is important for all clubs, CFAs and leagues to be extra vigilant in creating a safe culture, including:

- Finding ways of understanding and communicating with all children and young people
- Ensuring best practice at all times in physical and health care
- Developing knowledge of the diverse cultures they serve
- Respecting cultural differences
- Building relationships with parents and carers and including all families in club activities
- Observing carefully changes in mood, appearance and behaviour and discussing those concerns with families, carers or the designated person if suspicions or concerns are significantly aroused about the care of the child or young person

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- Acknowledging that disabled children and young people are additionally vulnerable and that vigilance is essential
- Acknowledging that abusive behaviour directed towards a minor whilst they are carrying out a leadership role is not acceptable and will be reported to the appropriate designated person as poor practice and or abuse
- Implementation of a club code of conduct for spectators and players
- Acceptance of the special role club officials have in setting a good example of the way in which people should behave towards children and young people in leadership roles.

It may be necessary to ask other specialist agencies for help and advice in including some children and young people in football. It should be seen as a strength of the club to approach families, Education, Health, Social Services, voluntary agencies and community groups for advice on including and protecting particular children.

The mentoring of young officials is particularly helpful in supporting individuals if they are faced with abusive behaviour and indeed preventing the continuation of such behaviour. Further information can be obtained via The FA's Referees Department (0207 745 4651).

### 3.2 Dealing with bullying

No one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. The FA will not accept or condone bullying in football and has defined bullying as a category of abuse. It is the responsibility of everyone in football, whatever their role, to ensure that bullying is dealt with appropriately.

Bullying can be defined as:

- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft
- Verbal: name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.

Bullying can take place anywhere but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision, e.g. in the changing rooms or on the way to and from the football pitch - but it can also take place at a training session or competition.

Football's competitive nature can create and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware. The bully in football can be:



- A parent who pushes too hard
- A coach or manager who has a win-at-all-costs philosophy
- A child or young person intimidating another
- An official who places unfair pressure on a child or young person.

The damage inflicted by bullying can often be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and young people, in some cases affecting their health and development. In extreme circumstances it can lead to self-harm. For further information on developing an anti-bullying policy (see Appendix 2).

### 3.2.1 Taking a proactive approach

- Ensure The FA's definition of bullying and its anti-bullying policy is promoted
- Ensure clubs have codes of conduct of which an anti-bullying policy is a part
- Ensure that you take all signs of bullying seriously
- Develop an open environment that encourages children and young people to share their concerns.

Remember that it is not the responsibility of an individual to decide that bullying is or is not taking place in football, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## Section 4.0 - Responsibility for Safeguarding in Football

We all have a moral and legal responsibility for the safety and protection of children and young people within football. However, there are people designated at every level of the game who take additional responsibility for child protection with the aim of making football as safe as possible for all concerned.

The title 'designated person' is an umbrella term that applies to all individuals that are nominated or appointed by clubs, youth, mini soccer and girls' leagues and all CFAs. The designated person for child protection should be clearly identified in every football setting.

Every designated person holds a position of significant responsibility. The FA therefore requires that prior to appointment, every potential designated person is considered to be a 'fit and proper person' to hold such a position as defined in Appendix 5. The FA also requires that all designated persons are perceived as being approachable, having a child-centred approach and the ability to maintain this perspective when carrying out their role.

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All designated persons need to have attended an FA Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop and have completed a CRB Enhanced Disclosure via The FA CRB Unit. Additional, role-specific support is being developed and all designated persons are expected to participate.

For additional information regarding job descriptions and person specifications for all designated persons within football, refer to the Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual, which can be accessed via [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)

### 4.1 The Club Welfare Officer

The FA is moving towards having a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in every club who will also be part of the Club Management Committee in order that safeguarding becomes imbedded in football. The CWO will promote best practice throughout the club and play a key role in dealing with poor practice concerns in line with the club's own disciplinary process. Matters of a more worrying nature will be referred to the CFA CPO. Confidentiality regarding concerns should be maintained on a strictly 'need to know' basis. Each CWO will be expected to:

- Know who the CFA Child Protection Officer (CFA CPO) is and how to contact them
- Refer any club child protection or poor practice concerns to the CFA CPO
- Seek advice from The FA/NSPCC Helpline if the CFA CPO is unavailable or in circumstances of child protection urgency
- Seek advice from local Social Services or the Police in an emergency
- Encourage the club to discuss and implement The FA's Child Protection Policy
- Encourage the club to utilise The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines on recruiting volunteers and always requesting and following up references
- Encourage the club to discuss and implement The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines on the use of images and organising travel, trips and tournaments
- Advocate that the CRB Disclosure be used as part of the club's safeguarding initiatives and encourage the club to make use of The FA CRB Unit
- Support the club in identifying those who require a CRB Disclosure
- Promote, support and encourage the benefits of the child protection and best practice education and awareness programme.

### 4.2 The Youth League Welfare Officer

All YLWO are expected to promote awareness of The FA's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Best Practice Guidelines. The development and introduction of codes of conduct, appropriate sanctions and proactive requirements for affiliation will do much to safeguard children and young people. It is anticipated that the league's rules and



disciplinary procedures will deal appropriately with many poor practice issues. However, where appropriate the YLWO may be required/asked to acknowledge and support sanctions imposed by the CFA.

Any concerns about a child's or young person's welfare should be reported immediately to the CFA CPO. The YLWO is expected to:

- Know who the CFA CPO is and how to contact them
- Know who the Club Welfare Officers are and how to contact them
- Encourage all league clubs to implement The FA Child Protection Policy
- Encourage all league clubs to implement the Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines
- Promote, support and encourage the benefits of the child protection and best practice education and awareness programme
- Have an understanding of The FA CRB Unit and its role within safeguarding children and young people
- Advocate the CRB Disclosure to be used as part of both the league and clubs' safeguarding initiatives and encourage all clubs to make use of The FA CRB Unit
- Coordinate annual CWO network gatherings for those CWO who are affiliated to their league.

#### 4.3 The County Football Association Child Protection Officer

The CFA CPO is a key member of The FA's safeguarding team and will work closely with The FA Child Protection Team. They will receive and collate child protection concerns in accordance with FA protocols and procedures and deal with poor practice concerns directly. As and when required they will seek advice from The FA Case Manager, Social Services, the Police or The FA/NSPCC Helpline regarding case referrals.

Part of their role is to promote and support the aims of The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Policy and Procedures and The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines. They will assist the youth, mini-soccer and girls' leagues to appoint Welfare Officers. Thereafter they will maintain contact with the YLWO to offer support and guidance where necessary. The CFA CPO will also support clubs and leagues in implementing CRB Disclosures.

For further information about the role of the CFA CPO, refer to the Safeguarding Children and Young People – Operations Manual, which can be accessed via [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal).

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### Section 5.0 - Responding to Concerns, Allegations and Disclosures\*

\*The term disclosure in this context is used to describe the sharing of child protection concern(s) by one individual to another and not the Criminal Record Bureaus formal record of an individuals relevant convictions.

There is a legal and moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context.

The FA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded.

The following guidelines are relevant whether or not the child or young person is involved in football. It is essential that you follow The FA procedures for any concerns that are related to football settings.

Concerns may arise because:

- A child or young person informs you directly that he or she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them (see 5.1 & 5.2.1)
- You become aware, through your own observations or through a third party, of possible abuse occurring (see 5.2).

Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the child or young person's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others. Your suspicions may develop over time (see Appendix 4 Signs and Indicators of Abuse).

Where the concern does not involve individuals in football settings, the matter should be reported directly to local Social Services or the local Police (see 5.2.6).

#### 5.1 What to do if a child or young person discloses to you

If a child or young person informs you directly that they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, this is known as a disclosure. The person receiving the disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person
- Tell the child or young person that he or she is not to blame and that he or she was right to tell
- Take what the child or young person says seriously
- If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to



hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person
- Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- In the event of suspicion of sexual abuse do not let the child bathe or shower until given permission to do so. Washing can destroy valuable evidence
- Inform the parents/carers immediately unless you have specific reason not to, e.g. the child has named the parent/carer as the abuser. If this is the case then contact the designated person. If they are unavailable contact local Social Services or the Police for guidance.

## 5.2 The FA Reporting Procedures

Whether informed directly by a child or young person, via a third party, or through your own observations within a football setting, you should follow The FA Procedures outlined below and in the flow diagrams on pages 24 and 25.

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person
- If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue
- Report the concerns to the designated person for child protection or the person in charge immediately, unless the concern is about this individual (see below)
- If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the local Social Services, the local Police or The FA/NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
- These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Social Services is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Social Services or the Police that this is a child protection referral
- All police forces have dedicated Child Protection Teams (CPTs) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in a position of trust. In a real emergency dial 999 to involve the full squad
- Remember if the concern is about someone involved within a football setting and you are unable to contact the appropriate designated person, then you should also inform The FA Case Manager on 0207 745 4771 and let them know what action, in line with FA procedures, you have taken.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### 5.2.1 Dealing with possible poor practice and/or abuse in a football setting

The flow diagrams on pages 24 and 25 explain how to deal with a concern about possible poor practice and or child abuse within a football setting. The following definitions relating to poor practice and abuse will help you to decide whether the issue(s) is likely to be poor practice or abuse. If you are at all unsure make sure you seek guidance from your CWO or CFA CPO as appropriate.

If you decide the concern relates to poor practice follow flow diagram 1 on page 24. If you decide that the concern relates to abuse use flow diagram 2 on page 25.

### 5.2.2 Distinguishing between child abuse and poor practice

Concerns identified as child abuse will fall within the following five categories:

#### Physical Abuse

A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person

#### Neglect

A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised

#### Sexual Abuse

An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs

#### Emotional Abuse

Persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person

#### Bullying

Persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person

Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of children and young people are not afforded the necessary priority, so as their welfare is compromised. Some examples are likely to be:

- When insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players)
- Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals and regularly or unfairly rejecting others (e.g. singling out and only focusing on the talented players and failing to involve the full squad)
- Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (e.g. changing in a 1:1 situation with a young referee)



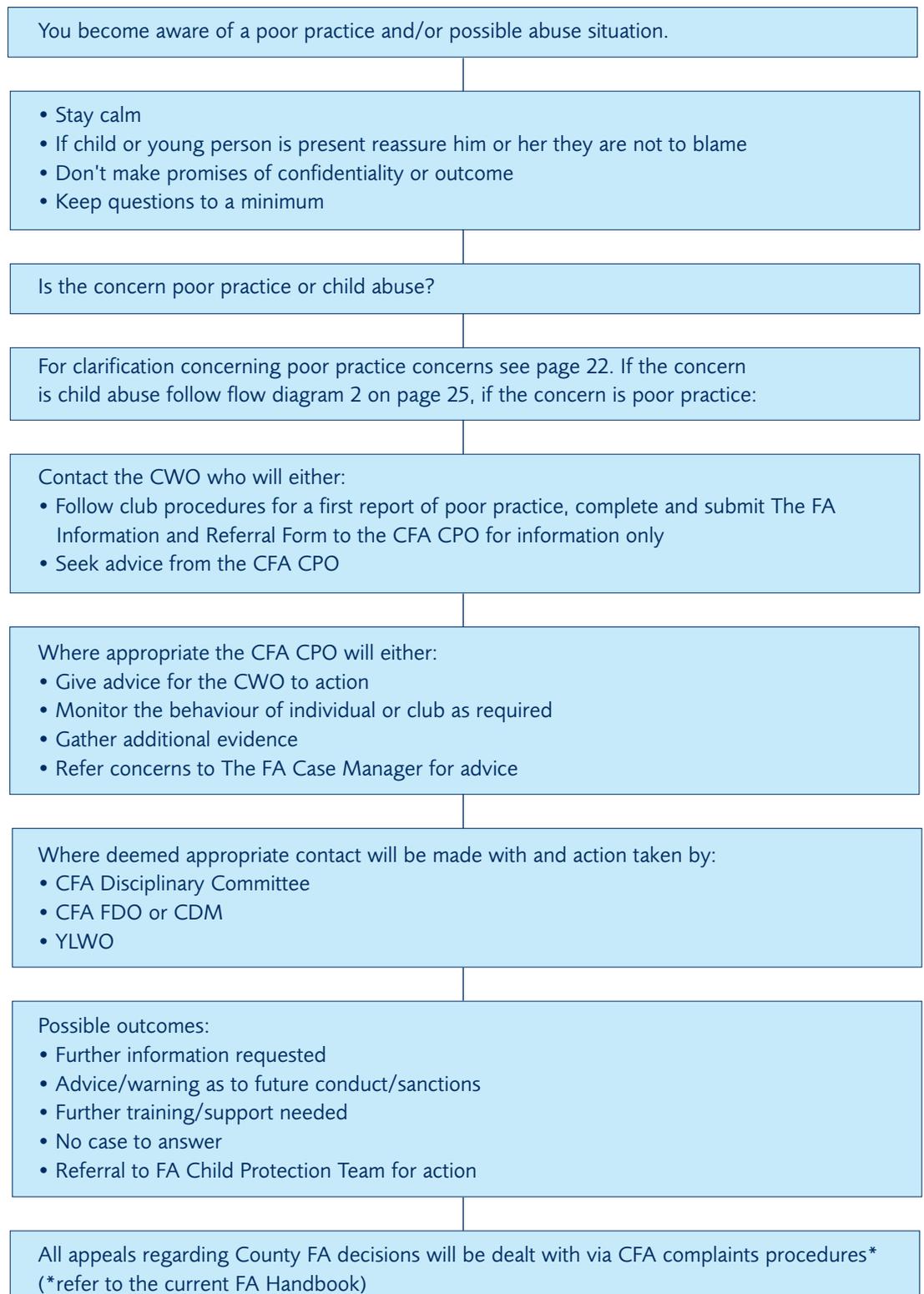
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (e.g. a coach who ridicules and criticizes players who make a mistake during a match)
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g. allowing young players set up goal posts unsupervised by adults)
- Failing to adhere to the club's codes of practice (e.g. openly verbally abusing the referee).

Please note:

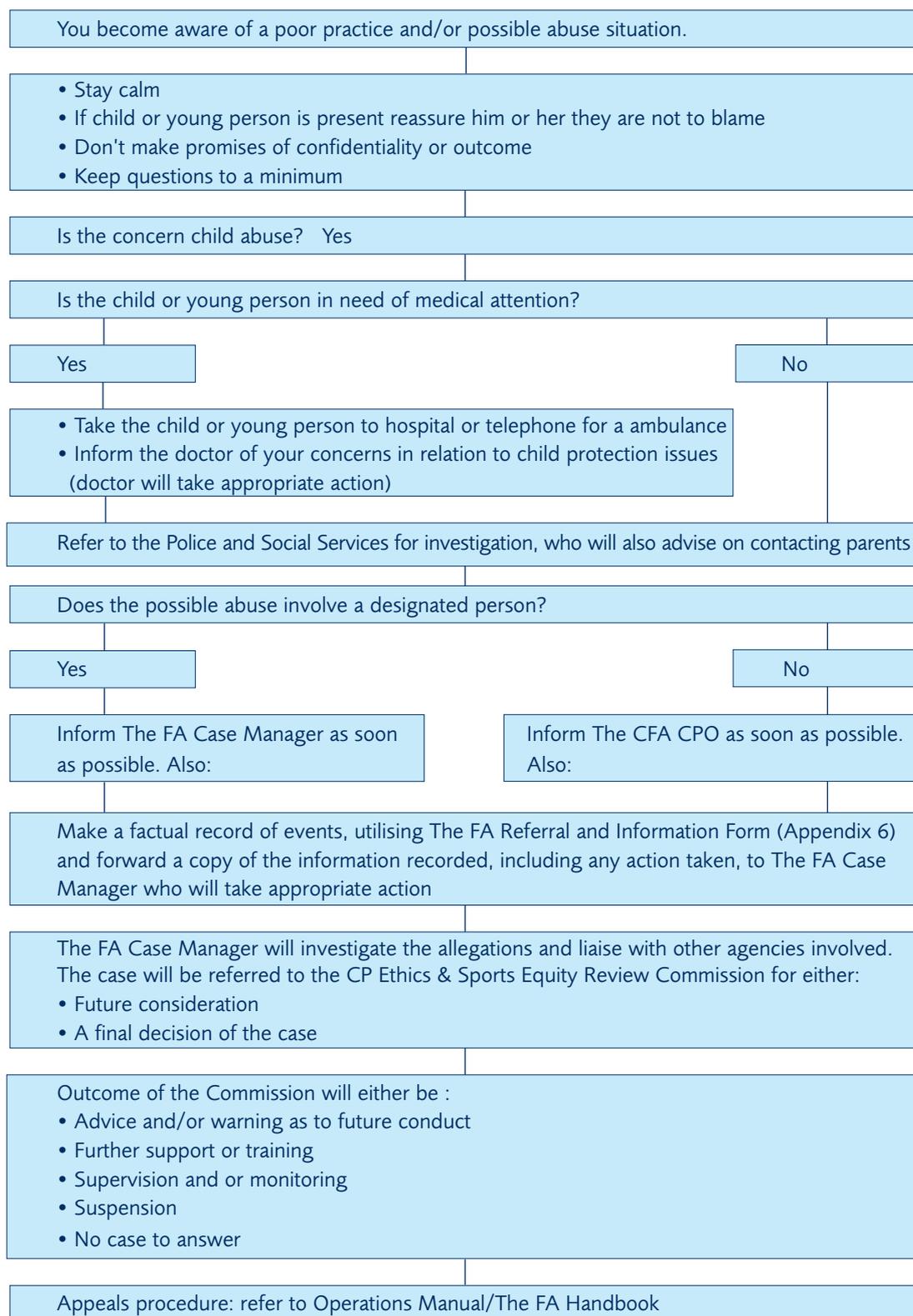
- The judgement about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice may not be able to be made at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information
- The majority of poor practice concerns can be dealt with by the club or alternatively with support and guidance from the County FA
- All child abuse will be dealt with by The FA (in conjunction with the statutory agencies) and with the support of the County FA
- For further clarification concerning abuse concerns (see Appendix 4).

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### 5.2.3 Flow diagram 1; dealing with possible poor practice in a football setting



## 5.2.4 Flow diagram 2; dealing with possible child abuse in a football setting



## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL



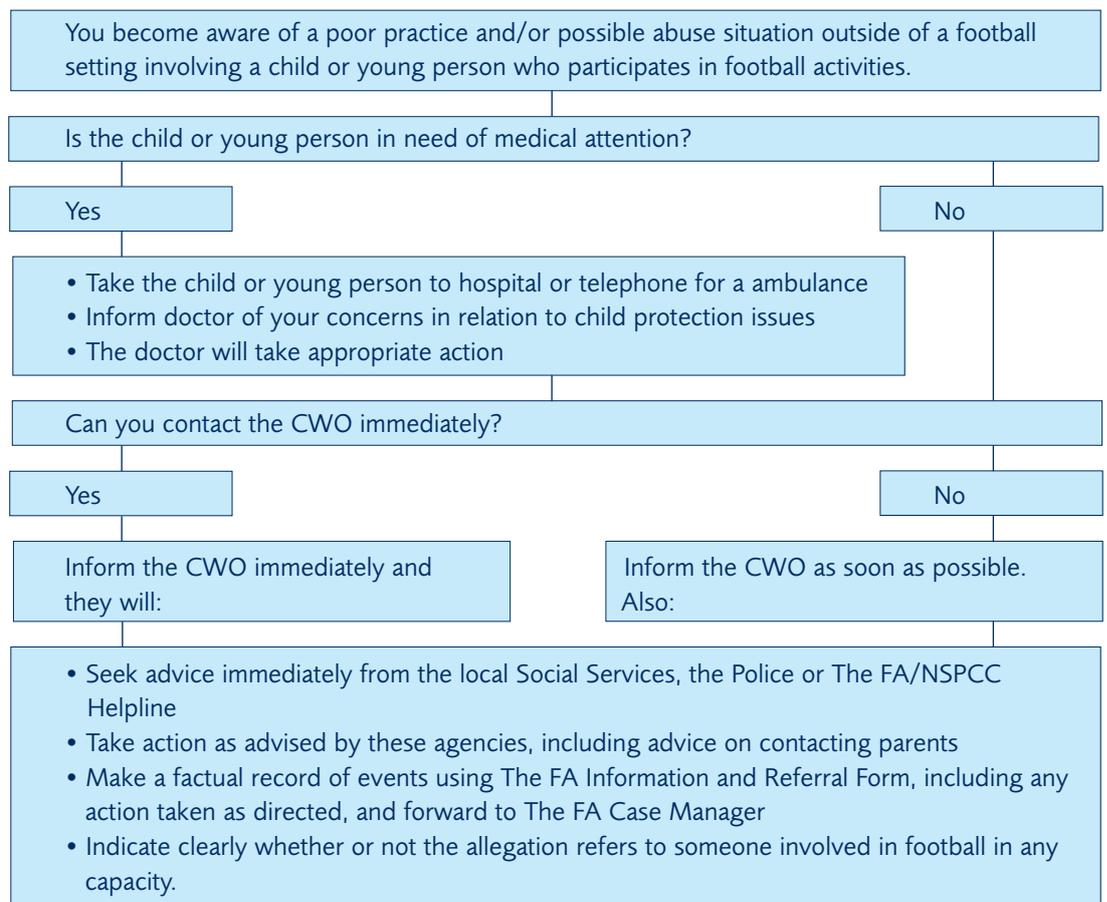
### 5.2.5 Concerns outside of a football setting

You may receive information regarding the welfare of a child or young person who is involved in football, yet the concern itself does not relate to someone within the game. In these circumstances (e.g. the concern relates to the child's home or a social setting other than football) you need to follow The FA Procedures outlined below.

- Follow the guidance on page 20 (5.1) if the child or young person informs you directly
- If your concerns are via a third person or through observation, report your concerns directly to the CWO
- If you are unable to contact the CWO immediately or the CFA CPO refer your concerns directly to local Social Services or to the local Police
- These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Social Services is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Social Services or the Police that this is a child protection referral
- Make a factual record of events using The FA Information and Referral Form including any action as directed, indicating clearly whether or not the allegation refers to someone involved in football. Forward this to The FA Case Manager.



### 5.2.6 Flow diagram 3; dealing with concerns outside of a football setting



## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### 5.3 Recording of suspicions, concerns or events

- Accurate recording is essential, as there may be legal proceedings at a later date
- Referrals to Social Services or Police should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours - if not, then at the earliest opportunity
- Keep a record of the name and designation of the Social Services member of staff or Police Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call in case any follow-up is needed
- Ensure all information is maintained safely in accordance with Data Protection Legislation
- Information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- Complete Appendix 6 (The FA Referral and Information Form) and send this to the CFA CPO. The CFA CPO in turn will send this onto The FA Case Manager.

### 5.4 The FA Case Management System

In case of child abuse or alleged child abuse, The FA Case Management System will:

- Decide whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries (see Appendix 3 for The FA Regulations)
- Assess all individual cases under the appropriate FA misconduct and disciplinary procedures, irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police inquiries
- Decide whether the nature of the concerns need to be dealt with by The FA Disciplinary Commission
- Support all designated persons in carrying out their role and responsibilities
- Inform individuals when they are the subject of a child protection concern and provide a point of contact to keep the alleged perpetrator informed of proceedings
- Decide and advise on any contact with the media
- Monitor the types and volume of poor practice and child abuse referrals and utilise this information to inform it's educational programmes and develop The FA referral process
- Decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively.

Decisions about reinstatement may be difficult. The FA, advised by the Police and Social Services and/or the NSPCC, will reach a decision based upon the available information. This could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true, regardless of any decisions relating to criminal prosecutions. The welfare of children and young people should always remain paramount.

NB. The FA is entitled to carry out its own investigations independently of the Police and Social Services and will do so where it believes this is necessary.

#### 5.4.1 Possible outcomes

Cases of poor practice will be investigated by the CFA and may be subject to CFA disciplinary procedures. Cases of child abuse (having been dealt with by the statutory agencies) will be investigated by The FA Case Manager who may refer the case to The FA Child Protection, Ethics and Sports Equity Review Commission. In these circumstances, the following outcomes are possible:

- No case to answer
- Advice and or warning as to future conduct
- Further support or training
- Supervision and or monitoring
- Suspension.

#### 5.4.2 "Whistle-blowing"

Whistle-blowing is an early warning system. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or within an independent structure associated with it.

Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can also use whistle-blowing by contacting The FA Case Management Team on 0207 745 4590.

Alternatively you can go direct the Police or Social Services and report your concerns there.

#### 5.4.3 Appeals

The appeals procedure is available to anyone who is subject to a decision made by The Ethics and Sports Equality Review Commission or The FA Disciplinary Commission. Every individual and organisation wishing to appeal against decisions by The FA must do so in writing, to be received by The FA Disciplinary Manager, The Football Association, 25 Soho Square, London W1D 4FA within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision appealed against. The appeal must identify the specific decision(s) being appealed and set out the grounds of appeal and the reasons why it would be substantially unfair not to alter the decision. A fee of £100.00 must be enclosed with the appeal. The FA Disciplinary Appeal Panel will exclude anyone who

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

sat on the initial decision-making panel and will consist of an independent Chair and two other members.

Further information regarding The FA Appeals Procedure can be found via [www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com).

### 5.4.4 Complaints procedures

A complaint may be made by an individual who has been the subject of a poor practice or child protection concern that has been dealt with by The FA's Child Protection Team. Please note, any matters relating to appeals with regard to Disciplinary Hearings, Suspensions and the Rules of The Association and Laws of the Game will be separately dealt with under established procedures and are not the subject of a complaint.

In the first instance the complainant is required to contact The FA Case Manager. It is hoped that the member of staff will be able to resolve the complainants concerns and give appropriate assurances regarding the management of the case in question. A record of this resolution will be made and copied to the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, they are required to put the matter in writing to The FA's Head of Compliance Department within 28 days of the known outcome of the informal communication with The FA Case Manager. Further information about The FA's appeals process can be obtained from The FA Handbook.

### 5.4.5 Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child, by a member of staff or volunteer who is still currently working with children or young people). Where such an allegation is made, you should inform the CFA CPO who will in turn inform The FA Case Manager.

The FA will, following consultation, take appropriate action. This is because other children or young people, either within football or outside it, may be at risk from this person and anyone who has been abused has the right to be heard at any time. This position is reinforced by UK legislation and guidance.



#### 5.4.6 Providing support

The FA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded, in the following ways:

- Via CFA CPO
- Via FA Case Management Team
- Provision of specialist independent organisations contact details
- NSPCC Helpline
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate for children, young people, parents or carers, volunteers and members of staff during and after poor practice and child abuse referrals to The FA.

It is never easy to respond to a child or young person who tells you that they are being abused. You may well be feeling upset and worried yourself. Confidentiality is paramount. However, The FA acknowledges that having received a disclosure, individuals may have a need for some support. Appendix 7 (Useful Contacts) provides information on support groups and helplines for those who have received a disclosure.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any child or young person who has been subjected to poor practice or abuse, and their parents or carers, will be given support from the appropriate agencies and The FA. A list of independent support groups and helplines is provided in Appendix 7 for those who have experienced abuse.

The FA will also consider what support with the process may be appropriate for those against whom a complaint of poor practice or an allegation of abuse has been made. Appendix 7 provides information on support groups and helplines.

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### Section 6.0 Appendices

#### Appendix 1 - Club Child Protection Policy

(INSERT NAME) Football Club

##### 1. Child Protection Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all of its members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity. We subscribe to The Football Association's Child Protection and Best Practice Policy and Procedures, Safeguarding Children and Young People in football (revised edition 2006) and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

##### 2. The key principles of The FA Child Protection Policy are that:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.

##### 3. We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

##### 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association Regulations (see Appendix 3) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, coach, club official or medical staff.

We endorse and adopt The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines for recruiting volunteers and will:



- Develop a role profile
- Request identification documents
- As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible conduct interviews before appointing
- Request and follow up with two references before appointing
- Require an FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with FA guidelines.

All current \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club members with direct access to children and young people will be required to complete a CRB Enhanced Disclosure via The FA CRB Unit. If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part \_\_\_\_\_ of Football Club guidance will be sought from The Football Association. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via The FA CRB Unit and that all decisions will be made in the best interests of children and young people.

It is accepted that The FA aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children or young people and to minimise the risk of 'grooming' within football.

5.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club supports The FA's Whistle-blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can whistle-blow by contacting The FA Child Protection Team on 0207 745 4771 or by writing to The FA Case Manager, The Football Association, 25 Soho Square, London W1D 4FA or by going direct to the Police, Social Services, or the NSPCC. \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club encourages everyone to know about it and utilise it if necessary.

6.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with The FA's role profile and completion of the Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop. The post holder will be involved with designated persons training provided by The FA. The CWO is the first point of contact for all club members and parents/carers regarding concerns for the welfare of any child or young person. They liaise directly with the CFA CPO and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing an awareness of poor practice and abuse amongst club members.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL



7. We acknowledge and endorse The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the CWO or member of the committee or alternatively in cases of serious bullying contact the CFA CPO.
8. Codes of conduct for coaches, players, officials and parents/carers, officials and coaches have been implemented by \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club. In order to validate these codes of conduct the club has clear sanctions to deal with any misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by leagues or the CFA in more serious circumstances. All prospective members will be informed of these codes.
9. Further advice on Child Protection matters can be obtained from:
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ County Football Association's Child Protection Officer, whose details can be found in the County Handbook
  - The FA/NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000
  - [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)
  - The FA Child Protection Team.



## Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Building Blocks

- Anti-bullying policy for football clubs (pages 35-38)
- Guidance for developing a club health and safety policy (pages 38-39)
- Guidance for developing a club complaints and disciplinary policy (page 39-41)
- Codes of conduct for player, spectators, coaches and officials (pages 41-45)
- The Football Association Equality Policy (page 46)
- Equality Policy for clubs (page 46-47)
- Club Complaints Procedure (page 47-48)

### Anti-bullying policy for football clubs

#### Statement of intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

#### What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

#### Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The impact upon a child or young person can be devastating and in some cases effect all aspects of their life, in extreme circumstances it can lead to suicide threats or even attempts.

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This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### Objectives of this policy

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All players and parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### Signs and indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- has possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases:

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the CWO or a member of the clubs committee or contact the CFA CPO
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the CFA CPO for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management System
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

### **Recommended club action**

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/is not appropriate, a small panel (made up from the chairman, CWO, secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent/carer and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same three members should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carer and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

1. The CFA CPO should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.

### Prevention:

- The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
- All club members and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club
- The CWO will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE.

KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.

KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

You may also wish to access [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) another website designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying.

**We would like to thank the Amateur Swimming Association who have shared their Anti-Bullying Policy for clubs on which this recommended FA Club Anti-Bullying Policy has been developed.**

### Guidance for developing a club health and safety policy

The type and ownership of facilities will shape the policy and procedures that you need to have in place.

Having a Club Health and Safety Policy really means applying common sense to the use and maintenance of your pitch(es) and facilities to ensure that you have a safe environment in which to carry out the club's football activities.

If you are using local authority facilities, e.g. local sports centre or school, there will already be a health and safety policy in place for these facilities. It is your responsibility to ask for the regulations and best practice guidance relating to usage of these facilities.



Make sure you find out what your club is responsible for and what the provider is responsible for. This should be clearly indicated when initially hiring the facility.

If the club owns the facilities there will have had to be a health and safety policy as part of the development of the facility so check who holds this information within the club and what regulations and best practice guidance the club has in place already.

#### **Recommended action**

- Make sure the club's management committee is aware of the need for procedures relating to health and safety and takes ownership of this responsibility
- Ensure the club has public and civil liability insurance and follows the expectations of the insurance policy
- Establish where and how access is gained by emergency services to the pitch/club house
- Sign up to and abide by The FA's Goalpost Safety Guidance (see leaflet for details)
- Check the pitch before use for obvious dangers e.g. broken glass, drinks cans
- Ensure goalposts are erected appropriately and always supervised by adults
- Establish where the nearest phone is
- Establish those individuals who have a recognised emergency first aid qualification within the club
- Establish emergency procedures within the club and ensure all coaches/managers are aware of these procedures
- Utilise The FA's guidance for travel and trips ([www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)) when transporting club members to and from football activities and when organising trips away
- Have an Incident/Accident Report Form.

#### **Guidance for developing a club complaints and disciplinary policy**

##### **The disciplinary process**

Many clubs will already have in place codes of conduct for players, spectators, coaches and officials. If a club is yet to have implemented codes of conduct this is the starting point. Codes of conduct can only be effective if there is a disciplinary process to support them. It is essential that the club is fair and consistent.

The following options can be considered:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Exclusion from specified number of matches

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- Exclusion from specified number of training sessions
- Removal from team for remainder of current season
- Refusal to register with team for future season.

It is recommended that the sanctions are built up or a combination of lighter sanctions issued. Once a decision has been taken it is not easy to reverse the decision. It is much simpler to add an additional sanction or increase the number or period of time being utilised.

Ultimately, of course, all clubs will be guided and required to follow the league(s) to which they are affiliated, County Association and FA rules. Experience of dealing with issues will in turn help to inform and develop the clubs disciplinary process.

### **Having a complaints process**

For those clubs which have clearly stated and communicated the club's philosophy, what it can offer to and what it expects from, players, spectators, coaches and officials, this will limit potential complaints.

Most complaints can be dealt with by referring individuals to club policies and procedures. However, where there are complaints which cannot be satisfied via these routes there needs to be a procedure for dealing with these.

The following options can be considered:

- Complaints can be submitted in the first instance to the CWO. Alternatively where the issue relates to a technical aspect the concern can also be submitted to the appropriate age group coach
- Complaints can be directed to the club chairman
- Complaints can be directed to the club committee
- All complaints must be submitted in writing to the club committee
- If an individual is unhappy with the outcome of their original complaint they can appeal to the club committee
- The outcome of an appeal to the club committee is final
- Individuals have the right to seek guidance from the County FA where they feel they have been unfairly treated by the club's committee.

Please note, all clubs must be aware of the County disciplinary process which may decide that a punishment is required following a report from a referee or any participant. Any sanctions made must take into account the time it will take a County FA to deal with a case. They must not expect a County FA to take into

account any action taken by the club when dealing with cases against players, coaches and officials of their club.

## Codes of conduct for players, spectators, coaches and officials

### The FA Coaches Association Code of Conduct

Coaches are key to the establishment of ethics within football. Their concept of ethics and their attitude directly affects the behaviour of players under their supervision. Coaches are, therefore, expected to pay particular care to the moral aspect of their conduct.

Coaches have to be aware that almost all of their everyday decisions and choices of actions, as well as strategic targets, have ethical implications.

It is natural that winning constitutes a basic concern for coaches. This code is not intended to conflict with that. However, the code calls for coaches to disassociate themselves from a win-at-all-costs attitude.

Increased responsibility is requested from coaches involved in coaching young people. The health, safety, welfare and moral education of young people are a first priority, before the achievement of the reputation of the club, school, coach or parent.

The FA Coaches Association Code of Conduct reflects the standards expressed by the National Coaching Foundation and the National Association of Sports Coaches.

### Code of Conduct for Coaches

1. Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person and treat each equally within the context of the sport.
2. Coaches must place the well-being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance.
3. Coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by the Rules of The Football Association.
4. Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect.
5. Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
6. Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
7. Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

8. Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the players (and, where appropriate, the parents) exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach.
9. Coaches must co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, physiotherapists) in the best interests of the player.
10. Coaches must always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. Fair Play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations or the use of prohibited substances or techniques.
11. Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
12. Coaches must not use or tolerate inappropriate language or behaviour.

### Code of conduct for players

Players are the most important people in the sport. Playing for the team, and for the team to win, is the most fundamental part of the game. But not winning at any cost – Fair Play and respect for all others in the game is fundamentally important. This code focuses on players involved in top-class football. Nevertheless, the key concepts in the code are valid for players at all levels.

### Obligations towards the game

A player should:

- Make every effort to develop their own sporting abilities in terms of skills, technique, tactics and stamina
- Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during a game, even if his team is in a position where the desired result has already been achieved
- Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters
- Avoid all forms of gamesmanship, and time-wasting
- Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion on the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game
- Not use inappropriate language.

### Obligations towards one's own team

A player should:

- Make every effort consistent with Fair Play and the Laws of the Game to help his own team win
- Resist any influence which might, or might be seen to, bring into question his commitment to the team winning.

### **Respect for the Laws of the Game and Competition Rules**

A player should:

- Know and abide by the laws, rules and spirit of the game, and the competition rules
- Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, equally
- Resist any temptation to take banned substances or use banned techniques.

### **Respect towards opponents**

A player should:

- Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result of the game
- Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play, and help injured opponents.

### **Respect towards the match officials**

A player should:

- Accept the decision of the match official without protest
- Avoid words or actions which may mislead a match official
- Show due respect towards match officials.

### **Respect towards team officials**

A player should:

- Abide by the instructions of their coach and Team Officials, provided they do not contradict the spirit of this code
- Show due respect towards the Team Officials of the opposition.

### **Obligations towards the supporters**

A player should:

- Show due respect to the interests of supporters.

### **Code of Conduct for team officials**

This Code applies to all team/club officials (although some items may not apply to all officials).

### **Obligations towards the game**

The team official should:

- Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters
- Promote and develop own team having regard to the interest of the players, supporters and reputation of the national game

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL**

- Share knowledge and experience when invited to do so, taking into account the interest of the body that has requested this rather than personal interests
- Avoid all forms of gamesmanship
- Show due respect to Match Officials and others involved in the game
- Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion of the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game
- Not use or tolerate inappropriate language.

### **Obligations towards the team**

The team official should:

- Make every effort to develop the sporting, technical and tactical levels of the club/team, and to obtain the best results by the team, using all permitted means
- Give priority to the interests of the team over individual interests
- Resist all illegal or unsporting influences, including banned substances and techniques
- Promote ethical principles
- Show due respect to the interests of players, coaches and other officials, at their own club/team and others.

### **Obligations towards the supporters**

The team official should:

- Show due respect to the interests of supporters.

### **Respect towards the match officials**

A team official should:

- Accept the decisions of the Match Official without protest
- Avoid words or actions which may mislead a Match Official
- Show due respect towards Match Officials.

### **Code of conduct for parents/spectators**

Parents/spectators have a great influence on children's enjoyment and success in football. All children play football because they first and foremost love the game – it's fun. It is important to remember that however good a child becomes at football within your club, it is important to reinforce the message to parents/spectators that positive encouragement will contribute to:

- Children enjoying football
- A sense of personal achievement
- Self-esteem
- Improvement in the child's skills and techniques.



A parent's/spectator's expectations and attitudes have a significant bearing on a child's attitude towards:

- Other players
- Officials
- Managers
- Spectators.

Ensure that parents/spectators within your club are always positive and encouraging towards all of the children, not just their own.

Encourage parents/spectators to:

- Applaud the opposition as well as your own team
- Avoid coaching the child during the game
- Not to shout and scream
- Respect the referee's decision
- Give attention to each of the children involved in football, not just the most talented
- Give encouragement to everyone to participate in football.

Ensure that parents/spectators within your club agree and adhere to your club's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

Please note: By ensuring that the relevant groups have signed up to the appropriate code of conduct your club will be able to apply the clubs sanctions and deal with any inappropriate conduct with clarity.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### The Football Association Equality Policy

As the governing body of the game, The FA is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the game at every level. Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by, anyone who wants to participate in it.

The FA's commitment is to eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability.

The FA is also committed to promoting equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community.

The following policy should be at the heart of your club's activities.

### Equality Policy for clubs

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect and that \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club is equally accessible to them all.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club's commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability and to encourage equal opportunities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club, in all its activities, will not discriminate, or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability. It means that \_\_\_\_\_ Football Club will ensure that it treats people fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club will not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of an individual, which for the purposes of this policy and the actions and sanction applicable is regarded as discrimination. This includes sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal.

\_\_\_\_\_ Football Club will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.



We are committed to the development of a programme of ongoing training and awareness raising events and activities in order to promote the eradication of discrimination within the club and within football.

\_\_\_\_\_Football Club is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members to abide and adhere to these policies and the requirements of the relevant equalities legislation - Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as well as any amendments to these acts.

\_\_\_\_\_Football Club commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims, when it is brought to their attention, of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice stop and sanctions imposed as appropriate.

### Club Complaints Procedure

In the event that any member feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way or that the Club Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct has been broken they should follow the procedures below.

1. They should report the matter to the Club Secretary or another member of the committee.

The report should include:

- i. Details of what, when, and where the occurrence took place
- ii. Any witness statement and names
- iii. Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way
- iv. Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made
- v. A preference for a solution to the incident.

2. The Club's Management Committee will sit for any hearings that are requested.

3. The Club's Management Committee will have the power to:

- i. Warn as to future conduct
- ii. Suspend from membership
- iii. Remove from membership

any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct.

If the complaint is with regard to the Club's Management Committee the member has the right to report the discrimination direct to the relevant County Football Association.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

As the governing body of the game, The FA is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the game at every level.

Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by everyone equally. Our commitment is to promoting equality of access and opportunity – by recognising that inequalities exist and taking practical steps to address them.

The FA is committed to eliminating discrimination and harassment. This includes whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or ability.

The ethics and sports equity policy should be at the heart of your club's activities.



## Appendix 3 - The Football Association Regulations

### Child protection

1. Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.
2. (a) In these Regulations the expression "Offence" shall mean any one or more of the offences contained in the Schedules of the Criminal Justice and Court services Act 2000 and any other criminal offence which reasonably causes The Association to believe that the person accused of the offence poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children.  
  
(b) All persons in such positions that The Association deems relevant whose normal duties include caring for, training supervising or being in sole charge of children are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure via The Association's CRB process.
3. Upon receipt by The Association of:
  - 3.1 Notification that an individual has been charged with an Offence; or
  - 3.2 Notification that an individual is the subject of an investigation by the Police, Social Services or any other authority relating to an Offence; or
  - 3.3 Any other information which causes The Association reasonably to believe that a person poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children then The Association shall have the power to order that the individual be suspended from all or any specific football activity for such period and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
4. In reaching its determination as to whether an order under Regulation 3 should be made The Association shall give consideration, inter alia, to the following factors:-
  - 4.1 Whether a child is or children are or may be at risk of harm;
  - 4.2 Whether the matters are of a serious nature;
  - 4.3 Whether an order is necessary or desirable to allow the conduct of any investigation by The Association or any other authority or body to proceed unimpeded having regard to the need for any action to be proportionate.
5. The period of an order referred to in 3 above shall not be capable of lasting beyond the date upon which any charge under the Rules of The Association or any Offence is decided or brought to an end.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

6. Where an order is imposed on an individual under Regulation 3, The Association shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Rules of The Association against the person relating to the matters as soon as reasonably practicable.
7. Where a person is convicted, or is made the subject of a caution in respect of an Offence, that shall constitute a breach of the Rules of The Association and The Association shall have the power to order the suspension of the person from all or any specific football activity for such period (including indefinitely) and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
8. For the purposes of these Regulations, The Association shall act through its Council or any committee or sub-committee thereof, including the Board.
9. Notification in writing of an order referred to above shall be given to the person concerned and/or any club with which he/she is associated as soon as reasonably practicable.
10. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability. The more serious the allegation taking into account the nature of the misconduct alleged and the context of the case the greater the burden of evidence required to find the matter proved. Save that for changes pursuant to The Football Association's Child Protection Policy, where the welfare and protection of children shall be paramount and the test shall be whether more likely than not.

For further details of The FA's Regulations, see The FA's Handbook for the current football season.

## Appendix 4 - Signs and Indicators of Abuse

### What is abuse?

Where and how does it happen? Does it really happen in sport and indeed, in football? 'Child abuse' is a term used to describe what happens when a person, or group of people, harm a child or young person under the age of 18. Child abuse may mean that harm is actively done to the child or young person, such as beating or burning, or it may refer to neglect where the carers fail to protect the child or young person from harm. The abuser is often an adult, but may also be another young person and occasionally even a child. Usually the abuser has some sort of power over the child or young person, and often knows them well. Abuse can happen anywhere, e.g. in the family, any institution or group and in any activity where children or young people are present. There is a risk that direct abuse, or neglect, can happen in football.

The FA defines abuse into five categories. These are:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying.

### Neglect

Neglect takes place if adults fail to meet a child or young person's basic physical needs, e.g. for food, warmth and clothing, or emotional needs such as attention and affection. It occurs if children or young people are left alone or inadequately supervised or where they are exposed to danger, injury or extreme weather conditions.

In football, neglect could occur if children or young people do not have proper supervision, clothing or are allowed or encouraged to play whilst injured. It could occur if a child or young person's particular health needs are disregarded before, during, or after a game.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs if people physically hit, burn, poison, shake or in some way hurt or injure children and young people, or fail to prevent these injuries from happening.

In football, physical abuse could happen where training methods are inappropriate for the developmental age of the child or young person, where they are allowed to play with an injury or where inappropriate drugs or alcohol are offered or accepted. It

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

would clearly happen if a child or young person is hit or physically restrained or manhandled by those supervising the game or training session.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs if children or young people are used to meet another person's sexual needs. This includes any form of sexual behaviour with a child or young person (by an adult or another child or young person), the use of sexually-explicit language and jokes, inappropriate touching and exposure to pornographic material.

Sexual abuse can occur in football. For example, where there is inappropriate touching, or where sexually-explicit jokes occur between adults and children or young people or if indecent images are taken or adapted and placed on child pornography sites.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse includes frequent threatening, taunting or sarcastic behaviour, along with holding affection or being extremely over-protective. It includes racist or sexist behaviour and demeaning initiation ceremonies. It can be inflicted by other children and young people as well as by adults. Children and young people who are being abused or bullied in any way will also experience emotional abuse.

In football, coaches or parents emotionally abuse children and young people if they constantly criticise, abuse their power, or impose unrealistic pressure to perform to a high standard. It may also occur if a club allows members to deride people with disabilities or from minority cultures and use derogatory language about them.

### **Bullying**

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, children and young people who are perceived as "different" from the majority may be at greater risk of bullying. This includes children and young people from minority cultures or children and young people with disabilities. Victims are often shy and sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Bullying can be defined as:

- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft
- Verbal: name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Bullying can take place anywhere, but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision. In football it is more likely to take place in the changing rooms, or on the way to and from the football pitch - but can also take place at a training session or in a competition.

Football's competitive nature can create and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware. The bully in football can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager who has a win-at-all costs philosophy; a child or young person intimidating another; or an official who places unfair pressure on a child or young person.

The victim is often weaker and less powerful and the outcome is always painful and distressing.

In an NSPCC survey of young people (2000), bullying was reported to be the most common source of distress and anxiety.

### **Signs and indicators**

Children and young people are reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused, so it is essential that every adult is aware of the possible signals that a child and young person's welfare or safety is being threatened. However, there is rarely a clear sign and you may often have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on your instinct that something does not seem quite right.

You may have one piece of information that, when added to that of others, forms a clear picture of abuse. This is often compared to fitting pieces of a jigsaw together. Only when you have a few pieces can you start to see the true picture.

**Remember, it is not your job to decide whether or not a child or young person is being abused - however it is your responsibility to share your concerns.**

The table on the next page shows some possible physical and behaviour signs of abuse. Some are very explicit and specific to the type of abuse, others are much more general. However, you need to be careful as any one of these signs might have another very plausible explanation, such as a death in the family, loss of a pet, an absent family member or problems at school. However you should remember to raise your concerns if there is a combination of unexplained changes over a period of time. Never allow a child or young person's disability or cultural difference to explain away concerns. This is not a judgement for you to make.

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Category of abuse	Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Physical abuse	Unexplained and unusual bruising, finger, strap and bite marks, injuries, cigarette burns, fractures, scalds, missing teeth. Injuries that a child with limited mobility would find it difficult to get.	Fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, cowering, bullying or abuse of others.
Neglect	Constant hunger, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothes, weight change, untreated conditions, continual minor infections, failure to supply hearing aids, glasses and or inhalers.	Always being tired, late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, seeks adult company or withdraws from people, stealing, no money, parent or carer not attending or interested.
Sexual abuse	Genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections or STDs, thrush, anal pain on passing motions.	Apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, age inappropriate sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, bed-wetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts, inappropriate masturbation, sexual approaches to others, sexual games with toys.
Bullying	Weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and head aches, incontinence, disturbed sleep, hair pulled out.	Difficulty making friends, anxiety over school/football, truancy, withdrawn, depressed, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money or possessions reported as 'lost', stealing from the family, distress and anxiety on reading e-mails or texts.
Emotional abuse	Weight change, lack of growth/development, unexplained speech disorders, self harm, clothing inappropriate for child's age, gender or culture.	Unable to play, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech and language difficulties, few friends.

## Appendix 5 - Safeguarding Children - Fit and Proper Person Checklist

When appointing a designated person, ensure that you have considered their appropriateness for this role by checking them against the following criteria.

### Essential

- Attendance at an FA Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop (note if all other criteria are met the candidate may be appointed on the understanding that they complete The FA Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop within two months of taking on the role of designated person)
- Willing and able to provide relevant references
- Completion of an Enhanced CRB check via The FA CRB Unit and acceptance by The FA of the outcome  
A history of offending will not prevent someone from working with children. Each case is considered on its merit. The FA CRB Unit or Goal website can advise on the current methods for checking this process and whether it has been satisfactorily completed
- Willingness to update skills and knowledge
- Previous experience of working with children
- Knowledge of and positive attitudes to equal opportunities
- Commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern
- Physical health – appropriate to carry out tasks
- Mental stability, integrity and flexibility.

### Desirable

- Knowledge of child protection issues\*
- Knowledge of child protection legislation\* (as appropriate)
- Relevant football knowledge/understanding.

\* If an interested individual does not currently have knowledge of child protection issues and or child protection legislation this can be addressed initially by The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Workshop, however there will be more training available post February 2006.

NB. If any person is considered not to be a 'fit' person to work with children, his/her application should be refused.

Adapted and developed with kind permission from an original by Southampton City Council - Sports Development Section

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### Appendix 6 - Child Protection and Poor Practice Referral and Information Form – Guidance notes for Completion

It is anticipated that in the majority of cases that the relevant sections of The FA Referral and Information Form will be completed by the CFA CPO and on occasion by the CWO. However, in order that The FA ensures that everyone in football is aware of how to make a referral and how to record the required information accurately, the following guidance notes are provided. If you have any concerns about completing any sections of this form please contact either your CWO or CFA CPO for advice.

#### Page one

Ensure that you have put your name as requested on the top of the form. It is likely that the CFA CPO or The FA Case Manager may need to contact you directly.

#### Indication by CFA CPO of the type of involvement required by The FA Child Protection Case Manager – note this is only to be completed by the CFA CPO

**Direct Involvement** – Tick this box if you consider the case warrants the active involvement of The FA Case Manager e.g. by either taking over the management of the case or to undertake a specific role (contact with another agency), to ensure the case is properly handled.

**Consultation & Advice** – Tick this box if at this stage you are seeking formal advice from The FA Case Manager about the next steps or regarding procedural matters.

**For Information Only** – Tick this box if you consider that the child protection/poor practice issue is being appropriately dealt with locally and that no additional input is needed by The FA Case Manager. The purpose of completing the form in this instance is to ensure that The FA Child Protection Team is able to keep accurate records of the detail and range of child protection/poor practice issues in England and Wales.

Only one tick box should be completed. There is the potential that after the details have been received by The FA, that a different level of involvement by The FA Child Protection Team may prove necessary.



## First Box of Information

### Details of person/club about whom there are concerns

The details in this section should be completed as fully as possible and should only reflect information about the accused person/club. It is recognised that some of this information will likely not be known. The CFA CPO however may seek to establish as much information as possible (e.g. **Contact Details**) without unnecessarily delaying forwarding the referral/information to the FA Case Manager.

In respect of **Position Held**, this relates to the person's post or role within football. If the person does not have a formal role within The FA but there is information that would help to clarify the details of this person, then it can be included here such as: - "None – parent of another young player" or "None – spectator".

In respect of **Relationship** to the alleged victim, this could provide additional information e.g. "Manager of the young person's team", "Referee of game in which incident took place", "Father of young person", "Supporter of opposing team" etc.

In respect of **Ethnicity**, ideally this should be self-reported, but if not and the person completing the form or who made the allegation, has knowledge of the person's ethnicity, then this can be included.

The **County FA** refers to The FA that the accused person belongs to or is linked with, especially if they have a particular role with The FA in question. Additionally if he/she has **Connections with other CFAs** previously or in another capacity, then this should be included here.

## Second Box of Information

### Alleged Victim/Young person Concerned

The same principles apply as above, when completing this second box, in that, as much information as is known should be included.

When identifying **Role/Position**, this reflects what the young person does within The FA, e.g. "Young Player", "Referee" etc.

In respect of **Any Disability**, this should include any disability reported by the young person, by the individual reporting the concerns, or any disability that is apparent.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

Regarding the section on the **Person who originated concern**, it is possible that the person who is completing the form is passing on concerns and information witnessed by another person – if this is the case then it is this person's details, if known, that is entered here. It is their **Relationship to alleged victim** or the **accused** that is then included if known.

### Page two

Summary of Incident/Poor Practice

In this section, it is important to distinguish what was actually seen, heard and witnessed, from what is third party information or assumed to have happened. It will be important to consider:

What happened, to Whom, When, Where and by Whom.

In Terms of **Contact Details** for a witness, agreement would need to have been reached that this person is agreeable to being approached if necessary for any further information to aid any investigation. This would normally be the expectation of any statutory investigation agency who would make a commitment to treat their details confidentially.

### Action Taken

In respect of completing this box, then please include under **Action Taken**, all the action(s) that you or another person has undertaken in order to try to resolve the concern or incident.

In respect of the **External Agencies Contacted**, please explain their response if it was felt necessary to have contacted them prior to this form being completed – also their appropriate details and contact person will be needed.

### Page three

If there is more than one victim, their details should be recorded on this page.

### Page four

Only to be completed by The FA Case Manager. The FA Case Manager will include in this section, the actions or decisions that have been proposed and agreed and a completed version of this section of the case will then be returned to the CFA CPO for their records.

# Child Protection and Poor Practice Referral and Information Form



Completed by: ..... Position: .....

County FA: .....

Referral for Direct Involvement

For Consultation & Advice

For Information Only

Case Name: .....  
(Accused Person/Club being referred)

Position Held: .....

Relationship: ..... Gender: Male  Female   
(To alleged victim)

Contact Details: .....

Address: .....  
.....

Phone No: ..... Date of Birth: .....

Age: ..... Ethnic background: .....  
(At time of incident) (if known)

County FA: ..... Connections with other CFAs: .....

Name of Alleged Victim/Young person Concerned: .....  
(If more than one, use Additional Information Form)

Age: ..... Date of Birth: .....  
(At time of incident)

Role/Position: ..... Any Disabilities: .....

Gender: Male  Female  Ethnic Background: .....  
(if known)

Contact: ..... Telephone No: .....  
(Name and address of parent/carer)

Association Club: .....  
(Name and address)  
.....

Name of person who originated concern and contact details: .....  
(if applicable/known)

Relationship to alleged victim: ..... Relationship to accused: .....

## For FA use only

Date received by FA: .....

Case Category: .....

## Summary of Incident/Poor Practice (please provide details where known)

**Location:** .....

**Details of Incident:** .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Date of Incident:** ..... **Witnessed By:** .....

**Contact Details:** .....

(of witness)

.....

.....

**Action Taken:** .....

.....

.....

.....

**External Agencies Contacted:**

(Please provide name, contact number, advice received and contact date)

**Police:** .....

.....

.....

**Social Services:** .....

.....

.....

**Other:** .....

(eg NSPCC)

.....

.....

Signed: ..... Date: .....



## Additional Information Regarding Other Alleged Victims or Young Persons Concerned

Case Name: .....

Completed by: ..... Date: .....

Name of Alleged Victim/Young person Concerned: .....  
(If more than one, use Additional Information Form)

Age: ..... Date of Birth: .....  
(At time of incident)

Role/Position: ..... Any Disabilities: .....

Gender: Male  Female  Ethnic Background: .....  
(if known)

Contact: ..... Telephone No: .....  
(Name and address of parent/carer)

Association Club: .....  
(Name and address)

Name of person who originated concern and contact details: .....  
(if applicable/known)

Relationship to alleged victim: ..... Relationship to accused: .....

Name of Alleged Victim/Young person Concerned: .....  
(If more than one, use Additional Information Form)

Age: ..... Date of Birth: .....  
(At time of incident)

Role/Position: ..... Any Disabilities: .....

Gender: Male  Female  Ethnic Background: .....  
(if known)

Contact: ..... Telephone No: .....  
(Name and address of parent/carer)

Association Club: .....  
(Name and address)

Name of person who originated concern and contact details: .....  
(if applicable/known)

Relationship to alleged victim: ..... Relationship to accused: .....

Attachments included: Yes  No

# For Completion by The FA Child Protection Case Administrator

Case Name: .....

Initial Action Recommended or Taken:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Timeframes Agreed/Proposed: .....

Additional Comments:

.....  
.....

Action Taken: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Prime Concern:

	Sexual	Physical	Emotional	Neglect	Bullying
Actual:	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Potential:	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### Appendix 7 - Useful Contacts

#### The FA/NSPCC Helpline

(Tel: 0800 800 5000)

24 hour free and confidential telephone Helpline that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child or young person at risk of ill treatment or abuse.

For those with a hearing difficulty, there is a text phone telephone number: 0800 056 0566

- Asian Helpline operated by Asian counsellors in:

Gujarati (telephone: 0800 096 7715)

Hindi (telephone: 0800 096 7716)

Bengali/Sylehti (telephone: 0800 096 7714)

Punjabi (telephone: 0800 096 7717)

Urdu (telephone: 0800 096 7718)

English (telephone: 0800 096 7719)

At the time of publication The Asian Helpline is open between 11am and 7pm Monday - Friday, so please check the NSPCC website for up to date details. [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### Both Parents Forever

39 Cloonmore Avenue

Orpington

BR6 9LE

Tel 01689 854 343

Help in child abduction cases [www.ukselfhelp.info/bothparentsforever](http://www.ukselfhelp.info/bothparentsforever)

Advice to parents, grandparents, children on rights following divorce, separation.

Men in domestic violence situations/false allegations.

#### Careline

Cardinal Heenan Centre

326-328 High Road

Ilford, Essex

IG1 1QP

Tel 020 8514 5444

Counselling Line 020 8514 1177

[www.ukselfhelp.info/careline](http://www.ukselfhelp.info/careline)

Confidential crisis telephone counselling service for children, young people and adults.

Face to face service for adults.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL**

### **ChildLine**

45 Folgate Street

London

E1 3GL

Tel 020 7650 3200

Fax 020 7650 3201

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Free national telephone helpline for children 24 hrs 0800 1111.

### **Family Rights Group**

The Print House

18 Ashwin Street

London

E8 3DL

Tel 020 7923 2628

Fax 020 7923 2683

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

Assists families with children in care/residential accommodation/involved in child protection procedures.

### **FSU**

207 Old Marylebone Road

London

NW1 5QP

Tel 020 7402 5175

Fax 020 7724 1829

[www.fsu.org.uk](http://www.fsu.org.uk)

Counselling, welfare, legal advice. Offices in all areas of UK.

### **Institute of Family Therapy**

24-32 Stephenson Way

London

NW1 2HX

Tel 020 7391 9150

Fax 020 7391 9169

[www.instituteoffamilytherapy.org.uk](http://www.instituteoffamilytherapy.org.uk)

Family & couple therapy. Problems for families, children, adolescents, relationships, divorce, separation, illness and bereavement.

### **Kidscape**

An organisation committed to help prevent child bullying

Tel 0207 730 3300

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Lifeline**

Susan Dyas

Walnut Tree House

98 Moor End

Holme on Spalding Moor

East Yorkshire

YO43 4DR

Tel 01262 469 085

Help and advice for families experiencing psychological, physical or sexual abuse within the home. Encourages and supports groups.

### **Local Rape Crisis Centres**

Contact numbers available in the telephone directory. These centres can offer help to survivors of abuse.

### **NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit**

Tel: 0116 234 7278

[www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

A central point for sports organisations in relation to child protection in sport.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit website is a specialist unit jointly funded by the NSPCC and Sport England. Their website is designed for use by anyone involved in sport or child protection, it is informative with sections on Home, Parents, Children, Organisations and Professionals.

### **Parentline Plus**

Unit 520

Highgate Studios

53-57 Highgate Road

London

NW5 1TL

Tel 020 7284 5500

Helpline 0808 800 2222

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Support for all families/stepfamilies.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL**

### **Refuge**

2 – 8 Maltravers Street  
London  
WC2R 3EE

Tel 020 7395 7700

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

24 hour national domestic violence helpline 0808 2000 247.

Can refer women experiencing domestic violence to refuges and give advice on welfare rights.

### **SAFE**

PO Box 1557

Salisbury

Wiltshire

SP1 2TP

Tel 01722 410 889

[www.ukselfhelp.info/safe](http://www.ukselfhelp.info/safe)

### **Samaritans**

The Upper Mill

Kingston Road

Ewell

Surrey

KT17 2AF

Helpline (local call rate) 08457 90 90 90

Admin Telephone 020 8394 8300/Fax 020 8394 8301

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

Nationwide, non-religious, non-political 24 hour confidential support.

Help for those with any kind of personal problem. Backed up by an e-mail group, Befrienders, via [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org) an International charity developing volunteer action to prevent suicide. The site features a comprehensive directory of emotional first aid helplines.

### **Self Harm Alliance**

PO Box 61

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire

GL51 8YB

Tel 01242 578 820

[www.selfharmalliance.org](http://www.selfharmalliance.org)

National organisation offering support.



**SOLA (Survivors of lesbian abuse)**

55 Hemstal Road

London

NW6 2AD

Tel 020 7328 7389

Support for those who have experienced violence in a lesbian relationship.

**Victim Support**

Cranmer House

39 Brixton Road

London

SW9 6DZ

Tel 020 7735 9166

Fax 020 7582 5712

Helpline 0845 3030 900

[www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)

Local Victim Support services provide emotional support, information and practical help for victims and witnesses.

**Women's Aid Federation of England**

PO Box 391

Bristol

BS99 7WS

Tel 0117 944 4411

Helpline 0808 2000 247

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Advice and temporary refuge for women and their children threatened by mental or physical violence.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

This charity website is designed for children and parents who are faced with dealing with bullying giving practical advice and guidance.

### [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Children's charity with national 24-hour telephone help line, founded in 1985. Offers children the opportunity to talk in confidence.

### [www.child-safe.org.uk](http://www.child-safe.org.uk)

Initiated by Avon and Somerset Police, Child-Safe aims to provide practical advice, promote safety and ensure that parents and organisations are made aware of the potential risks for children and young people when involved in travel, sport and organised groups.

### [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

The government's website, which provides advice on the vetting of individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults.

### [www.TheFA.com/Goal](http://www.TheFA.com/Goal)

The FA website - the Home of English Football. Access the latest child protection information. You may wish to return to the home page and click on Kids for more general information.

### [www.get.to/kids-in-crisis](http://www.get.to/kids-in-crisis)

An online resource for children and teenagers who are having difficult life problems and do not know where to turn for help.

### [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Information from the Home Office on child protection issues, including statistics, reports and news updates.

### [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

A charity for children that runs a helpline and training events and has collaborated on many child protection initiatives.

### [www.annecrafttrust.org](http://www.annecrafttrust.org)

The website of the Ann Craft Trust, a national association which deals with the protection of learning disabled adults and children from sexual abuse. It also provides support for families and survivors. The Ann Craft Trust, Centre for Social Work, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD Tel: 0115 951 5400 Fax: 0115 951 5232  
E-mail: [Information@annecrafttrust.org](mailto:Information@annecrafttrust.org)

**[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)**

Britain's largest children's charity and a prime mover in the development of child protection services for sport. They run a 24-hour telephone helpline. The NSPCC National Training Centre houses a staffed Child Protection in Sport Unit, with multi-agency backing (see [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)).

**[www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)**

Specialist library catalogue of research, journal articles & other publications, latest child protection news, weekly e-mail summaries, online publication ordering, selective reading lists.

**[www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone)**

Kids Zone is a website designed for young people, where you can find out more about the NSPCC and learn about their work to help children. There's the latest on the FULL STOP Campaign and news about celebrity supporters. Kids Zone will be developed over the next few months.

**[www.self-help.org.uk](http://www.self-help.org.uk)**

The UK's free online specialised child protection resource.  
A general list of 1,000 self-help organisations in the UK.

**[www.sportscoachuk.org](http://www.sportscoachuk.org)**

Sports coach UK is committed to the development of coaches and coaching at every level in the UK. They provide workshops and resources to guide the coaching of young players and safe and ethical sports practice.

**[www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com)**

The Virtual Global Taskforce was set up to help protect young people online. The Taskforce comprises police forces from around the world, including the National Crime Squad in the UK, and aims to make the Internet a safer place. For more information, visit the Taskforce website.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### Appendix 8 - Protecting Children and Young People with Disabilities

For many years children and young people with disabilities were not considered to be vulnerable to abuse. It is now known that this is not the case and that children and young people with disabilities are at an increased risk of abuse and that the greater the disability the greater the risk.

There are a number of factors that contribute to this and these include:

- Lack of friends and peer group to support and protect
- Intimate/physical care/invasive medical care required. This can make it difficult for the child or young person to know what is acceptable and unacceptable touch
- Lack of speech or limited communication. This makes it harder to report abuse
- Difficulty in resisting
- Multiple carers – making it hard to identify who may be abusing
- History of being told what to do and not given choices
- Depending on the abuser for a service or basic need
- Having medical conditions that are used to explain injuries
- A history of finding that compliance to others results in gentler care than challenging a carer
- Difficulty in identifying the abuse if sensory impaired
- Others seeing all carers as beyond criticism.

Children and young people with disabilities may also be less valued than their peers and poor care may be observed but tolerated by others. This might include such things as not speaking directly to the child or young person; not offering choices; not moving and handling them safely; not respecting their privacy and dignity; not treating them according to their age; allowing physical restraint to occur; or using derogatory language.

There is no one way to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are protected but the safest environments are those that help children and young people to protect themselves by helping them to speak out and do their best to stop abuse from happening and take responsibility for observing, challenging and reporting poor practice and suspected abuse.

Safe environments for children and young people with disabilities are also safer for all children and young people.



A safe environment is one where:

- Abuse is openly acknowledged to exist and is discussed by adults
- Training in awareness takes place
- Policies and Procedures are known by all and followed
- There is support for those who report suspicions or concerns The FA Policy and Procedures explicitly commit to these.

In addition, safe environments:

- Ensure that those working with children learn the child or young person's communication method. They may need help to do this
- Ensure that the child or young person's health needs are known, recorded and that sufficient people know how to respond. This may mean knowing how to manage a seizure or an asthma attack. It may mean ensuring that medication is kept to hand, administered correctly, and recorded
- Ensuring a mobile phone is available and switched on
- Discuss with parents or carers any physical care that is required and how this can best be done with respect and dignity. This will usually mean same gender carers, and consistent carers or supporters. Consideration needs to be given to the balance of the need for privacy with the need for accountability and protection against allegations for carers. This is best done by consulting with parents or carers and the child or young person concerned
- Give the child or young person every opportunity to make informed choices and respect their choice
- Have clear strategies for dealing with difficult behaviour that excludes any kind of physical punishment or restraint
- Listen to and advocate for children and young people
- Involve children or young people and their families wherever possible in the running of the club. This helps give all children and young people a voice and may act to deter abusers.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

### Appendix 9 - Facility Development

It is strongly recommended that any design or redesign of facilities is referred to one of the Facilities Team at The FA to ensure compliance with suitable criteria is established early in the scheme. Details of the Facilities Team can be found on The FA's web site via the Grassroot section.

This does not just centre on how children can use and access facilities, but also around the foot flow of the building to ensure adults and children do not access areas which could lead to allegations or incidents.

Designs of changing areas, including toilets and showers, particularly require careful planning, together with vanity screens to the changing rooms themselves. Other issues can include access to changing areas, the siting of spectator toilets, lighting, recessed areas, electrical and boiler systems and proximity to car parking on site. The location of pitches to the changing rooms should also be considered carefully.

## Appendix 10 - FA resources relevant to safeguarding

### Child protection and best practice

**Child protection Online** - is aimed at anyone involved in football with young people, who is not currently taking an FA qualification. It provides a basic introduction to best practice and child protection.

The three-hour **Child protection and best practice - Workshop**, is mandatory for those taking FA qualifications and working in football. It explores in greater depth, what is meant by best and poor practice, and how to recognise concerns about the welfare of children and young people and what to do if you have concerns. The workshop is also aimed at helping individuals to examine the strong emotions this subject raises. In so doing it helps participants to manage their feelings in a positive way that won't interfere with their judgment about when and how to act.

The **Child protection recertification** programme provides an opportunity for all those who have completed the best practice workshop to refresh and extend their knowledge. This programme is being adapted for use Online.

The **Welfare Officer Workshop** is targeted at those people in local club or league welfare officer roles. It builds on the best practice workshop, providing essential knowledge and skills, helping to develop the confidence required to deal with child protection issues at local level e.g. bullying and poor practice. It also enhances relationships with the County FA CPOs and statutory agencies, where additional support can be gained and or serious concerns can be referred on to.

### FA Charter Standard Awards

The Charter Standard was introduced as part of the Charter for Quality (1997), which puts the player at the centre of all football developments, to raise standards, recognise good practice and reward quality.

The following awards available:

- Charter Standard Club
- Charter Standard Development Club
- Charter Standard Community Club
- Charter Standard Schools
- Charter Standard Colleges

You can get application packs from: The Football Association, 25 Soho Square, London W1D 4FA

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL



### Soccer Parent

This resource recognises the crucial role that parents and carers play in supporting and encouraging their children's involvement in football. It will help you to:

- Run a meeting with parents
- Explain the aims of the club or organisation
- Describe what football can do for children and young people
- Show parents how important they are in football
- Help parents to see the importance of codes of conduct and how they should behave
- Show parents how best they can help their children to progress in football.

To get more information or a copy of the resource, please contact The FA or the County FA. Soccer Parent is also available as an interactive e-learning resource. By logging onto [www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com) selecting Soccer Parent from the menu then click onto Grassroots you will be able to access Soccer Parent.

### Goalpost Safety

The Goalpost Safety campaign was launched in August 2000 and it aims to raise the awareness of the importance of checking goalposts to prevent accidents: Check it, Secure it, Test it, Respect it. This campaign followed the deaths of nine children since 1986. It stresses the need for everyone involved in playing and organising football to play their part to make sure that these tragic accidents never happen again.

This campaign has been ongoing since 1998 after becoming aware of the deaths of young children where goalposts have been either unsafe or unstable.

For more information on the goalpost safety campaign go to The FA website [www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com) and click on The FA Campaigns link from the Football Now section or call The FA on 0207 745 4760 or alternatively email [Janet.McDonald@TheFA.com](mailto:Janet.McDonald@TheFA.com)



## Appendix 11 - Child Protection and Best Practice Promotional Materials

The following promotional materials are available:

- **An Introduction**  
A leaflet which introduces you to child protection and best practice
- **A Priority**  
This is an A4 handout which gives greater detail as to how you can become involved in The FA's child protection and best practice training
- **Posters**  
A set of four posters designed to raise awareness about child protection and best practice
- **Information cards**  
These carry The FA/NSPCC Helpline number

To obtain or simply to find out more information about these promotional materials contact:

The Media Group  
3 Wilford Business Park  
Ruddington Lane  
Nottingham  
NG11 7EP  
Telephone: 0115 969 4600  
[goal@themediagroup.tv](mailto:goal@themediagroup.tv)

The Football Association  
25 Soho Square  
London  
W1D 4FA

Telephone  
+44 (0)20 7745 4545  
Facsimile  
+44 (0)20 7745 4546

E-mail  
[info@TheFA.com](mailto:info@TheFA.com)  
Visit  
[www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com)



# Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football