

# RESPECT AND SAFETY WITHIN THE GAME - A GUIDE FOR UNDER 18 REFEREES

Amateur FA



Thank you for becoming a referee with the Amateur Football Alliance. We want to make sure you get the most out of your time refereeing. To do this we want to help you develop your skills, have fun and feel safe. This booklet aims to provide you with information about the support you can access should you have concerns over your safety or the safety of others whilst carrying out your refereeing duties.

Please take the time to read the information and keep this booklet in a safe place so you are able to refer to back to it when needed.

You can also access this booklet via the Amateur FA website.

## **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

If you have any concerns about your or another person's safety and well-being please ensure you contact one of the following:

**Dyahanne Sappleton – Designated Safeguarding Officer –**

Safeguarding@amateur-fa.com or 07904649876/02087332613

**Deryll David - Football Services and Referees Development Officer –**

Referees@amateur-fa.com or 02087332613

**Melanie Armstrong – Football Services Manager -**

Discipline@amateur-fa.com or 02087332613

**Jason Kilby – Senior Safeguarding Lead and CEO – 02087332613**

You can also contact the FA Safeguarding Team on 0845 169 1863. Alternatively you can contact Childline on 0800 1111.

Make sure you add these numbers into your mobile phone so you always have them to hand. Remember in an emergency you can always call the police on 999 or in a non-emergency on 101.

# KEEPING YOU SAFE

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It is important to remember that the majority of football is played in a safe, fun and friendly environment. We hope that you do not have any negative experiences during your time as a referee however if you do we want to make you know who you can talk to.

It is really important that you report any situation where you have witnessed the welfare of a child being put at risk or where you, yourself have felt at risk. If you are unsure about whether to report an incident then please always contact one of the above persons for advice. It's ok to feel unsure, particularly when it is a new situation for you.

## Concerned about something you have seen or heard?

Sometimes we witness situations that make us feel uncomfortable and unsafe. If this happens to you make sure you find and speak to a trusted adult as soon as possible. Let the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) know as soon as possible so we can support you.

All County FA's have a DSO who is responsible for ensuring children and young people in football are safe. The AFA's DSO is Sarah Robinson and she can be contacted on 07904649876/02087332613.

If you or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, then call the police on 999.

You can also contact Child line on 0800 1111.

## Feeling threatened?

In the unlikely event that you feel threatened whilst refereeing, your initial safety is the absolute priority.

- Stop and think before you react.
- Get yourself to safety
- Find a trusted adult and let them know what's happening
- Make sure you can leave the venue safely
- Report the incident to the AFA discipline and safeguarding department

Remember if you are in immediate danger phone the police on 999.

## What happens when you report an incident to us?

Once you have reported the incident to us, Deryll (RDO) or Sarah (DSO) will make contact with you via your parent or guardian to offer support and guidance. We will also explain the next steps moving forward.

## Racism and Discrimination

The FA and County FA's are determined to provide an inclusive football experience for anyone who wishes to play, coach, officiate, administer, support or be involved in any role in English football. An experience that is reflective of our diverse communities, safe for all and free from abuse and discrimination.

If you witness any discrimination or racism in football please report this immediately to the Discipline Department on 02087332613 #1 or [discipline@amateur-fa.com](mailto:discipline@amateur-fa.com).

You can also download Kick It Out's app, which allows you to report confidentially using film and video. In addition, Kick It Out employs a dedicated Reporting Officer, funded by The FA, whose role it is to support and monitor incidents across the game and liaise regularly with The FA, the Leagues, CFAs and clubs as well as civil bodies. You can also report concerns directly to Kick It Out via [info@kickitout.org](mailto:info@kickitout.org).



# **MATCH DAY**

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## **Travel Arrangements**

We understand that there may be occasions where you will require transport to and from a match venue. In some cases this may be provided by other match officials allocated to your fixture. We recommend all arrangements are agreed with your parents/guardians and that they speak to the person you are travelling with to ensure they are happy with the travelling arrangements.

If you feel unsafe or something doesn't feel right, do not feel obliged to travel with that person. You have the right to say no.

## **Changing Facilities**

When you are at a match you should change separately from any officials over the age of 18. There may not be the facilities to have a separate changing room and therefore we recommend you take it in turns to use the facilities. Never be forced into a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, always speak out and let somebody know what is happening.



# FEELING UNSAFE ONLINE?

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## The Quick Do's & Don'ts:

### Do:

- Use the privacy settings available on most social media sites. Facebook has different 'set up' guidelines for U18s to help to keep you safe – use them;
- Ensure you and your parents/carers know who from your club/county/league should be contacting you and how they should be doing this.

### Don't:

- Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist. This goes against football rules and could also be against the law;
- Do not send indecent or compromising images of yourself or others over the internet. This could be against the law.
- Give out personal details including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people you don't know well offline;
- Invite your coach, manager, club officials, adult referees or mentors to become your friends online even if you get on really well with them. They have been asked not to accept such invitations;
- Say or do something online if you wouldn't do it face to-face.
- The Advice If you're Worried or Feeling Uncomfortable:
- Tell an adult you trust about any communications that make you feel uncomfortable or that ask you not to tell your parent/carer;
- Talk to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Referee Development Officer if you are unhappy about anything sent to you or said about you over the internet, social networking sites, and text messages or via email;
- Tell an adult you trust if an adult involved at a club, a adult referee or mentor asks you to become their friend online. Also inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or your Referee Development Officer.
- If you receive an image or message you find offensive, threatening or upsetting, tell an adult you trust. Make sure you copy and save the image/message elsewhere – or print it off before you remove and destroy it. It may be needed as evidence;
- You can also report concerns directly to the police by clicking here:  
[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre).

# **DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS (AKA CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK)**

All referees who are 16 years old or over will need to complete a DBS check before they can referee youth football. If you are still under 16 you will not need one however as your 16th birthday approaches please ensure you contact the County FA to get help with completing this.

**Remember no CRC check = no youth refereeing! Don't get caught out, keep yours up to date!**

## **DISCIPLINARY MATTERS**

Please make sure you report all match day disciplinary matters to the relevant County FA. If you need any help you can contact Deryll David, Football Services and Referees Development Officer, who will be able to assist you. His contact details can be found at the front of the booklet.

In the event of a very serious disciplinary matter you may wish to discuss this with somebody further. You can contact Deryll David or Dyahanne, DSO.

## **Attending a Disciplinary Hearing**

There may be a point in your referee career where you are asked to attend a disciplinary hearing to give evidence. Do not worry if this is requested of you. The AFA will provide somebody to offer you support and guidance during this process. If you are under 18, your age is taken into account and we ensure the environment of the hearing is relaxed and friendly. Referees under the age of 18 can be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Additionally the Referee Development Officer or Designated Safeguarding Officer can be present for assistance.

## **Thank you and Have Fun**

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet, we hope it was useful. Enjoy your time as a referee!