



# Westmorland County FA

## Safeguarding Children's Policy

The Westmorland County FA continues to be committed to ensuring all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm children and young people (CYP) who participate in grassroots football.

Everyone involved in football needs to understand the individual and collective responsibility they undertake when working with CYP. It's clear that together and giving young people a voice makes a difference when it comes to having effective safeguards in football.

It's essential that everyone is clear about how to report a concern about the welfare of a child or young person. In short this means following the guidelines set out in this policy. Further support and guidance can be obtained through your club or league welfare officer (CWO or LWO) and County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (CFA DSO). This essential network of WOs is further supported by The FA's safeguarding team at Wembley.

Remember it's not your responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, but it is your responsibility to report any concerns you may have.

### **The Westmorland County FA (WCFA) Safeguarding Policy**

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 abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in football, thus every club is required to endorse and adhere to The WCFA's Safeguarding Children Policy.

The WCFA recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and young people (CYP) who play or participate in football by protecting them from abuse and harm.

This means creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere where everyone works together to tackle both bullying and discrimination, ensure safer recruitment, and tackle poor practice which leads to harm and reduces equal opportunities.

Best practice in Inclusion, anti-bullying, equality and the respect agenda are all part of making safer cultures and prevention of harm and abuse.

The WCFA is committed to working in partnership with clubs and leagues to provide a safe environment for all CYP to participate, whether in youth clubs or as under-18s in open-age football.

The FA recognises that the terms 'child or young person', 'abuse' and 'harm' are open to interpretation, so for the purposes of this policy, these are defined as

**A child or young person;** 'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.'

**Abuse;** ‘a violation of an individual’s human or civil rights by any other person or persons and, for the purposes of safeguarding children, shall include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and bullying.’

**Harm;** ‘Ill treatment and forms of ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical) and also the impairment of or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.’

‘**Harm**’ may be caused by acts of commission and acts of omission

**The Westmorland County Football Association’s Safeguarding Children Policy principles are that:**

- The child’s welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
- All CYP have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, racial origin, faith, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- Working in partnership with other organisations, CYP and their parents and carers is essential.

The WCFA is committed to working in partnership with the Police, Children’s Social Care, Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB) and the disclosure and barring service (DBS) in accordance with their procedures. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect all CYP.

The WCFA Safeguarding Children Policy is in response to Government legislation and guidance, developed to safeguard the welfare and development of CYP.

Clubs and leagues with youth teams must appoint a Welfare Officer in line with FA affiliation requirements. All League and Club Welfare Officers are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct for volunteer Welfare Officers.

The Safeguarding Children Policy is further supported by The FA’s Respect Programme to address verbal abuse and bullying of youngsters by parents and coaches on the sidelines.