

**Chester FC Community Trust**



**COMMUNITY  
TRUST**

**Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Reviewed: August 2024**

**Date of Next Review: January 2025**

## **Aim of the Policy**

Chester FC Community Trust is committed to ensuring all necessary steps are taken to protect the safety and welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults who are participants or beneficiaries or are otherwise connected to the Trust.

This document sets out the Trust's position, role and responsibilities, and clarifies what is expected of our staff and volunteers.

Everyone involved in sport and education needs to understand the individual and collective responsibility they undertake when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It's clear that working together and giving young people a voice makes a difference when it comes to having effective safeguards in sport & education.

This policy applies to all Chester FC Community Trust staff, volunteers and trustees whether paid or unpaid. These staff members could be:

- Administration staff
- Community coaching staff
- Education staff
- Volunteers
- Bus drivers
- Higher education students
- Ambassadors
- Trust partners
- Trustees
- Football club representatives

It is essential that everyone is clear about how to report a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. In short this means following the guidelines set out in this policy. Further support and guidance can be obtained through the designated safeguarding officer (DSO).

## **Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)**

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## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Every child, young person or vulnerable adult who plays or participates in sport and education should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse and exploitation. This is the responsibility of everyone involved.

The Trust recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who play or participate in activities and projects by protecting them from abuse and exploitation. This means creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere where everyone at the Trust 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 Trust is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults to participate in the sporting projects to the best of their abilities for as long as they choose to do so. All staff and volunteers must ensure a positive commitment towards equality and diversity by treating others fairly and not committing any form of direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment of any description and to promote positive working relationships between all internal and external stakeholders.

The Trust's Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy principles are that:

- The child and vulnerable adult's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults 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, vulnerable adults, children and young people and their parents and carers is essential
- The Trust is committed to working in partnership with stakeholders and relevant agencies including the Police, Cheshire West & Chester Council 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 children and young people.
- The Trust's policy is in response to government legislation and guidance, developed to safeguard the welfare and development of children and young people. We have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer in line with FA recommendations.
- The safeguarding 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.

# **Roles & Responsibilities**

## **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

The Trust will always have a Designated Safeguarding Officer with the responsibility for Child Protection.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Ensure that there are mechanisms in place to assist the staff to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure that proper procedures and policies are in place and are followed with regard to child safeguarding and protection issues.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training as part of their induction and annually thereafter.
- Ensure that they receive necessary training related to the role and have updated training every two years and in addition, keep up-to-date with safeguarding developments at least annually.
- Ensure that records of training are accurately maintained for all staff in liaison with the trust administration department.
- Ensure that the profile of safeguarding remains high within the Trust by communicating regular updates.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have access to protocol and policy related to child protection.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware that the Trust may need to make referrals as this will avoid later conflict if the Trust does have to take appropriate action to safeguard a child
- Be responsible for record keeping, ensuring accuracy and security.
- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within the Trust and will be available for other staff, volunteers and Trustees to draw upon.
- Coordinate all action regarding safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- Support Trustees with reviewing this policy annually.

## **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive of the Trust will:

- Ensure Staff and Volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.
- All Trustees have an enhanced DBS in place.
- All adults with substantial access to children or vulnerable adults at the Trust have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check before starting work and prior to confirmation of employment. Take steps to gather sufficient and accurate information about whether any member of staff is disqualified by association.

- Ensure the Trust's single central record is accurately maintained as an ongoing, accurate and live record.
- Ensure that new staff have access to information on identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality issues. Receive basic safeguarding children and vulnerable adult's information and a copy of this policy.
- Ensure any new staff have an understanding of the Trust's code of conduct and whistleblowing policy.

## **All Staff**

The Trust has a duty to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and young people and that all members of staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.

Staff should be explicitly aware of the dangers inherent in:

- Working alone with a young person
- Physical interventions
- Cultural and gender stereotyping
- Dealing with sensitive information
- Giving to and receiving gifts from students and parents
- Contacting young people through private telephones (including text), email or social networking sites.
- Disclosing personal details inappropriately
- Meeting students/ young people/ vulnerable adults outside of Trust hours.

If a member of staff has reasonable suspicion that a young person is suffering harm, and fails to act in accordance with this policy this will be viewed as misconduct and appropriate action will be taken.

Any member of staff or visitor to the Trust who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the DSO. Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual students/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

All members of staff have a duty to attend training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

The whistleblowing advice line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or other organisations. They can be contacted on 08000280285 or by emailing them directly using [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## **Definitions & Further Guidance**

The Trust recognises that the terms 'child, young person 'abuse' and 'exploitation' are open to interpretation, so for the purposes of this policy, these are defined as follows;

A child or young person shall be defined as: 'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.'

Abuse shall be defined as: '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.'

### **Categories of abuse**

**Physical Abuse:** This is any abuse where a child is physically harmed, for example hitting, biting, and burning. Signs and symptoms might be unexplained wounds, bruises or broken bones. The child might make up stories to explain injuries or try to cover them up with clothing

**Emotional Abuse:** This means a child's emotional needs are not being met. This could include being made to feel inadequate or not feeling loved and secure. A parent or carer may not be talking to them enough or giving them the attention they need. Typical signs and symptoms could include delays in development, speech disorders or a fear of making mistakes or overreacting to them.

**Sexual Abuse:** This could involve children or young people being involved in sexual acts, being made to watch sexual acts or being shown pornography. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) means that children are manipulated sexually for the abuser's benefit. Typical signs and symptoms include awareness and knowledge of sexual activities beyond what would be expected at their age as well as genital or anal pain or itching or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

**Neglect:** This is a form of abuse where a child's basic needs are not met, for example through a lack of food, medical attention or access to education or poor clothing, housing, hygiene or parenting. Neglect could sometimes be happening as a result of a child being the carer of a family member. Typical signs and symptoms may include always being hungry, poor personal hygiene, delays in development, tiredness and looking ill and underweight.

**Exploitation shall be defined as:** Taking advantage of someone's vulnerability to treat them badly for the abuser's benefit.

### **Raising awareness of potential vulnerability**

Some children and vulnerable adults may experience multiple challenges and difficulties. This could be due to family circumstances, poverty, and discrimination, disability, family problems

with mental health, domestic violence or substance and alcohol use. The more challenges facing a child or young person the greater their vulnerability.

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

### **Children, young people and vulnerable adults with disabilities**

Research has consistently shown that children/vulnerable adults with a disability are more at risk of abuse. Disability may be visible such as Cerebral Palsy or invisible such as a learning disability. Many things contribute to this including:

- Poor practice resulting from not understanding the care and support the child needs
- Attitudes and assumptions about disability
- Lack of awareness and the belief that disabled children are not abused
- Factors linked to the impairment i.e., it may be harder to communicate or avoid the abuser if the child depends on them.
- Targeting by abusers who may believe they are less likely to tell or be believed because of this The Trust may need to put extra safeguards in place. Best practice to build safeguards includes:
  - Making sure everyone working with the child understands what the impairment actually means for the child
  - Talking to the child and parents/carers to understand the child's needs
  - Making sure there is a plan to meet additional needs and that this is clear and shared with those who work with the child
  - Listening to what the child says and communicates by their behaviour as well as their words or signs
  - Making sure the child knows who to go to and how to do so if they are worried about anything
  - Observing carefully and getting to know the child and understanding how they respond to different experiences
  - Reviewing the child's involvement regularly to help them get the most from the game
  - Looking for the child's abilities not their disabilities.

### **Children, young people and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups**

Children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.

### **Supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and vulnerable adults**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) young people come from all socioeconomic backgrounds, religions, faiths, ethnicities and cultures. It is estimated that six per cent of the population is lesbian, gay or bisexual, so there's a good chance that in a group of 30 young people/vulnerable adults, at least two will be or will grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Most young people will know LGB people too, including family and friends. In addition, a 2010 piece of research, funded by the Home Office, estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people in the UK may identify as transgender.

However, LGB&T people remain largely invisible across sports, and two thirds of LGB young people say they don't like team sports. This lack of visibility, as well as the misapprehensions about LGB&T people, contribute to an environment of homophobia and transphobia in sport.

This can potentially cause LGB&T young people and vulnerable adults to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. We therefore all have a role to play in dispelling myths about LGB&T people, challenging homophobia and transphobia when they occur, and creating a football environment where everyone feels included. It's important to remember that people realise they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender at different stages of their lives; so if a young person seems to identify in a certain way, it doesn't mean they will remain that way in the future.

It's also worth remembering that, when young people and vulnerable adults come out or identify a wish to reassign their current gender it's often the first time they've told anyone and how they do that will often be in response to the way they think others will react. Let them decide how they feel and what, if any, identity, they feel they have, and be supportive.

Every young person and vulnerable adult has the right to be treated with dignity and respect; this includes all young people who are openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual or transgender or are thought to be. A club culture that permits casual use of homophobic or transphobic language makes it all the easier for players to suffer name calling and bullying.

This can impact on a young person/ vulnerable adult's sense of belonging, self esteem and therein achievement. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people have the same needs as any other teenager. They'll enjoy, achieve and stay safe if they:

- Feel able to be themselves
- Feel valued for who they are
- Feel included and part of a community



- Have access to resources and information relevant to them
- Feel safe and supported
- Feel they have people to talk to if things aren't going so well

Don't make assumptions; it's impossible to tell whether a young person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender by the way they act, talk and dress or by who their friends are. Be positive when young people come out and know what to say; offer them reassurance, listen and be supportive – direct them to where they can get further advice and guidance.

Don't discuss a young person/ vulnerable adult's sexual orientation; with their parents/carers without their permission.

Protect young people and vulnerable adults from bullying; all young people have the right to grow up free from fear of bullying and that includes those young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Be inclusive; any football setting for young people/ vulnerable adults can make sure it's inclusive by creating zero tolerance for homophobic and transphobic bullying.

### **Dealing with bullying**

No one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. The Trust will not accept or condone bullying and has defined bullying as a category of abuse. It is the responsibility of everyone, 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, sexist or homophobic taunts or comments about disability, threats and gestures
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring or isolating.

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.

The bully 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.

### **Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination**

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – derogatory remarks about young female players, suggesting they are inferior to boys; or that young black, Asian or minority ethnic coaches are not as capable as white coaches. Ridiculing a young volunteer because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging. Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.
- Ensure that all staff and students know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in the Trust.
- If an incident occurs, members should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive, and will not be tolerated. If a member continues to make discriminatory remarks, explain in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed just as in any breach of the club's Code of Conduct and Anti- Bullying policy.
- If a member makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the training setting in line with managing challenging behaviour procedures and the Trust Designated Safeguarding Officer or club officials should talk to them in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable
- If the problem persists, the member should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour. Consider inviting the parents/carers to the club to discuss the attitudes of the youth member in line with the procedures detailed in The Trust's Anti-Bullying policy.

### **Whistleblowing**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (“the Act”) protects workers and employees from detrimental treatment or dismissal as a consequence of disclosing information about unlawful actions of their employer or information about the conduct or behaviour of employees, volunteers or others associated with the operation and organisation of the Trust .

This is known as “whistleblowing”. The protection applies to employees, volunteers, agency and contract workers.

Employees who have a role involving finance should also have regard to the Financial Regulations document for their Trust which includes a Whistleblowing Policy containing specific provisions relating to financial issues.

If an employee/worker makes a disclosure it must concern one of the 6 types of “qualifying disclosure” specified in the Act to be protected. These are where there has been or is likely to be:

- A breach of any legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a criminal offence;
- a danger to the Health and Safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; and,
- deliberate concealment of information about any of the above

The employee/worker raising the concern must reasonably believe they are doing so in the public interest. Concerns should normally be raised initially with the employee’s line manager. If a concern is raised verbally it should be followed up in writing wherever possible. However, where the complaint relates to the employee’s line manager, the complaint should be brought to the attention of a more senior manager, the Chief Executive of the Trust or Chair of Trustees.

## **Cyberbullying**

Young people are communicating more frequently online through social networking sites and via mobile – whilst a great way to communicate it also lends itself to potential abuse. Cyberbullying is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger), to deliberately upset someone. This behaviour can also be referred to as ‘Trolling’ when deliberately offensive comments are posted on an individual’s social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

Bullies often feel anonymous and ‘distanced’ from the incident when it takes place online and ‘bystanders’ can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur on line or via texts - bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person. The Trust has a responsibility to ensure their websites and/or social

networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying must be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. All young people should know that there are potential risks associated with meeting up with people they have only met online. A young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person will naturally want to meet other lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people with similar experiences, and they will seek friends they can relate to and a community where they can be themselves. This can make them particularly vulnerable in an online environment. It's essential that they understand that healthy friendships are based on mutual respect and trust and where to turn for further advice and support. For more information visit [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) to speak with someone call 0800 050 2020.

Children with disabilities also use the online world to meet others and at times hide their disability in order to make friends and build relationships. People who pose on line as children may target disabled children and young people.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

- Features physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of young people by their peers
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which young people spend their time
- It often hinges upon young people's experiences of power, and ultimately the notion of consent
- It is ultimately about unhealthy relationships and should be viewed as such e.g. domestic violence and relationships which are exploitative
- Sexting is a form of peer on peer abuse and should be dealt with as a matter of safeguarding by staff

### **Social media**

Facebook, Twitter, blogs, instant messaging and photo and video exchange sites are now common ways of communicating. All of these online tools provide a useful way for everyone to connect with children, young people and vulnerable adults. However the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks.

It is important that the Trust and its staff keep pace with how children, young people and vulnerable adults are being communicated with and follow the best practice guidance.

It is expected that any staff member working/volunteering/in a position of power at the Trust does not communicate with students or young people via personal social media.

Work phones or work email exchanges are permitted along with visible work social media accounts which include Facebook and Twitter. Any communication must be appropriate and in line with the staff code of conduct.

When using or taking any image or footage of a young person, consent must first be obtained from a parent prior to it being taken. If this is not obtained, the image or footage must not be taken.

### **Photographing Children and use of Images**

We understand that parents/carers like to take photos of or video record their children when participating in activities whilst with the trust; this is a normal part of family life and, we will not discourage parents from celebrating their children's successes. However, if there are health and safety issues associated with this e.g. the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle the child, and cause them to have an accident, we will encourage parents/carers to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash.

We will not allow images or footage of participants to be used on the Trust/club websites, publicity or press releases without express permission from the parent/carer, and if we do obtain such permission, we will not identify individual children by name.

The Trust cannot, however, be held accountable for photographs or video footage taken by parents/carers or members of the public during Trust activities. The Trust will take measures to ensure that members of the public are not able to take images or footage of participants during activities where possible.

Photography will be used across the Trust's programmes as a tool to support assessment and to provide evidence of, and celebration of, progress on all programmes. However staff should avoid using personal cameras or mobile phones to do so.

## **Safer Recruitment of Volunteers and Staff**

We are committed to ensuring that appropriate recruitment checks have been carried out as anyone may have the potential to abuse children, young people and vulnerable adults, therefore all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Proper recruitment and selection procedures will help to screen out those who are not suitable to work at the Trust.

We will ensure that we follow the steps set out here;

### **Planning and advertising**

- Have defined role profiles which highlights the key responsibilities of the role for every job
- Decide upon the skills and experience the role will need; a person specification
- Be clear about what the Trust aims and philosophy are in our adverts/ information
- Reflect the Trust's positive stance on safeguarding children 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 original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence.

### **Interviewing**

- Meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decision
- Ensure more than one official is present. The meeting or interview will enable the Trust to explore further the information provided in the application form. Prepare in advance questions relating to safeguarding e.g. they will provide the applicant with the opportunity to share previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations and explore their attitudes and commitment to welfare.

### **References**

Managers will 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 they have been involved in sport, particularly children's activities, previously, or other voluntary work. 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 Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service Checks**

The disclosure and barring service checks (DBS) are a tool in the Trust's recruitment process. A DBS contains impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the Police and government departments which can be used by the Trust to make safer recruitment decisions. It can indicate that a person is not suitable to work with children, for example if they have a history of sexual offending or offences against children or vulnerable adults. It may also tell authorities that further investigations are required, for example if the person has a history of drug dealing or racist offending.

All staff or volunteers with substantial access to children or vulnerable adults at the Trust have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check before starting work and prior to confirmation of employment.

The Trust will take into account the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and only consider offences which are relevant to the care, supervision and training of children. This will take the form of producing a risk chart to fully understand the risk involved as well as gathering all of the information regarding previous convictions and offenses. Any decision would be made by consulting the Trustees, DSO, FA and other organisations involved before making a decision on the candidate.

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

### **Appointing volunteers and staff**

The Trust will consider all the information they receive via the application form, confirmation of identity, the outcome of the take up of references and The FA criminal records check. This information will 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 the Trust.

### **Post appointment decisions**

It is important that once a new volunteer/staff member has been recruited, follow up action is taken and this should include:

- Any qualifications are substantiated e.g. request to see copies of their coaching certificate(s)
- New volunteers are made aware and sign up to the club's/Trust's safeguarding policy and procedures, best practice guidelines and codes of conduct
- The roles and responsibilities of the new volunteer/staff member are signed up to
- Training needs are established and actioned
- A period of supervision/observation or mentoring is used to support the new volunteer; this is often referred to as an induction

- The FA's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Workshop is completed or if it was taken over three years ago is renewed either online or via a Workshop with further training provided dependent on the role.

### **Code of Conduct**

It is expected that all Trust staff will read and sign a Trust code of conduct relating to their team and role. The staff code of conduct will set out the expectations of the member of staff in their role and can be referred back to in the event of any incident. A review of this code of conduct will be completed during the appraisal process at the end of each year.

For volunteers, a separate code of conduct will be presented when signing up to volunteer and it is the volunteer's duty to read, sign and follow the code of conduct.

As well as staff, any participants and students must also read and sign a code of conduct to ensure they are aware of the expectations within the session.



## Managing Risk

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 or levels of development of the children involved?
- Where is the activity going to take place?
- Are there any additional needs within the group?
- How do they affect the child's ability and needs in terms of safe-guarding?
- Are there mixed groupings?
- What experience and qualifications do the organisers have?
- Are staffing or volunteer levels appropriate to the needs of the group?
- Do you have someone with the appropriate level of first aid training for the needs of the group?

It's important to also consider your familiarity with the venue and the level of responsibility you 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.

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.

Adult/participant ratios must be based on the age and understanding of the children and young people involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are additional needs. The lower the age of the participants, the higher the ratio of staff should be. If the activity is mixed gender, male and female staff should ideally be available.

Whatever the age of the children and young people and type of activity, a minimum of two adults should always be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of an incident.

As a rule of thumb staff should generally have a minimum of 1 adult to 16 children and young people. Where the children are aged 8 or younger you will require more staff and remember a minimum of two adults should always be present.

With post 16 students a ratio of 1:20 should be adopted. If the children and young people have additional needs e.g. learning needs or a disability the ratio should be higher than 1:16 to ensure you can meet the specific needs of any given group. You may have Trust volunteers including 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 and 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.

Lone working with individual children should be avoided if at all possible. However, it is recognised that there will be occasions when there is no alternative. The following guidelines should be considered by staff:

- Let another member of staff know that they are alone with a child
- Keep the door open to the room that they are in or ensure they are in a room with an uncovered glass panel in the door
- If this is a regular occurrence (such as regular individual lessons/work experience/transportation), the child's parent/carer should be informed of the situation
- Should anything happen during the session that makes the staff member uncomfortable, this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Teachers providing transport for students, to and from training/matches – parents must be informed during induction that this may occur on an infrequent basis
- Coaches providing transport for work experience - the families must put this request in writing to the coach.

## Reporting

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 Disclosure Barring Service formal record of an individual's relevant convictions. There is a legal and moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. The Trust 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 vulnerable adult is involved in football. It is essential that you follow the correct procedures for any concerns that are related to CFCCT 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
- You become aware, through your own observations or through a third party, of possible abuse occurring. 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. The matter should be reported directly to the DSO who will then inform First Response, Early Help and/or the local Police.

### **What to do if a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses to you**

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult informs you directly that they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, this is known as a disclosure. A disclosure may be given slowly over time or all at once and it may seem incomplete, unclear and may sometimes be retracted. Children and vulnerable people don't often tell in one simple 'disclosure'. The person receiving the disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Ensure the immediate safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult that he or she is not to blame and that he or she was right to tell
- Take what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says seriously
- If the child, young person or vulnerable adult 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 as it is their responsibility to refer this on appropriately to the Police.
- When speaking with a child, young person or vulnerable adult keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult 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 try to avoid the child bathing or showering until given permission to do so. Washing can destroy valuable evidence
- Take a detailed written record of what the person said to you
- As soon as the child, young person or vulnerable adult completes the disclosure make sure you accurately record what they said using their language and of any actions you may have taken as a result
- Inform the parents/carers immediately unless you have a 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 Safeguarding Officer. If they are unavailable contact the Police for guidance.

### **The Trust's reporting procedures**

Whether informed directly by a child, young person or vulnerable adult via a third party, or through your own observations, you should follow the procedures outlined below:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- If the child, young person or vulnerable adult needs immediate medical treatment, call 999 for immediate assistance
- Report the concerns to the DSO immediately
- If the DSO is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the Early Help team or local Police. If the child already has an allocated child protection social worker, contact the social work team.
- If the child has a disability or extra communication needs share the needs with the people you report to so they can communicate effectively with the child or young person.
- Once the information has been passed to the DSO, the DSO will then pass any information given on to the Police and Early Help.
- Remember if the concern is about someone involved within a football setting and you are unable to contact the Trust Designated Safeguarding Officer, then you should also inform The FA's Safeguarding team on 0800 1691863 or via email on [safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding@TheFA.com)
- When working in schools, coaches should follow the reporting procedures that the school set out while also informing the DSO of any safeguarding incidents.

If you have any concerns about a child or young person and the DSO is not around, do not leave it for someone else to deal with, particularly if you think a child is being neglected or abused.

All referrals and incidents that have been report will be stored securely by the DSL via a password protected document. These files must not be shared and discussed outside of the safeguarding lead and members of staff involved. Details of the reports must not be shared outside of the Trust or agencies involved.

### **Reporting a child at immediate risk:**

If the child is at immediate risk call the Police on 999.

**Other numbers you can call:**

NSPCC 24 hour Helpline: 0800 800 5000 (free from a landline)

NSPCC Text helpline: 88858 (service is free and anonymous)

Police: 101 (non-emergency calls)

## **Allegations made against staff**

If anyone makes an allegation that any members of staff, trustee or volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may not have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

Then the allegation will be dealt with in accordance with national guidance and agreements as implemented locally.

Allegations against a member of staff should be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Officer in the first instance. If contacted with regard to an allegation against the DSO, the Chair of Trustees will contact the Early Help team or local Police. An allegation must not be discussed with the alleged perpetrators or other members of staff/governors, unless advised to do so.

## Review Points

There is a commitment to review the safeguarding document on an annual basis (minimum) with exception to the following;

- To any legislation/organisational changes
- In the event of a series incident
- If the Trust implements a new activity or service which involves contact with children
- A significant organisational change

When establishing, developing or improving a service, project or activity the Trust will:

- a) include safeguarding in the planning brief;
- b) seek input from children and adults at risk who might be participants;
- c) ensure that any delivery partners have (so far as relevant) implemented safeguarding measures equivalent to those set out in this policy.

Any changes will be reviewed by the full board of Trustees and signed off when in agreement.