



THE WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

POLICY TITLE: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Board of The Walsall Football Club Limited (“WFC”) acknowledges and accepts it has a statutory obligation and responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all Children and young people who participate in WFC’s activities or utilise WFC’s facilities.

WFC’s Safeguarding Children Policy applies to senior managers and all staff, paid or volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, interns / students or anyone working on behalf of WFC and will be given to all adults working with our children and young people.

The welfare of the child is paramount and all adults working at The Trust have a ‘duty of care’ to safeguard the welfare of Children and young people by creating safe environments that protect them from harm. The policy may also be supplemented by in-service training and additional guidance.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK - RULES AND REGULATIONS

WFC is governed by statute law set out in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), Affiliated Football Policy and Procedures, English Football League (“EFL”) and Football Association (“FA”) Rules and guidance. WFC is fully committed to ensuring that the best practice recommended by these bodies is employed throughout the activities of WFC.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

WFC’s Safeguarding Children Policy underpins all the activities delivered for the safe participation of Children and Young People. This policy will be reviewed annually or if there is a statutory legislative or organisational change or following any safeguarding incidents, concerns or allegations where the policy is found to be in need of updating to ensure the aims and key principles are still being met. All policy documents, and reviews will be put before the Board for approval at the following Board meeting.

DEFINITIONS

A “Child” (collectively referred to as “Children”) is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

An “Activity” means any activity or series of activities arranged for a Child or Children by or in the name of WFC. These are deemed to be regulated and therefore activate the required levels of Criminal Record Checks that are associated.

Senior Safeguarding Officer (“SSO”) – Board Member responsible for overseeing safeguarding policies and procedures across WFC.



Designated Safeguarding Officer (“DSO”) – Responsible for implementing safeguarding policies and procedures across WFC.

AIMS & KEY PRINCIPLES

The aims of WFC’s Safeguarding Children Policy are:

- To safeguard all Children and young people who interact with WFC.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of safeguarding Children.
- To develop a positive and pro-active welfare programme to enable all Children and young people to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- To encourage parents and other members of the Child or young person’s family to be involved in a relationship with WFC.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout WFC by ensuring Responsible Adults who come in contact with our children and young people provide good role models of behaviour.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

- 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 identity.
- All allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to efficiently and proportionately.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare.

SENIOR SAFEGUARDING OFFICER / DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

WFC has a SSO who has overall responsibility for overseeing the safeguarding of Children at WFC.

WFC also has DSO who has overall responsibility for implementing the policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children at WFC.

The DSO is the focal point for Safeguarding Children in WFC and will undertake regular monitoring and risk assessments of activities involving Children (or will designate this task to a trained activity lead, the Health & Safety Manager or an external assessor where appropriate).

Anybody with a concern about a Child or young person’s welfare should contact the DSO direct or their line manager for advice in the first instance – details can be found at the end of this policy.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:



- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

HUMAN RESOURCES & DISCLOSURE

Recruitment

As part of WFC's recruitment and selection process, offers of work for positions which involve working with Children are subject to a satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Criminal Records Check (CRC) at the level deemed suitable for the position offered and subject to appropriate references.

Staff Training & Awareness

Written guidance to WFC employees and casual workers who come into contact with Children is provided at induction. The DSO will hold a specific Safeguarding & Safer Working Practice Induction with all new fixed-term, permanent starters and volunteers during which the key elements of WFC's Safeguarding Children Policy are discussed in more detail and specifically to the individuals' role.

All staff working in direct contact with Children are required to complete the FA's 3-hour Safeguarding Children Awareness workshop and undertake a refresher course, as advised by the FA, at least once every 3 years. Details of all training qualifications and annual WFC refresher training are retained by the DSO.

A continual programme of Safeguarding Awareness courses is also provided by WFC to develop knowledge which are department specific.

Work Experience

WFC may from time to time offer work experience placements to young people. WFC will provide forwardly planned and structured work experience placements. Whilst undertaking work for WFC, those on work experience will not have unsupervised access to Children.

Contractors

Where applicable external contractors engaged by WFC must undergo a suitability test prior to commencing work. This will include evidencing the contractor's Safety Record, Safety Policy, Liability Insurance, Risk Assessment/Method Statement and details of Competent Person. On arrival at WFC, the



contractor will receive a site induction from the DSO or Health and Safety Manager who covers Safeguarding Children and give details of the Club's expected code of behaviour.

Contractors are subject to regular inspection from WFC personnel. In the event of a Contractor carrying out work on an area that is usually occupied by Children this work, where possible, will be undertaken when Children are not present.

Service Level Agreements / Partnership Agreements

WFC's commitment to Safeguarding is outlined in any partnership agreements, service level agreements or any other agreements that are in place with any facility or service provider or for commissioned services insofar as those services relate to Children. Agreements will clearly define roles, responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding Children before, during and after the delivery of those services.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

WFC are registered with the DBS to carry out Criminal Record Checks on individuals who work for WFC, including The Walsall FC Community Programme. Enhanced CRCs, plus barred list check where appropriate, enable WFC to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions involving work with Children.

PROCESS FOR DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE CHECKING

New Appointments

All staff that are offered a position which involves working with Children in Regulated Activity will be required to complete a Self-Declaration Form and also undertake an Enhanced CRC with a barred list check where appropriate.

All offers of work are subject to the outcome of the screening process and where applicable, this is set out in the initial job advertisement and the applicant's offer of work. Until such time as a satisfactory CRC has been received, the member of staff will not be permitted to work with Children.

Should a positive CRC be received, a risk assessment will be carried out by the WFC SSO and DSO or HR Manager, to assess the information contained within the CRC.

The member of staff may also be asked to attend an interview prior to a recruitment decision being made. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and Protection of Freedoms Act should be considered in all cases before a final decision is made.

New Appointments who already have a CRC

If a new member of staff has been subject to a CRC check by their previous employer WFC will still require a further check either by new application or use of the DBS Update service.



Temporary Staff and External Consultants

WFC will ensure that all temporary staff and external consultants sign a Self-Declaration Form where appropriate and, in any case, will not have unsupervised access to Children during their time with the Club.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

WFC is committed to providing equal opportunities to staff and therefore a positive CRC will not necessarily result in a bar from work or volunteering. A copy of WFC's policy on equal opportunities can be obtained from the Management Team.

RATIOS AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Any Activity undertaken by WFC will always give full consideration to the appropriate number of staff members available depending on the age of the Children involved, the degree of risk the Activity involves, and whether there are any additional needs for the group of participants. The lower the age of the participants, the greater the need for supervision.

Regardless of these ratios a minimum of 2 members of staff or delivery partner will always be available to supervise an Activity. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the Activity (e.g. in the event of a participant requiring the attention of an adult during the Activity following an accident).

- For Children under 5 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:6.
- For Children under 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:8.
- For Children over 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:10, but this varies depending on the Activity. Advice should be sought from the Children's Services' Officer if unsure.

LONE WORKING GUIDANCE

Working 1:1 with children or young people should only happen in exceptional circumstances. When it does happen staff should request and follow specific guidance from the DSO.

GIFTS & FAVOURITISM

Staff should take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

WFC recognises that there are occasions when Children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a "thank you", and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value as this may be misinterpreted by others. Staff should report any gifts received to their line manager.



Similarly, it is not permitted for staff to give personal gifts to Children. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or to single out the Child. It might also be perceived that a “favour” of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a Child must first be agreed with the staff member’s line manager as part of a structured reward system and not based on favouritism.

USE OF IMAGES

WFC takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and The FA:

- Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought in writing at the start of the financial year or prior to the event or session. Parents/Carers/Guardians are responsible for informing WFC of any change of circumstances which may affect consent.
- Parents/Carers/Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. WFC will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed.
- All Children featured in WFC publications will be appropriately dressed.
- Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific Child.
- Where appropriate, images represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event.
- Designated WFC photographers will, where applicable, undertake a DBS check and attend a Safeguarding Children workshop and in any case will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest guidelines on the Use of Images policies from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- WFC Identification will be worn at all times.
- Children who are under a court order will not have their images published in any WFC document.
- No images of Children featured in WFC publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address.
- Recordings of Children for the purposes of legitimate coaching aids are only filmed by WFC officials and are stored safely and securely at the WFC’s premises.
- Any instances of inappropriate images should be reported to the DSO.
- WFC does not put young peoples’ profiles with images and personal information on its website.

TRANSPORT

WFC has a Transport policy and should be followed when Children are being transported on behalf of the WFC. Children shall be accompanied and supervised at all times by the Activity leader. Only Vehicles and Drivers approved under the WFC’s Transport Policy will be used to transport children. Under no circumstances should a member of staff use a private vehicle to convey children engaged on an Activity being delivered by WFC.



MEDICAL

There may be occasions where medical treatment is necessary during an Activity or event. WFC will ensure a level of medical cover is available during all of its activities including at least one suitably trained Emergency Aider. All relevant and necessary medical information of participants will be treated in confidence but provided to the Event Lead if necessary, e.g. asthmatic participants. Specialist medical advice and further information must be sought when working with children who have special needs or disability.

GUIDELINES IN THE EVENT OF CONCERN

Highlighting Concern

Although WFC is committed to doing the utmost to safeguard Children from harm there may be occasions when concern is raised over the treatment of a Child.

“Child abuse” and “neglect” are generic terms encompassing all ill treatment of Children as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the Child’s health or development. Children may be abused or suffer neglect through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the Child and may be of the same or opposite sex. There is often a common misconception that only a certain type of person can abuse Children but this is simply not the case – abuse can take place in any setting, by someone of either sex, of any sexual orientation and of any age.

Recognition – Signs of Abuse

There are five main forms of abuse identified as follows, should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact the DSO immediately.

Physical Abuse: ‘Physical abuse’ may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a Child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a Child. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick Child. Physical abuse can be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a Child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the Child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving Children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging Children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a Child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other Children.



Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a Child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the Child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a Child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a Child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a Child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a Child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the Child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to Children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the Child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on Children. These may include interactions that are beyond the Child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the Child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing Children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of Children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a Child, though it may occur alone.

Bullying: Bullying is not always easy to define and can take many forms. The three main types are: physical, verbal and emotional. Bullying can also take the form of online Cyber bullying where technology and The Internet is used to post or share derogatory comments and/or pictures of children which cause them alarm or distress, in applications or social media.

WFC has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and any reported incidents of bullying by a staff member to a Child, Child to staff member or Child to Child will be taken seriously and investigated by the DSO.

RESPONDING TO A REPORT OR SUSPICION

Where possible WFC's DSO or Event Lead should be contacted as early as possible, however it is recognised that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately. With this in mind the following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse:

Do:

1. Treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the Child as if you believe what they are saying, although do not directly say the words "I believe you".
2. Tell the Child they are right to tell you.
3. Reassure the Child that they are not to blame.



4. be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
5. tell the Child what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
6. Take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse.
7. Write down everything said and what was done (handwritten is preferable) and sign and date the notes. An Incident Report Form should be used where possible and, in any case, a referral must be made to the WFC within 24 hours of the incident taking place.
- 8 Seek medical advice if necessary.

Don't:

1. make promises you cannot keep.
2. interrogate the Child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the Police and Children's Social Care, who have experience in this.
3. cast doubt on what the Child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
4. say anything that makes the Child feel responsible for the abuse.
5. inform parents / carers – the Safeguarding Officer will make this decision based on whether there is suspicion of their involvement.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION; IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT.

Make sure you tell WFC's DSO or SSO immediately, they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS

The DSO will immediately report any allegation to the SSO, who will ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report. An Incident Report Form must be completed and submitted within 24 hours to the Trust DSO or SSO.

Any statement made by the Child should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts. Any opinion, interpretation or judgment should be clearly stated as this.

WFC will ensure that any Child concerned is immediately removed from any possible risk of harm.

Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. In these cases, the SSO will first seek the advice of the Safeguarding Children Team, Children's Social Care, a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Police before setting up an internal inquiry and take their advice on informing the Child's parents. In any case of suspected abuse, as soon as the Local Authority or the Police have been informed, the Trust must provide a report to the WFC Board.



The Club SSO will also inform the The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team and EFL in writing as required under the Affiliated Football policy and procedures using the appropriate notification form.

Providing it is appropriate to do so, the SSO will maintain constant dialogue with all parties involved with the allegation until such time as the matter has reached a reasonable outcome.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

If the report involves an allegation about any member of staff (whether full time, part time, paid, unpaid, contracted, engaged, voluntary etc.) and WFC believe that the report could demonstrate that the member of staff in question has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children,

the SSO or Board shall immediately inform the LADO of the Borough where the alleged incident took place so that he or she can consult with the Police and local authority children's social care colleagues as appropriate. Where the SSO or Trustees are unsure as to whether the report meets the criteria stated above, the advice of the LADO shall still be sought.

The SSO will also inform the The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team and EFL in writing as required under the Affiliated Football policy and procedures using the appropriate notification form.

The member of staff in question may be asked to write a brief report, as may any other person that is deemed to have an involvement in the allegation. This process would only be carried out once the advice of the above mentioned external bodies and The FA Case Management Team had been sought and only then in consultation with the SSO or Board. Providing it does not contradict with any advice received from the LADO or The FA, any internal investigation will be carried out in line with WFC's Disciplinary Policy and either general or Grievance Procedures, as applicable.

The SSO will also consult with The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team and EFL under the Affiliated Football policy and procedures.

Confidentiality

There is always tension and caution around issues of confidentiality. The advice for all staff WFC is that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a Child (although this does not necessarily mean that the parents / carers have to be told).

A Child should never be pressured to give information or show physical marks unless they do so willingly. If they chose to show markings, two members of staff should be present.



There are actions which staff have to and are obliged to take once we are aware of a problem. Undertakings of confidentiality should not be given either to the person making the allegations or to the person being interviewed. A matter is confidential on a need to know basis and nobody should have any reservations about referring any issue to the DSO. The key issue is that the welfare of the Child is protected.

SENIOR SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:

Stefan Gamble WFC Chief Executive Officer/Director

Phone: 01922 622 791

Email: stefan.gamble@walsallfc.co.uk

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:

Nick Adshead Academy Secretary and Designated Safeguarding & Inclusion Officer

Phone: 01922 622 791

Email: youth@walsallfc.co.uk

EXTERNAL LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS

Walsall Safeguarding Children Board,

<http://web.walsall.gov.uk/childrens-services/workforce/walsall-safeguarding-children-board/>

Telephone: 01922 659529 (to report a concern about a child call 01922 658170)

THE FA / NSPCC HELPLINE: 0808 800 5000 / Textphone: 0800 056 0566

NSPCC SMS: 88858

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

FA Safeguarding Children Guidelines:

<http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/WhatWeDo/FootballSafe/Downloads>

Information Sharing Guidance for Managers and Practitioners:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00807-2008>

Working Together to Safeguard Children:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00305-2010>