

**WatfordFC**  
safeguarding



**WATFORD** COMMUNITY SPORTS  
& EDUCATION  
**TRUST**  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1102239



# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

**Policy Name:** Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

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# 1

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## Statement

Watford Football Club (hereafter referred to as the Club) is committed to creating opportunities for children and young people to participate in a broad spectrum of activities at the Club at the same time as creating a safer culture for the participants.

The Club has a moral, legal, and social responsibility to provide a fun and safe environment for all those participating in these activities. Working in partnership with children and young people and their support network is essential in promoting and embedding this, Policy.

# 2

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## Principles

The Club seeks to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and young people who engage in activities with the Club. It is through the application of this policy and procedures that the Club will seek to develop a positive and proactive welfare program to enable all children to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. This equally applies to the safety and security of those working with and responsible for the activities involving children.

If you work or intend to work with children, you are automatically placed in a Relationship of Trust that carries authority, status, power, and responsibility. If the staff involved are positive role models, displaying high moral and ethical standards, the benefits to that child's development can be significant. Football can and does have a positive effect on children's development; and is potentially an inspiration for all sections of our community

# 3

## Scope

This policy is for use across the Club and is to be observed by all those working with children. The application of this policy and procedures across the Club, promoting safeguarding good practice is mandatory.

All the requirements of this policy are obligatory and are to be enforced where there are any suspected instances of poor practice or abuse. All staff and partners must make themselves aware of the Club's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. Where appropriate to their role with children they will be supported by a safeguarding training program.

The person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at the Club is the Head of Safeguarding (HoS). The Club fully acknowledges and accepts its responsibility for the safety and well-being of children who engage in any activity carried out with the Club.

The Club has a child orientated approach and child welfare is of paramount importance. It is the duty of all staff working at the Club to safeguard the welfare of children by creating an environment that protects them from harm.

Activities undertaken at the following locations and departments are under the remit of this policy, including:

- Watford FC Academy
- Watford Women FC (WWFC)
- Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust (the Trust)

The Club has a comprehensive safeguarding procedure in place to meet the requirements of The FA and Premier League Rules (Section S, the 'Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups and Safe Recruitment'); FA Safeguarding Children Rules and the Children Act(s) 1989 and 2004.

These procedures ensure that national standards for safeguarding are met and implemented throughout the Club.

In respect of safeguarding individuals from radicalisation, the Club works to the PREVENT element of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy and where deemed appropriate seeks external support for children and young people through referrals to the Channel Program. This program aims to work with the individual to address their specific vulnerabilities, prevent them from becoming further radicalised and possibly entering the criminal justice system because of their actions. It is recognised that radicalisation can occur to an individual from any section of society and is not particular to any racial, ethnic, or social group. It is further recognised that in many instances the process of radicalisation is essentially one of grooming by others.

The Club also has a responsibility to maintain regular dialogue with Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The Club will refer concerns that a child might be at risk of significant harm to the Department for Children and Young Peoples Services, the Police or in cases of suspected radicalisation to the Channel Scheme as appropriate. The Club will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) any incident or allegation against a person in Relationship of Trust.

# 4

## Safeguarding Strategy – Our Plan

The Club's Safeguarding Strategy document entitled "Our Plan" sets out the Club's strategic approach for the next three years to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are consistently considered, implemented, and improved.

It presents the Club's guiding vision behind Our Plan, its objectives, the actions, and measures through which outcomes will be achieved, and underpinning principles.

Our Plan acts as a framework through which all those working at or with the Club can better understand and carry out their safeguarding responsibilities, so that everyone who engages with the Club can do so in a safe environment.

### Our Vision

*"To keep safeguarding and welfare at the heart of our Club."*

The vision behind Our Plan is to collectively promote and protect the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk across the Club, and to create a welcoming and secure environment for them in which they are supported, respected and safe.

### Our Priorities

We will do this through:

- **CULTURE:** Encourage a Club-wide, shared commitment to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding considerations are embedded into the Club's culture and approach to all work.
- **PEOPLE:** Maintain a professional workforce made up of responsible individuals who are vigilant, proactive, and responsive in their attitude to safeguarding, and are aware of the processes for dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- **AWARENESS:** Provide safeguarding education and awareness both to those at the Club responsible for safeguarding and those at risk of harm, so that individuals are empowered to recognise, report, and speak about their concerns in a safe and supportive environment.
- **COMPLIANCE:** Actively monitor and review safeguarding arrangements, and adjust where necessary, to ensure that they are as effective as possible.
- **HORIZIONS:** Seek out and embrace new opportunities and technology that encourages any form of abuse is prevented from the outset.

## **Our Foundations**

We will achieve this following based on our foundations:

- **DIVERSITY:** Working together within our community to delivery our safeguarding vision
- **EMPOWERMENT:** To empower all those entrusted into our care
- **EQUALITY:** Treat everyone fairly and equality without exception
- **FAMILY:** Continue to champion our reputation as the original family club
- **INCLUSION:** We are committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment
- **RESPECT:** Promote a safe and supportive culture
- **TOGETHER:** The Board, staff and partners acknowledge that safeguarding and welfare is everyone's responsibility

# 5

## Safeguarding Governance and Leadership

### Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

The Club has a Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) that provides clear direction and addresses all aspects of safeguarding at a strategic level. The Club has a Senior Safeguarding Lead at Board level who oversees the delivery of the safeguarding strategic plan through the Strategic Safeguarding Group.

The operational delivery of safeguarding is coordinated by the Head of Safeguarding (HoS) and is supported by the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager (S&WM), Safeguarding Manager (Trust) (SMT), Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer (APCSO), Women's Safeguarding Officer (WSO), and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Each lead is specifically responsible for providing localised expertise and supports the promotion and awareness-raising of safeguarding.

### Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

The Club's Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) will contribute and ensure safeguarding remains at the fore of all the Club's work. The Group has a collective responsibility to provide support to the Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) and all departments operationally.

The group maximises the diverse Club expertise and experience to help promote and ensure effective safeguarding, welfare, and wellbeing across the business and provide a positive influence and help foster a strong safeguarding and welfare culture within the Club.

The group works collaboratively with the Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) and support the operations needs of the Club and those outline in the Safeguarding Standards framework to maintain effective communication measures and working relationships in relation to safeguarding and welfare across all the constitutes of the Club.

# 6

## Definitions

### Definition of a Child

Child and Children is defined by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as any person or persons who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. While we recognise the importance of and use the term 'children and young people' in practice, it is essential to understand the definition of a Child in the context of Safeguarding and this Policy.

### Definition of Club

Associated football club in the membership of the English Football League (EFL). The term 'Club' includes all constituents that operate under the brand of Watford Football Club including – Watford FC Academy, Watford FC Community Sports, and Education Trust (Trust) and Watford Women Football Club (WWFC).

### Definition of Safeguarding Team

The collect term for those who hold specific roles within safeguarding for the Club. These roles include, but are not exclusive, Senior Safeguarding Leads (SSL), Head of Safeguarding (HOS), Safeguarding Managers' (SM), Safeguarding Officers'(SO) and Designated Safeguarding Officers' (DSO).

### Definition of Staff

Means any person employed or deployed by the Club whether paid or voluntary.

### Definition Partners

Means any person or organisations whose contractual agreement requires them to comply with this safeguarding policy.

### Definition of Activity or Activities

Means any activity or series of activities arranged by or in the name of the Club for children or attended by children.

### Definition of Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding Children is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of Children and protect them from harm.



# 7

## The Key Principles Underpinning this Policy are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned, or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Staff and partners who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff and partners should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied and should be sensitive to differences expressed through culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Staff and partners should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.
- Develop a positive and proactive welfare program to enable all children to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- Promote high ethical standards throughout.

# 8

## A Positive Culture

All staff and partners working with children should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment - avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Make the experience of the provided activity fun and enjoyable.
- Promote fairness, confront, and deal with bullying.
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of the child first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Adopt all other good practice/common sense principles given the varying situations.
- Challenging poor practice such as racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, foul, aggressive, or provocative language or any controlling behaviour that upsets children is vital.
- Encourage a good listening and supportive culture

# 9

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Head of Safeguarding (HOS)

The role of the Club's Head of Safeguarding is to:

- Work closely with Club's Board and Senior Safeguarding Lead to provide clarity across the Club to ensure full compliance with the English Football League (EFL) rules, the FA safeguarding agenda and Government legislation.
- Maintain key relationships with Club's Board, Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG), the English Football League Safeguarding Team, Designated Safeguarding Officers, NSPCC, Police, Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (for the management of allegations against professionals), and The FA Safeguarding and Case Management teams.
- Work close with the Club's Board and Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) to ensure the effectiveness of the Club's safeguarding strategy; compliance and updates on current legislation and any changes in English Football League or FA Rules; or statutory agency legislative changes which impact the Club.
- Represent the Club as lead case manager when cooperating with and reporting directly to external statutory agencies such as the Police, Local Safeguarding and Children's Board. This includes the referral of cases of suspected radicalisation to the Police or Channel Scheme.

### Safeguarding and Welfare Manager (SWM)

The role of the Club's Safeguarding and Welfare Manager is to:

- To assist and support the Head of Safeguarding on the delivery of best practice in safeguarding and child protection within the Club and ensure the highest standards for safeguarding for all vulnerable groups.
- In the absence of the Head of Safeguarding, act as the deputy.
- Responsible for being the localised expertise for safeguarding knowledge, understanding, roles and responsibilities through regular staff training across the Academy and Watford Women FC, ensuring standards are met as required.
- Work alongside the Head of Safeguarding and other members of the Club's Safeguarding Team, promote, embed, implement, and improve the Club's safeguarding provision.
- Oversee the Club's Academy Player Care and Welfare Officer, Watford Women FC (WWFC) and Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO).

## **Safeguarding Manager (Trust) (SMT)**

The role of the Club's Safeguarding Manager (Trust) (SMT) is to:

- To assist and support the Head of Safeguarding on the delivery of best practice in safeguarding and child protection within the Club and ensure the highest standards for safeguarding for all vulnerable groups.
- Responsible for being the localised expertise for safeguarding knowledge, understanding, roles and responsibilities through regular staff training across the Trust, ensuring standards are met as required.
- Work alongside the Head of Safeguarding and other members of the Club's Safeguarding Team, promote, embed, implement, and improve the Club's safeguarding provision.
- Oversee the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Academy Player Care & Safeguarding Officer (APCSO)**

The role of the Club's Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Overseeing and monitoring all Academy players' welfare, including mental and emotional wellbeing, providing and or sourcing the appropriate training where required for players, parents, and staff.
- With the support of the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager to develop and successfully coordinate the mechanism for engaging with players and parents to ensure we meet the welfare and safeguarding needs for all individual players aged between 8 – 21 years.

## **Watford Women's FC Safeguarding Officer (WWSO)**

The role of the Watford Women's FC Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Overseeing welfare and safeguarding provision for the Women's first and development teams, including mental and emotional wellbeing, providing and or sourcing the appropriate support for players and staff.
- Responsible for being the localised expertise for safeguarding knowledge and implementation for the Watford Women's FC set-up.

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

The role of the Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Support the day-to-day management of safeguarding issues and proactive promotion of safeguarding within the specified department.
- To be available at all reasonable times as a first contact for children, staff, and partners and if appropriate, external agencies regarding information or referral of safeguarding matters within the department.
- Ensure all incidents, concerns, allegations, evidence of poor practice are reported in confidence, and in line with Data Protection legislation using the Club's CPOMS system.
- To attend regular Club Designated Safeguarding Officer meetings with relevant personnel, and undertake any actions raised at meetings and CPD events.

# 10 Safer Recruitment

As part of the Club's recruitment and selection process, offers of work for positions which involve 'regulated activity' when working with children are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check and two appropriate references.

All offers of work are subject to a satisfactory outcome to the screening process and until a satisfactory disclosure has been confirmed, the individual concerned will not be permitted to commence work.

All staff and partners engaged in 'regulated activity' will be required to undergo regular DBS disclosure clearances, normally every three years or earlier if requested.

All elements of the safer recruitment process and pre-appointment checks will be applied to applicants from overseas in the same way as applicants' residents to the UK.

Overseas checks will be carried out on anyone that has lived or worked abroad in the last three years and spent more than three months outside of the UK in addition to the standard DBS check process.

We require all applicants to disclose any 'unspent' criminal convictions as part of their application. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended ex-offenders do not have to disclose 'spent' convictions. However certain types of posts, particularly those that involve working with children and/ or young people and/or adults at risk or other positions of trust or sensitive areas, are exempt from these provisions, and in these cases all convictions must be declared. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the Ministry of Justice website – Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the legislative framework for the Vetting and Barring Scheme effective from October 2009. The criminal records checking regime, which in England and Wales is administered by the Disclosure and Barring Service, makes decisions about who will be barred from working with children and adults at risk. If a manager believes that the appointee to a vacancy will be working in a 'regulated' or 'controlled' position, they will require an enhanced criminal records check to be undertaken before commencing employment.

Applicants must be made aware early in the recruitment process that a criminal records check will be required

Should an individual's DBS check reveal any convictions the Club will consider whether the nature of the offence or offences renders the person concerned unsuitable for working with children. In such circumstances, when the nature of any disclosure must be considered, a risk assessment will be carried out to assess the information contained within the disclosure certificate. The individual may also be asked to attend an interview prior to a recruitment decision being made.

On occasions, the Head of Safeguarding and Head of HR, English Football League and/or The FA and/or the Local Safeguarding Children Board Manager may be asked to attend the risk assessment meeting.

In addition, as part of the short-listing process, the Club may consider carrying out an online search for publicly available information as part of the due diligence process.

# 11

## Staff Induction and Training

All staff will undertake the Club's mandatory safeguarding induction and Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) training as part of their induction process.

All staff will be required to complete The Premier League's online safeguarding training module plus government Prevent and ACT training as part of their induction process. Staff will be required to refresh this training every second season. In addition, staff will also receive training appropriate to their role in accordance with the Club's Training Matrix.

Those staff who hold a specific role in safeguarding will also need to undertake Statutory and Mandatory Safeguarding Training Level 3 course which will need to be refreshed every three years. e.g. members of the Safeguarding Team and DSOs.

Details of those having achieved required mandatory and role specific training will be retained by the Head of HR and Learning and Development Officer. All recruiting leads shall be required to complete the NSPCC's Safer Recruitment for those in non-education online training,

It is important that all members of staff discuss the basics of standard good practice in safeguarding in their regular Professional Development Review (PDR) meeting – as it impacts their role. In addition, due to the demands placed on the Designated Safeguarding Officer role a robust framework for one-to-one supervision, which provides a safe opportunity to promote critical analysis, professional development, and emotional resilience throughout the year.

# 12

## Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS)

Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) is a secure cloud base software system used by the Club to report, record and monitor safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral issues, as well as enabling the Club to identify trends and patterns of harm and abuse, allowing early intervention to support all our risk groups.

CPOMS is used extensively throughout the Club, and all full-time and part-time staff have access to the system allowing them to raise and share concerns including poor practice and confidential reporting directly with the Safeguarding Team and senior leaders.

All part-time and full-time staff are provided with induction training and a tailor-made account which features a two-factor login feature.

Staff can access the secure system via <https://wfctrust.cpoms.net/>

# 13

## Duty of Care

The Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of everyone who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment.

All staff and partners are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources, and protect children from discrimination and avoidable harm. To always ensure best practice staff and partners must be fully aware of this Children Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and their responsibilities.

All staff and partners have a duty of care to keep children safe; this can be exercised through the development of respectful, caring, and professional relationships between adults and children.

Staff and partners must demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement whilst working with children. Any person responsible for a child, whether solely or jointly, is in a relationship of trust which requires behaviour to be in accordance with this policy. Examples of positions of trust include (but are not limited to):

- Head of Department.
- Coach.
- Learning mentor/tutor.
- Physiotherapist.
- Driver.
- Facilitator.
- Staff engaged in matchday activities involving children, including supervising mascots, ball collectors and photographers.

# 14

## Protecting Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities are at an increased risk of abuse and the greater the disability the greater the risk.

There are several factors that contribute to this, and these include:

- Lack of friends and peer group to support and protect.
- Intimate or physical and or invasive medical care required. This can make it difficult for the child to know what an acceptable and unacceptable 'touch' is.
- Lack of speech or limited communication makes it harder to report abuse.
- Multiple parent or person responsible – making it harder to identify who may be abusing.
- History of being told what to do and not given choices.
- Being dependent on the abuser for a service or basic need.
- Having medical conditions that are used to explain injuries.

Children 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; 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 with disabilities are fully protected but the safest environments are those that assist children to protect themselves by helping them to speak out. Everyone must 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 with disabilities are also safer for all children.



# 15

## Creating a Safe Environment

A safe environment is one where:

- Training in safeguarding and child protection awareness takes place.
- Policies and procedures are known by all and followed.
- There is support for those who report suspicions or concerns.
- In addition, safe environments ensure that those working with children have established effective methods of communication with them, and this may require additional training and workforce development.
- Ensure that the child'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.
- Ensure a mobile phone is available and switched on.
- Discuss with parents or the person responsible for any physical care that is required and how this can best be done with respect and dignity. This will usually mean same gender parent or person responsible, and consistent parents 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 the person responsible. This is best done by consulting with parents and the child concerned.
- Give the child 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 support children.
- Involve children and their families wherever possible.
- This helps give all children a voice and may act to deter abusers.

# 16

## Third Party Working and Facility Hire

Registered companies, contractors and organisations asked to provide services in an area of the Club premises or scope of work that brings its employees into contact with children and/or adults at risk will be subject to the expectations outlined in the Club's Procurement and Contractors Safeguarding Agreement.

Registered companies, contractors and organisations hiring Club facilities e.g. Vicarage Road Stadium, Training Ground, Meriden Community Centre and Cedars Youth and Community Centre or are employed to provide activities on behalf of the Club which are regulated through the provision of teaching, training, instruction, care for or supervision of children must provide the Club details of:

- Organisations safeguarding policy.
- Name of person responsible for the organisation's safeguarding provisions.
- Evidence of Disclosure and Barring Service checks completed for all staff, partners, and hirers.
- Evidence of all staff, partners and hirers have undertaken some form of safeguarding children training.
- The Club will ensure that all staff and partners working with children are subject to a satisfactory Enhance DBS check and sign a self-declaration before commencing duties.
- Delivery of regulated curriculum activity, the Club will work with and adhere to the school's, college or education providers safeguarding policy and procedure as directed. If the school, college, or education establishment is unable to provide a 'fit for purpose' safeguarding policy and procedure, the Club's own policy will be used and supersede that of the school, college, or education establishment.
- The hiring of facilities outside of the school day e.g. after school provision, to provide activities which are regulated through the provision of teaching, training, instruction, care for or supervision of children the Club will adhere to their own policy and notify school, college or education establishment of any incidents, concerns or allegations made.

# 17

## Late Collection of a Child

It is the parent or person responsible responsibility to ensure that their child is dropped off and collected by the responsible person unless permission has been given though written consent for the child to travel home unsupervised.

- Unless written permission has been given for the child to walk home alone or to be picked up by another individual, staff should not discharge the child from their responsibility.
- Whether a child has participated in an activity or is arriving back from a trip or tour, when collected, parent or person responsible must use the agreed designated collection point.
- Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they have signed all children out appropriately.
- Only children who have been given prior written permission to walk home alone may do so. These individuals must still sign out on the register; and any child being collected by their parent or person responsible who does not have permission to walk home alone must be signed out by parent or person responsible before they leave.
- All parents or the person responsible are made aware that their children should be met no later than 15 minutes after an activity has finished.
- Should a child not be collected within 15 minutes, staff have emergency contact numbers and should communicate with their line manager to seek alternative numbers if necessary.
- For those staff working within a school environment an emergency contact number for the site manager or designated person should be made available.
- In the event that a child is not collected on time, a minimum of two staff and/or responsible adult will wait at the venue until the parent/person responsible arrives. A child should not be left alone with a member of staff unless it is unavoidable and in this instance a line manager or Head of Department should be notified immediately.

# 18

## Good Practice

All staff and partners working with children should adhere to the following principles and action (list is not exhaustive):

- Have access to and be familiar with the Club's safeguarding policies and procedures and relevant working documents.
- Know the Head of Safeguarding and Safeguarding Team and how to contact them.
- Put welfare of children first and act in their best interests
- Ensure the safety of the individuals/group in their care.
- Ensure any concerns or allegations relating to child or young person welfare is recorded via the Club's CPOMS reporting system outlined in this policy.
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information.
- Help maintain an ethos whereby colleagues, children, and parent/person responsible feel able to raise concerns comfortably and safely, safe in the knowledge that effective action will be taken as appropriate.
- Adhere to Club's codes of conduct and ethics.
- Encourage and demonstrate consistently high standards of behaviour.
- Where any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child or young person.
- Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child's consent has been given.
- Request written parental consent if Club officials are required to transport children.
- Gain written parental or person responsible consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g., overnight stays.
- First aider is in attendance.
- Ensure that at away events, staff and partners should not enter a child's room or invite children to their rooms.
- Staff and partners should be a good role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Secure written parental consent for the Club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if needed.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, and details of any treatment given using and submitted to CPOMS.
- Adhere to the Club's Lone Working Policy, Lone Worker Risk Assessment, Late Collection and Missing Person Procedure.
- If groups must be supervised in changing rooms always ensure coaches etc. work in pairs.

# 19

## Poor Practice & Abuse

This takes place whenever staff fail to fulfil the highest standards of care and support in their working practice. Poor practice which can continue can cause harm and can become abuse. Poor practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action.

Please see the Club's Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Procedure, Whistle Blowing Procedure and Harassment and Bullying Policy. An individual may not be aware that poor practice or abuse is taking place, as they may deem the behaviour 'acceptable.' The following are regarded as poor practice and may be considered as high-risk offending factors and therefore should be avoided:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Being alone in changing rooms, toilet facilities or showers used by children.
- Taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Sharing a room with a child
- Engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves.
- Engage, follow, or communicate with a child via social media on a personal basis – please refer to Club's Social Media Policy.
- Communicate with a child using electronic communication unless this is on a business level through approved means.
- If in doubt... Do not do it
- Remember, always challenging poor practice such as racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, foul, aggressive or provocative language or any controlling behaviour that upsets children is vital.
- Never ignore bullying or verbal abuse by supporters, parents, person responsible, coaches or children. Listen to and support the person being targeted. Explain to the bully that poor behaviour is unacceptable. Refer to the Club's Harassment and Bullying Policy where appropriate.

## 20

## Signs, Indicators and Forms of Poor Practice and Abuse

“Child abuse” is a term used to describe what happens when a person, or a group of people, harms a child – a person under the age of 18. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child; somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. There are different types of abuse.

- **Physical** – Physical abuse indicators can include an explanation which is inconsistent with an injury, several different explanations provided for an injury, unexplained delay in seeking treatment or reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.
- **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.
- **Sexual** – (including internet grooming and sexual exploitation) Sexual abuse is when adults, of either sex, or other children, use children to meet their own sexual needs. It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **Emotional** – Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise. It is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

Full details of signs and indicators of abuse can be found within the appendices to this policy. You may also become aware that a child is potentially becoming radicalised. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or concerned about an adult’s behaviour towards a child you must act.

Do not assume that someone else will help the child, safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility. It is important that you report your concerns to one of the following:

- Head of Safeguarding
- Safeguarding and Welfare Manager
- Safeguarding Manager (Trust)
- Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer
- Watford Women FC Safeguarding Officer
- Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Head of Department

**TAKING NO ACTION IS NOT AN OPTION.**

# 21 What to do if you Receive a Safeguarding Disclosure

It is not the responsibility of anyone within the Club to decide whether or not abuse has taken place.

All staff and partners have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children, including taking appropriate steps (including those set out in this procedure) to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice are taken seriously and reported immediately and appropriately.

The Club will assure all staff and partners that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague or another is, or may be, abusing a child.

Children who may be vulnerable are likely to disclose abuse, or radicalisation to those they trust and how one responds to a disclosure is crucial.

Deal with the disclosure as it happens and ensure that the child's immediate needs are met and that they feel supported. When a disclosure is made, it is most important to understand that you must not investigate the disclosure yourself. The disclosure must always be taken seriously and dealt with according to the guidance in this Policy, even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain.

You are not expected to act as a social worker, counsellor, judge, jury, or avenge the abuser; you are expected to act in the best interest of the child.

Please refer to Appendix 2. 'What to Do if You Receive a Safeguarding Disclosure from a Child or Young Person.'

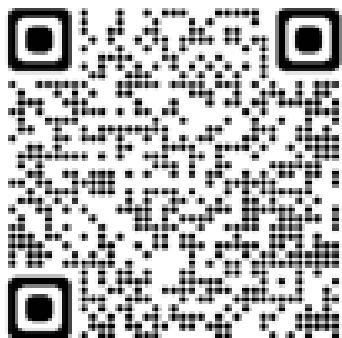
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# 22 Reporting a Concern

If you are concerned about an individual, report the concern to Head of Safeguarding (HOS) or a member of the Safeguarding Team via the Club's CPOMS system <https://wfctrust.cpoms.net/> or by using the secure digital form available via either the Club's or Trust websites under the 'Safeguarding' section or simply scan the QR code below

[www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding](http://www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding)

[www.watfordfccsetrust.com/about-us/safeguarding/reporting/](http://www.watfordfccsetrust.com/about-us/safeguarding/reporting/)



# 23

## Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff and Partners

The Club will always take concerns and allegations about staff and partners seriously and will respond in a way that places the protection and needs of children first. The procedure will always be followed in respect of all cases where it is alleged that staff or partner has:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child. Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved in a way that indicates individual is unsuitable to work with children. This can include behaviour in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns.
- The Club will always inform the police when information is received that indicates that the criminal law has been, or may have been, broken. Additionally, the Club will inform other Statutory and Regulatory Authorities/Agencies when it is required to do so or when the circumstances regarding the allegations are such that the Authorities/Agencies should be so notified.
- The Club will work with openness and transparency with all Authorities/Agencies.
- The Head of Safeguarding will have full oversight of any allegations against staff or partners who work with children. The Head of HR will also be informed at each stage of any allegation and or concern. The Head of Safeguarding will hold management responsibility and the Head of HR will hold responsibility for advising on all aspects of the HR processes.
- If the concern involves the Head of Safeguarding, then the allegation should be raised directly with either the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager or Safeguarding Manager (Trust) who will in turn refer to Head of HR.
- There will be circumstances when the policy and procedures may be used concurrently with other procedures such as Disciplinary, Whistleblowing and Complaints procedures. In such circumstances, the safeguarding process takes precedence, and other processes may need to be suspended whilst safeguarding processes are completed.
- In circumstances where a whistleblowing event or other complaint is made of which the where safeguarding allegations or concern against staff of partners is only minor element nevertheless, the safeguarding concerns must be addressed using this policy and procedure and may require other processes to be delayed.
- The Club recognises that children, and some staff and partners may have disabilities that require reasonable adjustments to be made to this procedure in accordance with The Equality Act 2010. In such cases, the Head of Safeguarding will make these adjustments in consultation and agreement with the Head of HR.



# 24

## PREVENT – Radicalisation & Extremism

The following definitions are taken from the HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011.

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate on terrorist activity. During the process of 'radicalisation' it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of the armed forces. Please note that being drawn into terrorism includes not only violent extremism but also non-violent extremism. Extremism can take several forms, including Islamist extremism, far right and animal rights extremism for example.

The Prevent Duty is part of the UK Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), based on the Counter Terrorism and Security Act of 2015. It requires public bodies, including local authorities, the police, prisons, providers of probation services, schools, colleges, and universities to act to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, ensuring awareness of risks of terrorism.

The Prevent duty applies to those bodies, which include, for example, children's homes and independent fostering agencies and bodies exercising local authority functions whether under voluntary delegation arrangements or via the use of statutory intervention powers. These bodies should ensure they are part of their local authorities' safeguarding arrangements, and that staff are aware of and know how to contribute to Prevent-related activity in their area where appropriate.

The Club recognises that some children are more vulnerable to radicalisation, including those who may be isolated/ marginalised in society (through mental health or disability) and may have no other support. Children who attend activities are not immune from this risk and therefore the Club ensures that all staff who work with children are equipped to identify potential indicators of abuse regarding radicalisation and extremism.

There are often no obvious signs of extremism. There are frequent requests for a list of signs, but although changes in behaviour and dress are often cited as signs of extremism these will often be signs of perfectly normal behaviour, particularly among young people in their late teens and early 20s. There are some physical signs that would indicate concerns relating to extremism such as the tattoos that far right organisation supporters will sometimes display.

You are not expected to be aware of the significance of tattoos but if you are worried about someone with what you think may be far right tattoos you should pass the details on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head of Safeguarding. They can contact local Prevent coordinators for help if needed. You should follow the notice, check, share approach used by provider organisations.

- **Notice:** you should be aware of any behaviour which leads to any safeguarding concerns including Prevent duty-related ones.
- **Check:** you should check what their concerns.
- **Share:** you should refer any concerns to the Head of Safeguarding or member of the Safeguarding Team.

Any concerns you have will usually be like other safeguarding concerns. These may include changes in behaviour; you should use your judgement to decide when these are worrying and when they are within the normal range. There are concerns which should always be passed on such as:

- Evidence of sharing of extremist websites.
- Evidence of homophobic.
- Religion based or racist bullying.

It is your own judgement which will lead you to decide to refer a safeguarding concern whether that relates to extremist exploitation or any other kind of exploitation. It should be noted that individuals taking their religion more seriously, choosing to grow a beard or wearing a headscarf for religious reasons are NOT signs of extremism.

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## 25 Non-Recent Concerns of Abuse

Referral of concern about historical and non-recent abuse should be continued to be made directly to the Head of Safeguarding or alternatively, directly to the FA's Safeguarding Team via [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com). A helpline is available 24 hours a day on 0800 023 2642.

## 26 Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations.

Child-on-child abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to): serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence and abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and/or prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence.

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of child-on-child abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, child-on-child grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

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## 27 County Lines

It often involves the exploitation of children, as gangs use minors and those with mental health or addiction problems to transport drugs, money, or weapons. These gangs establish a base in the location they are targeting, often taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing.' Cuckooing is the term used when gangs establish a base in the location they are targeting, often taking over the homes of adult at risk adults by force or coercion. Possible signs and indicators may include:

- Lone child from outside of the area.
- Individuals with multiple mobile phones or tablets or 'SIM' cards.
- Children with more money, expensive clothing, or accessories than they can account for.
- An increase in anti-social behaviour around the property.
- Something a child has told you.

## 28

## Photography, Images and Filming

The Club takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by The FA and Premier League. All images are taken by Club officials or approved third parties who have been briefed by the Club's Head of Safeguarding or by a member of the Communications and Media Department responsible for the activity being photographed or filmed.

- Before taking images of children, parental consent must be sought in writing, prior to the event or activity. For those young people aged 16 years or older, written consent must also be obtained by the named individual in addition/alongside parental consent.
- The parents or person responsible are responsible for informing the Club of any change of circumstances within the season which may affect consent.
- The parent or person responsible will be informed of how the image will be used. The Club will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed.
- All the children that are featured in Club publications will be appropriately dressed.
- If possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific child.
- Where appropriate, images will represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event.
- Club photographers will, where applicable, undertake an enhanced DBS check and complete the Premier League's Safeguarding Online Training module; 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 Premier League. Club identification will be worn at all times.
- Children who are the subject of a court order will not have their images published in any Club document.
- No images of children featured in Club publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their home address.
- Recordings of children for the purposes of legitimate reasons i.e., recorded event, coaching aids and will only be filmed by Club officials and stored safely and securely on the Club's premises.
- Mobile phone cameras are not to be used in changing rooms.
- Any instances of inappropriate images in football should be reported to the Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- The Club does not put children's profiles with images and personal information on its website or social media.
- Images must not be taken, stored, or shared on personal devices, i.e. mobile phones, tablets etc.

# 29

## E-Safety

E-safety guidance is designed to protect children who are supported by the Club and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones/devices, games consoles and the Internet) as part of their involvement with the Club. The separate guidance is designed to provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to e-safety.

This can be found on the Club's intranet under HR forms. To ensure as a Club that we work in line with our values, and within the law, in terms of how we use information technology and behave online.

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# 30

## Social Networking Guidance

The Club recognises that social media and social networking services provide opportunities to effectively engage with a wide range of audiences in a positive manner. However, the Club is also aware of the potential safeguarding risks, especially to children and young people when using these forms of media.

- Do not add or invite children you have responsibility for to be 'friends' within social networking sites such as 'X' (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat etc.
- Do not follow or accept children you have responsibility for in football on social media if they try and "add" you on sites such as 'X' (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat etc.
- Avoid 'one to one' electronic communication. Where you do communicate electronically ensure you send this communication to the parent or person responsible as well as the child.
- Social networking is dealt with in full in the Club's Social Media Policy.

# 31

## Communicating with Children

The following guidance is provided to support and manage safeguarding responsibilities effectively. It aims to ensure children and adults in a relationship of trust are not subjected to improper communications or improper allegations.

- Written informed consent needs to be obtained from parents or the person responsible before communicating with children.
- Signed consent from parents or person responsible needs to be obtained before using any methods of communication with children.
- When communicating with children and their parents or the person responsible, this should always be via an approved platform i.e. Performance Management Application (PMA), Heja etc. Communication via platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat BeReal etc. would be deemed poor and unsafe practice.
- Staff or partners are not permitted to communicate with children or parents or the person responsible for the usage of their own personal devices or accounts, this includes sharing of any personal contact information.
- Do not text or email for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes, or other items of a personal nature.
- Only use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent or person responsible or the designated member of the club to all communications with children. Never share any personal information with others i.e. contact information.
- Make sure texts or emails are only in relation to specific club related activities. e.g. informing about changes in travel arrangements, timings, or signposting.
- Report to a member of the Safeguarding Team any instance(s) where you have received any inappropriate communications from a child, parent, or person responsible. Either the Head of Safeguarding or member of the Safeguarding Team will then agree what action the Club will take, notifying parents or person responsible and any other appropriate individuals or agencies.
- Do not respond to direct messages from a child. Never engage in one-to-one messaging, always include parent or person responsible and/or appropriate member of staff.
- Do not respond to emails from a child other than those directly related to Club matters without including parent or person responsible or appropriate person within the Club.
- Advise Head of Safeguarding or member of the Safeguarding Team if you receive any non-club related communications and do not delete any messages, images, or data.

## 32

## Lone Working and One-to-One Situations

A lone worker, for the purpose of this Policy, is defined as a member of staff or a partner who is engaged in activities which place them in a situation without direct contact with other staff or partner staff or without direct supervision. It is the staff or partner staff's responsibility to:

- Work in an open and transparent way and avoid conduct which could raise concerns. Under no circumstances should staff and agency staff visit children and young people in their homes outside agreed work arrangements. Nor should they invite children and adults at risk to their own home or to that of a family member, colleague, or friend.
  - Ensure that contact by whatever means and meetings with children and young people outside agreed working arrangements never take place without the knowledge and agreement of the Club.
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## 33

## Supervision Ratios

- Staff and partners are expected to provide appropriate supervision of the children and young people in their care at all times. The level of supervision required will vary between activities. Ratios for each activity should be determined by taking the following into consideration:
  - There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. The NSPCC have put together some best practice guidance to help other organisations work out how many adults are needed to supervise children safely.
  - The NSPCC recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people.
  - Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum.
  - NSPCC recommend having at least two adults present, even with smaller groups.
  - If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

## Children with Additional Needs or Disabilities

- If you are working with children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) you may need more supervision than the minimum ratios above.
- For each activity you should undertake a risk assessment to help you decide on supervision ratios. The assessment should consider children and young people's behaviour, ability, and mobility. As far as possible, include input from children and their parents and person responsible in risk assessments to ensure children's needs are met.

## **Toilet Ratios**

- If the group has both boys and girls there should be at least one male and one female responsible adult supervising visits to the toilet.
- Adults who have not previously volunteered and have not had the necessary vetting checks shouldn't be left alone with children or take them to the toilet unaccompanied.
- In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervises the remaining children and keep a head count.

## **First Aid Ratios**

- NSPCC recommend that at least one adult is trained in first aid.
- If you are running one-off events, you will need to conduct a first aid and medical risk assessment. Many organisations provide medical services but ensure the organisation you select is competent, trained in first aid and able to cope with the demands of your event.

## **Travelling Ratios**

- When travelling with children the recommended adult to child ratio can vary depending on:
  - The size of the group
  - The age of the children, their behaviours, and needs.
  - The size of the vehicle in which you are travelling.
- If you are travelling in a vehicle, it is recommended that there is one adult driving and one adult supervising the children. Larger groups and vehicles will require more adults to ensure adequate supervision. Think about having one adult driving and at least one adult supervising the children, depending on the size of the group.



# 34

## Confidentiality

Staff and partners may have access to confidential information about children in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances, staff and partners may be given extremely sensitive or confidential information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a child or their family for their own or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass children.

Confidential information about a child should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which staff or partner may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

If a member of staff or partner is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from the Club's Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Any media or legal enquiries should in the first instance be referred to the Club's Head of Communication and Media Relations. The storing and processing of personal information about children is governed by the Data Protection Act, 2018. For further information on the Club's (and your) obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, please see the Club's data handling policies and procedures, available on the Club's intranet. This means that employees, workers, consultants, agency staff and volunteers:

- Are expected to treat information they receive about children or young people in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Should seek advice from the Head of Safeguarding if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them.

# 35 Matchday Attendance

The Club reserves the right to refuse admission to the ground of any child under the age of 14 years unless accompanied by a responsible adult – 18yrs or older.

Supporters aged under 14yrs must be accompanied by a responsible adult when attending Watford FC matches, both home and away. This also applies to supporters aged between 14 and 17 years of age wishing to attend games without being accompanied by a responsible adult unless a consent form has been completed in advance of purchasing tickets.

If a situation occurs where a child enters the stadium unaccompanied by a responsible adult, the Club will:

- Contact a responsible adult to either attend the game with the child or.
- The child will leave the stadium unless a consent form is produced.
- The Club's responsibility towards that child begins from the moment the child enters the stadium and ends when the child leaves the stadium.
- If an accompanied child who is under 14 years of age or adult at risk is left unattended at a game or is found in the stadium alone, the welfare and safety of that young person must be protected, and the Matchday Safeguarding Officer needs to be alerted of the situation and the correct procedures carried out. The Matchday Safeguarding Lead is the Club's Stadium Operations Manager.

Further details outlining the Club's Ticketing term and conditions for home, away and season ticket purchases along with our consent form can be found at [www.tickets.watfordfc.com](http://www.tickets.watfordfc.com)

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1.**

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

### **Appendix 2.**

What to Do if You Receive a Safeguarding Disclosure

### **Appendix 3.**

Dealing With Concerns in a Football Setting

### **Appendix 4.**

DBS Assessment Procedure

### **Appendix 5.**

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Partners

### **Appendix 6.**

Internet Grooming

### **Appendix 7.**

Safeguarding Structure

### **Appendix 8.**

Key Safeguarding Contacts

### **Appendix 9.**

Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

### **Appendix 10.**

Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

### **Appendix 11.**

Club Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

### **Appendix 12.**

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

### **Appendix 13.**

Trust Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

### **Appendix 14.**

Other Applicable Policies and Legislation

### **Appendix 15.**

Incident Reporting Form

## Appendix 1. Signs and Indicators of Abuse

One or more of the following might trigger concerns about a child:

- A sudden change in behaviour.
- Something a child has said.
- Physical signs of abuse.

The signs may vary according to the age and understanding of the child.

Type of Abuse	Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
Physical Abuse	Physical signs such as unexplained and unusual bruising, finger and strap marks, injuries, cigarette burns, bite marks, fractures, scalds, missing teeth.	Behavioural signs such as fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, bullying or abuse of others.
Neglect	Physical signs such as constant hunger, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothes, weight change, untreated conditions, continual minor infections, failure to supply hearing aids, glasses and or inhalers.	Behavioural signs such as always being tired, early, or late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, stealing, no money, parent, or person responsible not attending or supportive.
Sexual Abuse	Physical signs such as genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections or STDs, thrush, anal pain on passing motions.	Behavioural signs such as apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, masturbation, bed-wetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money, or gifts, acting out with toys, self-harm.
Bullying	Physical signs such as weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and headaches, bed-wetting, disturbed sleep, hair pulled out.	Behavioural signs such as difficulty making friends, anxiety over school, truancy, withdrawn, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money, and possessions reported as lost, stealing from within the family, distress and anxiety on reading texts or e-mails.
Emotional Abuse	Physical signs such as weight change, lack of growth or development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm, clothing inappropriate for child's age, gender, or culture etc.	Behavioural signs such as unable to play, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech and language difficulties, few friends.
Radicalisation	Physical signs such as they are observed downloading, viewing, or sharing extremist propaganda from the web. They may change their appearance, their health may suffer (including mental health), and they may become isolated from family, friends, peers, or social groups.	They become withdrawn and focused on one ideology. They express a desire/ intent to take part in or support extremist activity. Their views become increasingly extreme regarding one another. section of society or government policy. An individual becomes increasingly intolerant of more moderate views.

## Appendix 2. What to Do if You Receive a Safeguarding Disclosure From a Child

### Stage 1

Deal with the disclosure as it happens and ensure that the child's immediate needs are met and that they feel supported. When a disclosure is made, it is most important to understand that you must not investigate the disclosure yourself. The disclosure must always be taken seriously and dealt with according to the guidance in this Policy, even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain. **You are not expected to act as a social worker, counsellor, judge, jury, or avenge the abuser; you are expected to act in the best interest of the child who may be at risk.**

#### YOU MUST:

- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational.
- Allow the child to lead the discussion and to talk freely.
- Listen to what the child is saying. Try not to interrupt them or ask lots of questions. Being asked a lot of questions can feel like being interrogated.
- Let them tell you at their own pace. Do not worry if the child stops talking for a while – silences are OK. You do not have to rush to fill in the gaps.
- Accept what the child says without challenge.
- Listen to the child without investigating.
- Allow the child to talk but protect them from sharing the information with too many other people.
- Provide reassurance that you are taking them seriously.
- Let the child know that you understand how hard it is for them to tell.
- Let them know they are doing the right thing by speaking out.
- It is ok to let them know if you are unable to answer all their questions.
- Avoid using questions such as “Is there anything else you would like to tell me.”
- Avoid asking leading questions like “Did the coach hit you?”
- Never ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate.
- If physical abuse has taken place, you may observe visible bruises and marks but do not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to see them.
- Tell the child who you will be contacting e.g., the Head of Safeguarding statutory agencies etc., and that you will support them throughout.
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure.
- **Use the ‘TED’ method – Tell me. Explain to me. Describe to me.**
- Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than those who need to know. Those who need to know are those who have a role to play in protecting children.

**REMEMBER!**

When a child discloses, they may feel:

- **Guilt:** They may blame themselves for the abuse and often feel guilt for telling.
- **Ashamed:** They may feel mortified about the abuse itself.
- **Confused:** They may be muddled about their feelings for the alleged abuser.
- **Scared:** They may fear the repercussions. They may fear the alleged abuser.

Be careful about touching (e.g., hugging or cuddling) the child if they have not initiated the contact. They may be upset by physical contact.

**Stage 2**

As soon as possible, once the immediate comfort and safety of the child is secured, you must inform the Head of Safeguarding or member of the Safeguarding Team of the disclosure. You may make a referral yourself directly to a statutory agency if you are concerned about the child's immediate safety and/or are having difficulty contacting either the Head of Safeguarding or if the Head of Safeguarding is the alleged abuser the contact a member of the Safeguarding Team. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

**Stage 3**

You should report the concern or incident as so as possible after the disclosure has been made. What is clearly etched at the time can become blurred after a few hours. It is vital that report your concern via the Club's CPOMS system or by scanning the QR code below and completing an online referral. Make sure the report is clear and concise; additional information can be added later.

- When? Date and time of the disclosure or incident.
- Where? Location of where the disclosure was made, or incident took place.
- What? A brief description of what happened/disclosed.
- Who? Victim; alleged perpetrator; witnesses; other members of staff
- Actions taken? Who has been informed – Parent; Police; Line Manager.

Wherever possible, you must record information as it was relayed to you using the language of the child rather than your own interpretation of it. It is important to report information rather than your assumption or interpretation. Please follow the guidance provided by the online reporting form –

**[www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding](http://www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding)**



## What Happens Next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. You should be informed by the Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Safeguarding Team if there is an immediate concern. Staff must report the incident within eight hours. If you do not receive this information, you should be proactive in seeking it out.

If you have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, you should inform the Head of Safeguarding and ultimately contact the relevant statutory agency.

A disclosure is not the only way that you may be made aware of a problem. Sometimes another adult or even a child may say something about a possible abusive situation.

On occasions, you may witness an incident that may cause concern or indeed you may notice things that cause concern to you. Information may be passed to a coach or lead person anonymously by a person or persons who do not want to be directly involved for whatever reason.

However, you come upon information that causes concern and may put others at risk, the action should always be the same.

### **Taking No Action Is Not an Option**

All matters will be fully investigated, and appropriate action will be taken. Action may include referral to the Police, Children's Services, English Football League, or The FA if deemed as appropriate by the Head of Safeguarding. Any referral to an external agency shall also be reported to the Senior Safeguarding Lead.

**Remember the child's welfare is of paramount importance.**

## Safeguarding Procedures

The Club takes any form of safeguarding poor practice or abuse seriously to promote a culture of best practice and accountability.

The Club encourages all staff and partners to raise concerns they may have about any safeguarding poor practice or abuse as early as possible to the relevant personnel. The Club will respond accordingly to promote a safer environment.

If you have any questions regarding this section of the Children Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, please contact the Head of Safeguarding.

## Process for Raising a Concern

How to raise a concern? You do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern. But we do ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

### Stage 1

If you have a concern of any form of safeguarding poor practice or abuse, raise it first with the Safeguarding Team via the Club's Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) or alternatively, concerns can be raised via the online reporting form using the QR code shown below.

### Stage 2

If you feel unable to raise the matter with a member of the Safeguarding Team for whatever reason, raise the matter directly with the Head of Safeguarding.

### Stage 3

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact The Head of Safeguarding at the Premier League on 020 7864 9000 – please refer to Club's Confidential Reporting Procedure.

Steps will then be taken to fully investigate the matter to decide what appropriate action should be taken. The Club is committed to protecting children and young people and will take action to uphold this commitment.





## Remember the Five 'R's'

### RECOGNISE

- Recognising abuse or harm is often not easy.
- You need to act when you suspect harm or abuse is or has taken place, not just when you are sure that harm has occurred.
- You may not have proof, but it does not mean you are jumping to conclusions, it simply means you do not have the proof that the abuse is taking place.
- As soon as you suspect any kind of abuse or harm you should raise the concern.

### RESPOND

- Responding to abuse is vital, and you have a responsibility to report any concerns you have to the Safeguarding Team – first instance nominated lead or directly with the Head of Safeguarding.
- You may need to find out the basic facts, ensure you allow the individual to speak without interruption, do not make any judgement.
- Reassure them and let them know that you are going to have to speak to somebody to ensure that they are safe.

### REFER/REPORT

- Contact your nominated safeguarding lead, member of the Safeguarding Team or Head of Safeguarding. If you cannot reach them, contact your line manager, you should also consider contacting local authorities. For example, the Police or local children services.

### RECORD

- You should also make sure you make a note of any disclosure so that this can be recorded on the Club's secure Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) or via [watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding](https://www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding) or use the QR code below:



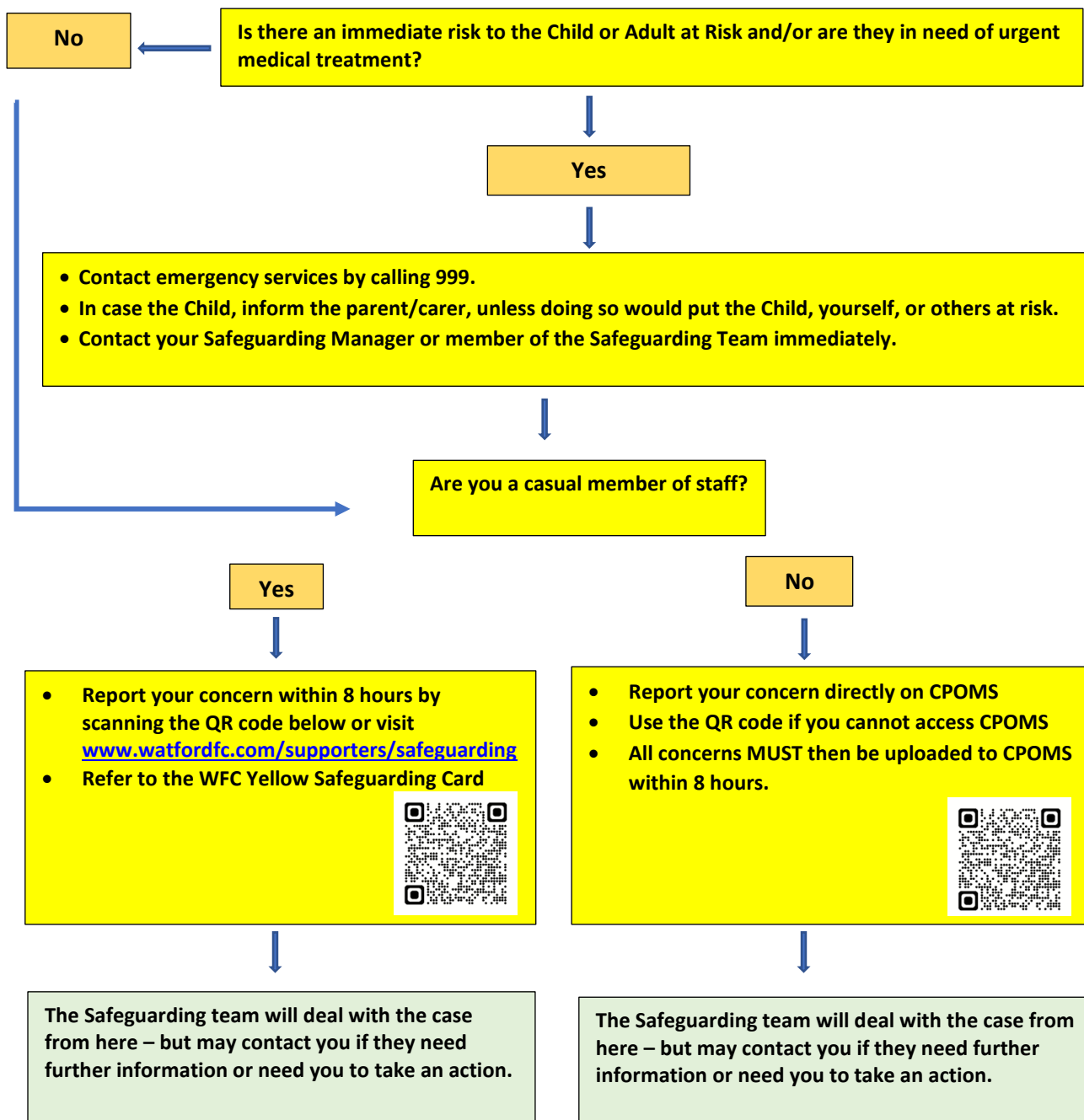
### RESPECT

- Respect the confidentiality of the discloser and do not share information with anyone other than those who need to know.
- Those who need to know have a role to play in protecting children.

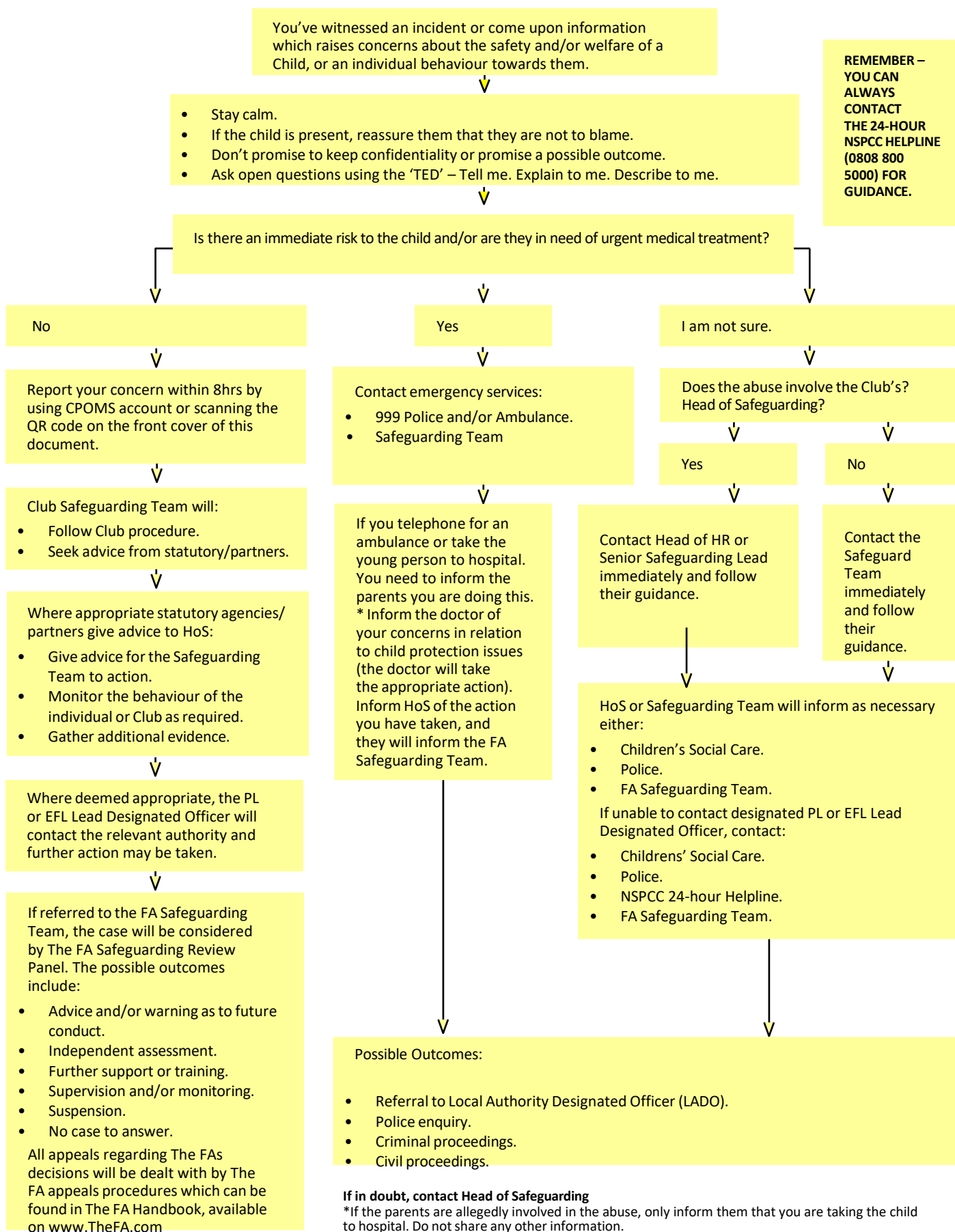
## Appendix 3. How To Report a Safeguarding Concern

You've witnessed an incident or come upon information which raises concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a Child or Adult at Risk, or an Individuals behaviour towards them.

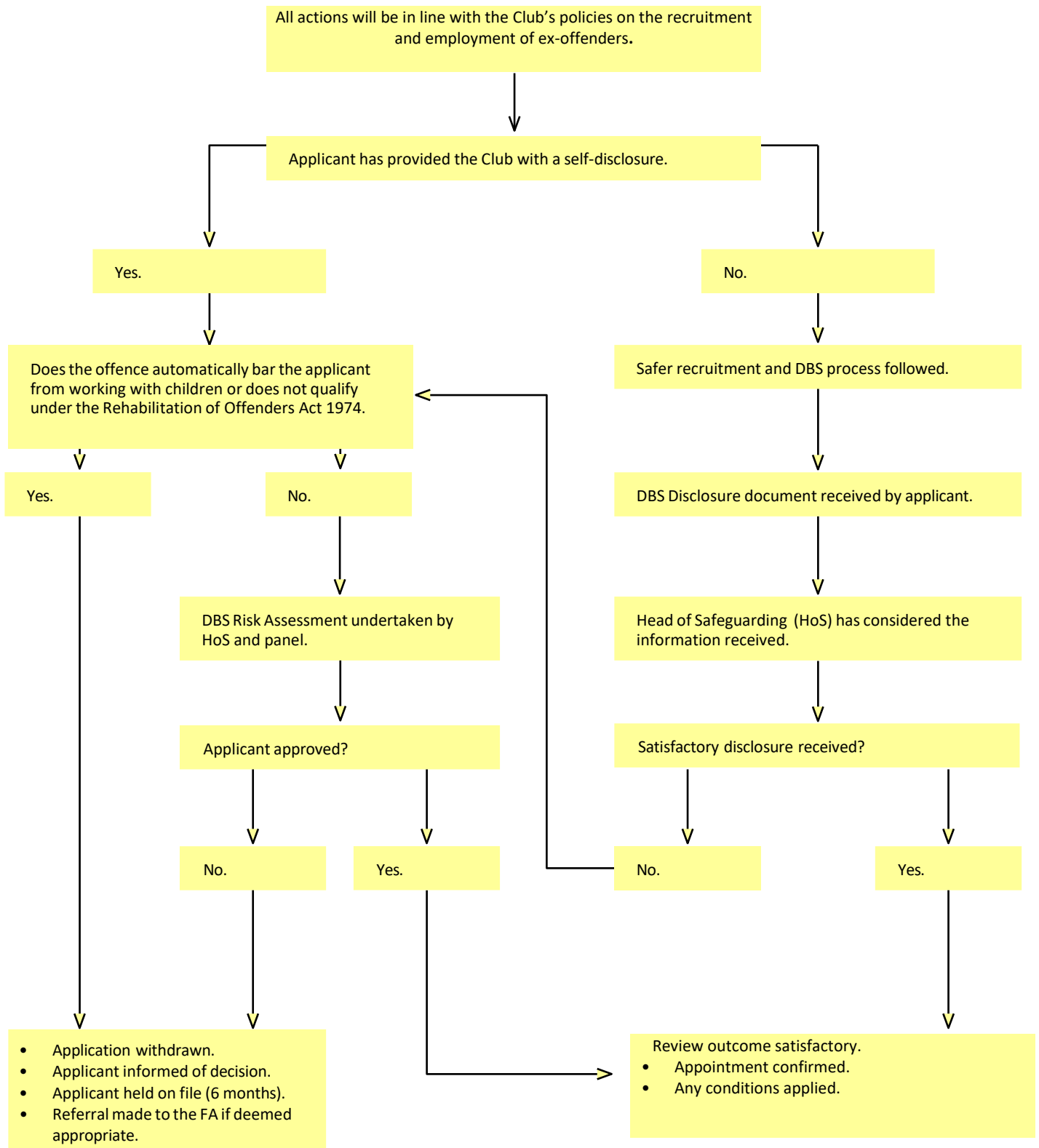
- Stay calm.
- If the individual is present, reassure them that they are not to blame,
- Don't promise to keep confidentiality or promise a possible outcome,
- Ask open questions by using TED – Tell me. Explain to me. Describe to me



## Appendix 3. Dealing With Concerns in a Football Setting



## Appendix 4. DBS Assessment Procedure



## Appendix 5. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Partners

**A Safeguarding allegation raised about the conduct or behaviour of a staff member or partner.**

Is the concern about the Head of Safeguarding?

Yes.

No.

Inform the Club's Head of HR or Senior Safeguarding Lead immediately, and the staff or partner raising the concern should complete the Incident Report form as soon as possible and within 8 hours and send it to the Head of HR and Senior Safeguarding Lead.

Inform the Head of Safeguarding immediately and staff or partner raising the concern should complete the CPOMS or online referral as soon as possible and within 8 hours.

Head of Safeguarding or Head of HR (if the allegation is a member of the Safeguarding Team) decides whether the member of staff has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence towards a child.
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

Head of Safeguarding, member of the Safeguarding Team or Head of HR will complete the referral and record to CPOMS.

The Head of Safeguarding will contact the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Police for advice and support. The Club will also inform the FA's Professional Game Safeguarding Team of the incident/concern.

The Club will decide whether to suspend the staff member or partner pending the statutory investigations, information and advice given by the LADO or Police.

Once any statutory investigations are concluded or where appropriate in parallel, the Club will undertake its investigation and decide what sanction should be taken against the member of staff or partner. If the staff member or partner is removed from their role and a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the FA's Professional Game Safeguarding Team.

## Appendix 6. Internet Grooming

The message to all children is that it is not okay for someone to expect them or their friends to do things that they do not want to. They should listen to their instinct; if it does not feel right then they should tell a trusted adult such as a parent, grandparent, carer, teacher, youth, health, or care worker.

It is important that we can identify the signs of internet grooming and sexual exploitation. This involves understanding the answers to the following questions:

- What does it feel like to be groomed?
- What might a friend see?
- What might sexual exploitation feel like?
- What is sexual exploitation?

### What does it feel like to be groomed?

- Special/loved.
- What you want
- Understood
- You have control.
- New friends
- Exciting
- You've changed.
- Grown up
- Sexualised conversations

### What might sexual exploitation feel like?

- You owe something.
- In love and no one else matters
- No going back
- Humiliated or threatened.
- Scared or trapped.
- You deserve it.
- No-one will believe you.
- Fooling yourself that it is okay.
- Pressured to get friends involved.
- Used

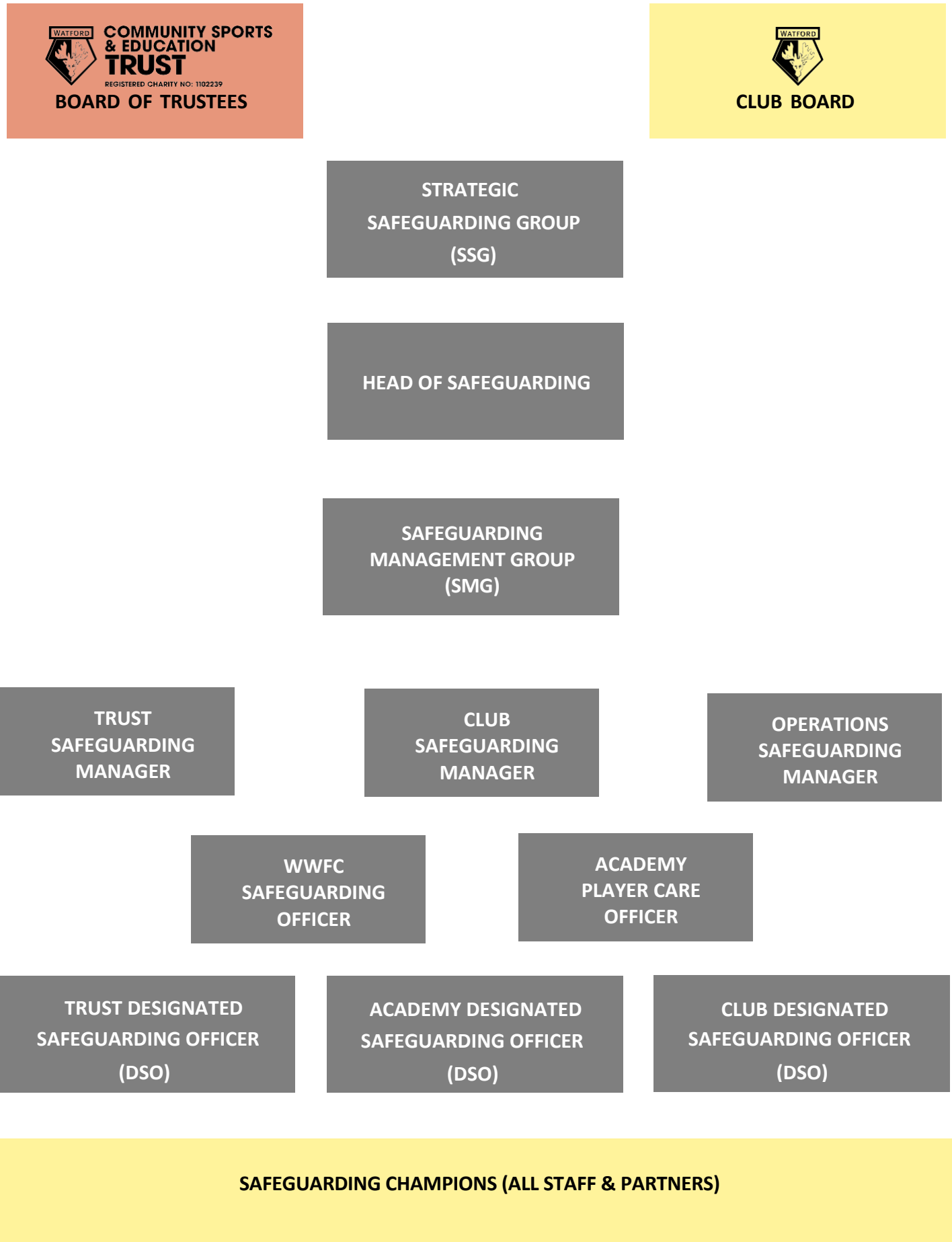
### What might a friend see?

- Gifts or money
- Increased Secrecy
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Criminal activity
- Changing appearance
- Going missing
- Self-harm
- STI's and pregnancies
- Online relationships with strangers
- Suicidal thoughts
- Injuries

### What is sexual exploitation?

- Doing sexual things, you find horrible.
- Sexual things with an older person
- Forced to have sex with strangers.
- Made to send naked pictures.
- Having sex in front of others
- Rape
- Drink or drugs addiction
- Being hurt or beaten up
- Forced not to leave when you want to

## Appendix 7. Safeguarding Structure



## Appendix 8. Key Safeguarding Contacts

### Head of Safeguarding (HOS)

01923 496256 // 07855 300439

### Safeguarding and Welfare Manager (SWM)

07876 786910

### Safeguarding Manager (Trust) (SMT)

07761 037305

### Stadium Operations Manager (SOM)

01923 496355

### Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer (APCSO)

07964 082163

### Women's Safeguarding Officer (WSO)

07718 492050

### Police

101 or 999 in an emergency

### English Football League Safeguarding Team

01772 325490 // [safeguarding@efl.com](mailto:safeguarding@efl.com)

### Premier League Safeguarding Team

0207 864 9000 // [safeguarding@premierleague.com](mailto:safeguarding@premierleague.com)

### FA's Safeguarding Team (24hrs)

0844 980 8200 // [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)

### NSPCC (24hrs)

0808 800 5000

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

Protecting against grooming and sexual exploitation

### [www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding](http://www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding)

Online reporting

### We - Watford Welcomes

Report discriminatory abuse, anti-social behaviour, and safeguarding concerns on a matchday. Text 'We' followed by details to 66777.



## Appendix 9. Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

### Safeguarding Board Leads

 **Scott Duxbury**

*Chairman and CEO*

 **Professor Stuart Timperley**

*Non-Executive Director  
Senior Safeguarding Lead*

 **David Fransen**

*Non-Executive Director*

### Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) Members

 **Gayle Clarke**

*Head of HR*

gayle.clarke@watfordfc.com

 **Richard Johnson**

*Academy Director*

richard.johnson@watfordfc.com

 **Iain Taker**

*Head of Legal*

iain.taker@watfordfc.com

 **Rob Clarke**

*Head of Safeguarding*

rob.clarke@watfordfc.com

 **Ian Pope**

*Operations and Facilities Director*

ian.pope@watfordfc.com

 **Professor Stuart Timperley**

*Non-Executive Director and  
Senior Safeguarding Lead*

 **Rob Smith**

*Community Director*

*(Watford FC CSE Trust)*

rob.smith@watfordfc.com

 **Rosemary Inskipp**

*Safeguarding Trustee*

*(Watford FC CSE Trust)*

 **Steve Alexander**

*Head of Business Services*

*(Watford FC CSE Trust)*

steve.alexander@watfordfc.com

## Appendix 10. Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

### Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) Members

 Rob Clarke

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***Head of Safeguarding***

[rob.clarke@watfordfc.com](mailto:rob.clarke@watfordfc.com)

 Katie Wright

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***Safeguarding and Welfare Manager***

[katie.wright@watfordfc.com](mailto:katie.wright@watfordfc.com)

 TBC

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***Safeguarding Manager (Trust)***

[TBC@watfordfc.com](mailto:TBC@watfordfc.com)

 Andy Jenkins

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***Operations Manager***

[andy.jenkins@watfordfc.com](mailto:andy.jenkins@watfordfc.com)

 Nathan Jopp

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***Academy Player Care & Safeguarding Officer***

[nathan.jopp@watfordfc.com](mailto:nathan.jopp@watfordfc.com)

 Rebecca McDermott

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***Watford Women FC Safeguarding Officer***

[rebecca.mcdermott@watfordfc.com](mailto:rebecca.mcdermott@watfordfc.com)

 Steve Alexander

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***Head of Business Services (Trust)***

[steve.alexander@watfordfc.com](mailto:steve.alexander@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 11. Club's Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

### Safeguarding Lead

 Rob Clarke

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**Head of Safeguarding**

[rob.clarke@watfordfc.com](mailto:rob.clarke@watfordfc.com)

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 Alex Ashby

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**Hospitality & Events Manager**

[alex.ashby@watfordfc.com](mailto:alex.ashby@watfordfc.com)

 Anne-Marie Burn

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**Learning & Development Officer**

[annemarie.burn@watfordfc.com](mailto:annemarie.burn@watfordfc.com)

 Ben Holt

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**Retail Operations Manager**

[ben.holt@watfordfc.com](mailto:ben.holt@watfordfc.com)

 Dave Newman

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**Ticket and Supporter Services Manager**

[dave.newman@watfordfc.com](mailto:dave.newman@watfordfc.com)

 Dave Messenger

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**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead**

[dave.messenger@watfordfc.com](mailto:dave.messenger@watfordfc.com)

 Kevin Stump

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**Safety Officer**

[kevin.stump@watfordfc.com](mailto:kevin.stump@watfordfc.com)

 Richard Wilde

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**Operations Manager (Levy Catering)**

[richard.wilde@levy.co.uk](mailto:richard.wilde@levy.co.uk)

 Dan Palmer

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**Senior Content Editor**

[daniel.palmer@watfordfc.com](mailto:daniel.palmer@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 12. Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers

 **Katie Wright**

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***Safeguarding & Welfare Manager***

[katie.wright@watfordfc.com](mailto:katie.wright@watfordfc.com)

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 **Andrew Griffiths**

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***Academy Head of Education***

[andrew.griffiths@watfordfc.com](mailto:andrew.griffiths@watfordfc.com)

 **Jimmy Gilligan**

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***Head of Academy Technical Development***

[jimmy.gilligan@watfordfc.com](mailto:jimmy.gilligan@watfordfc.com)

 **Peter Sharp**

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***Academy Head of Performance***

[peter.sharp@watfordfc.com](mailto:peter.sharp@watfordfc.com)

 **Michael Cook**

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***Academy Operations***

[michael.cook@watfordfc.com](mailto:michael.cook@watfordfc.com)

 **Nathan Jopp**

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***Academy Player Care & Safeguarding Officer***

[nathan.jopp@watfordfc.com](mailto:nathan.jopp@watfordfc.com)

 **Rebecca McDermott**

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***Watford Women FC Safeguarding Officer***

[rebecca.mcdermott@watfordfc.com](mailto:rebecca.mcdermott@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 13. Trust Designated Safeguarding Officers

### Safeguarding Lead

 Rob Clarke & Katie Wright (Interim)

*Safeguarding Manager (Trust)*

[rob.clarke@watfordfc.com](mailto:rob.clarke@watfordfc.com) // [katie.wright@watfordfc.com](mailto:katie.wright@watfordfc.com)

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 Caoimhe Walker

*Youth Health and Wellbeing Officer*

[caoimhe.walker@watfordfc.com](mailto:caoimhe.walker@watfordfc.com)

 Michael Williams

*Premier League Kicks Manager*

[michael.williams@watfordfc.com](mailto:michael.williams@watfordfc.com)

 Simon Butler

*Health & Wellbeing Project Manager (Children)*

[simon.butler@watfordfc.com](mailto:simon.butler@watfordfc.com)

 Lucy Tearle

*Community Projects Manager (Young People)*

[lucy.tearle@watfordfc.com](mailto:lucy.tearle@watfordfc.com)

 Ines Perreira

*Youth Health & Wellbeing Officer*

[ines.perreira@watfordfc.com](mailto:ines.perreira@watfordfc.com)

 Paul Palmer

*Business Support Officer*

[paul.palmer@watfordfc.com](mailto:paul.palmer@watfordfc.com)

 Nicola Burton

*Schools Sports Project Officer*

[nicola.burton@watfordfc.com](mailto:nicola.burton@watfordfc.com)

 Joe Pizans

*Cedars Community Centre Manager*

[joe.pizans@watfordfc.com](mailto:joe.pizans@watfordfc.com)

 Laura Figg

*Higher Education - Strategic Lead*

[laura.figg@watfordfc.com](mailto:laura.figg@watfordfc.com)

 Alison Goodchild

*Health & Wellbeing Project Manager (Adults)*

[alison.goodchild@watfordfc.com](mailto:alison.goodchild@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 14. Other Applicable Policies and Legislation

### Relevant Legislation/Regulations:

Please note that these lists are not exhaustive.

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

### Policies

- Bullying and Harassment Policy (Employment Policy)
- Data Handling and Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy (Employment Policy)
- Equal Opportunities Policy (Employment Policy)
- Grievance Policy (Employment Policy)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff and Partners Policy and Procedures
- Lone Worker Policy
- Missing Person Procedure
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- PREVENT Guidance

## Appendix 15. Incident Report Form



In the event of not being able to:

- Access the Club's CPOMS system or.
- Scan the QR opposite or.
- Report via [www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding](http://www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding);
- this form can be used and emailed directly to the Head of Safeguarding or another appropriate member of the Safeguarding Team.

Failure to complete this form properly could result in the Club being unable to investigate an allegation/incident.

**If you have a safeguarding concern, please complete this form.**

(All fields are mandatory to complete)

**Name of child, young person, or adult at risk:**

---

**Date of Birth:**

(Individual you are raising the concern on  
behalf of – if known)

---

**Your Name**

---

**Your Email**

---

**Your Contact Number**

---

**How are you connected to the individual?**

---

**When did the incident occur?**

---

**Time of the incident**

---

**Where did the incident occur (location)?**

---

**Please give a description of what has happened/disclosed?**

---

**Who was involved (this may include alleged perpetrator(s) and/or additional person(s) harmed)?**

---

**Who was the incident reported to (if anyone)?**

---

**What actions were taken (if any)?**

---

**Is there anything else you wish to share?**

---

**Once completed, please return this form to the Head of Safeguarding or an appropriate member of the Safeguarding Team**