



# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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

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# Contents

1. Statement	19. Poor Practice and Abuse
2. Principles	20. Signs, Indicators of Poor Practice & Abuse
3. Scope	21. Receiving a Safeguarding Disclosure
4. Safeguarding Strategy – Our Plan	22. Reporting a Concern
5. Safeguarding Governance & Leadership	23. Allegation Against Staff or Partners
6. Definitions	24. PREVENT – Radicalisation & Extremism
7. Aims and Key Principles	25. Non-Recent Concerns of Abuse
8. Child First Centered Culture	26. Child-on-Child Abuse
9. Roles and Responsibilities	27. County Lines
10. Safer Recruitment	28. Photography, Images and Filming
11. Staff Inductions & Training	29. E-Safety
12. CPOMS System	30. Social Networking Guidance
13. Duty of Care	31. Communication With Children
14. Protecting Children with Disabilities	32. Lone Working & 1-to-1 Situations
15. Creating a Safe Environment	33. Supervision Ratios
16. Third Party Working & Facility Hiring	34. Confidentiality
17. Late Collection or Missing Child	35. Matchday Attendance
18. Good Practice	Appendices 1 – 19

# 1

# 2

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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 range 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.

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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 (the Club)
- Watford FC Academy (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 English Football League Rules - 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 were deemed appropriate seeks external support for children and young people through referrals to the Channel Program. This program aims to work with individuals to address their specific vulnerabilities, prevent them from becoming further radicalised and possibly enter 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.
- **HORIZONS:** Seek out and embrace new opportunities and technology that encourages any form of abuse is prevented from the outset.

## Our Foundations

We will achieve the following based on our foundations:

- **DIVERSITY:** Working together within our community to deliver 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 directions 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), Welfare and Development Manager (W&DM) Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (S&WO), Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer (APCSO), Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SMT), 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 supports 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 constituents 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 Players and Staff, 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, Head of Safeguarding, Safeguarding Managers', Safeguarding Officers', Safeguarding Lead 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

## Key Principles Underpinning this Policy are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount - Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- 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

## Child First Centered Culture

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

- **Welfare is paramount** - The child's safety, health, and emotional well-being come before organisational convenience or adult interests.
- **Voice of the child** - Children are listened to, believed, and taken seriously. Their views are considered in all decisions affecting them.
- **Participation and empowerment** - Children are involved in shaping the services and environments they engage with, where appropriate.
- **Individual needs recognised** - Children are not treated as a group, but as individuals with unique experiences, backgrounds, and needs.
- **Consistent relationships** – Staff build trust-based, safe, and consistent relationships with children.
- **Early intervention and prevention** - Concerns are identified early, and support is sought after before issues escalate in accordance with the Club's reporting processes.
- **Inclusive and non-discriminatory** - Children from all backgrounds (e.g., race, religion, disability, gender identity) are equally valued and respected.
- **Safe environments** - Physical and emotional environments are actively designed to promote safety, openness, and well-being.
- **Accountability** - Staff are trained, monitored, and held accountable for upholding safeguarding and ethical standards.
- **Continuous improvement** – The Club responsible for regularly review policies and practices to better support children's rights and safety.
- It aligns with the Children Act 1989 & 2004, where the child's welfare is the legal priority.
- It reflects the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- It builds environments where children feel safe, respected, and able to thrive.
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** - All staff and partners understand their duty to prevent, recognise, report, and respond to abuse or neglect.

# 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 (EFL) 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.
- Responsibilities included overseeing all aspects of safeguarding and welfare across the organisation, encompassing the Men's First Team, Academy, Player Care, Watford FC Women, Wellbeing Team and the Community Trust.

### 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 protection within the Club and ensure the highest standards for safeguarding for all vulnerable groups.
- In the absence of the Head of Safeguarding, to 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, Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO) and Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Welfare and Development Manager (WDM)**

The role of the Club's Welfare and Development Manager (WDM) is to:

- The Welfare and Development Manager, liaising between safeguarding and management staff, including coaches, medical, and performance teams.
- Managed people and welfare initiatives, including apprenticeships, intern support, host family oversight, and matchday workforce operations.
- Championed wellbeing and safeguarding, delivering campaigns and acting as a first point of contact for welfare concerns within the Club.
- Led staff development and compliance across the club, including onboarding, training plans, performance reviews, and regulatory training
- Provide day-to-day operational support to the Head of Safeguarding, ensuring strategic safeguarding goals are effectively implemented across departments.

## **Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT)**

The role of the Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT) is to:

- To assist and support the Head of Safeguarding with the delivery of the 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.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO)**

The role of the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer is to:

- Lead safeguarding and welfare provision across the Foundation and Youth Development Phases of the Academy, acting as the primary point of contact for concerns and managing a wide range of cases. Provided support across the club, including Watford Women's team, and deputising for the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager as part of the wider Safeguarding Team
- Oversaw the full player welfare journey, from onboarding and personal needs assessments to ongoing development and transition support, ensuring a player-centred approach to wellbeing across the Academy environment, with a predominant focus on the Foundation and Youth Development Phases.

## **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

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Safer Recruitment Policy – Working with Children**

As part of the Club's recruitment and selection process, all offers of work for positions involving regulated activity with children are subject to:

- A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with a check of the Children's Barred List; and
- Two appropriate references.

No individual will be permitted to commence work until all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

#### **Ongoing DBS Requirements**

- All staff and partners engaged in regulated activity with children will be required to undergo regular DBS disclosure checks — normally every three years, or earlier if requested.
- Staff must also complete an annual self-declaration if they are undertaking regulated activity or regulated work with children.

#### **Overseas Applicants**

- All elements of the Club's safer recruitment process and pre-appointment checks apply equally to applicants from overseas.
- Additional overseas checks will be conducted on any applicant who has lived or worked outside of the UK in the last three years and spent more than three months abroad.
- These checks are in addition to the standard DBS process.

#### **Disclosure of Criminal Convictions**

- All applicants must disclose any **unspent criminal convictions** as part of the application process.
- Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended), ex-offenders do not need to disclose spent convictions.
- However, certain positions — particularly those involving work with children or roles in positions of trust — are exempt from these provisions. In such cases, all convictions, both spent and unspent, must be declared.

Guidance on the filtering of 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)

#### **Legal Framework**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the legislative basis for the Vetting and Barring Scheme, effective from October 2009. Under this regime, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) determines who should be barred from working with children in England and Wales.

If a recruiting manager determines that a role falls within the definition of regulated or controlled activity, an enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check must be completed before the individual begins employment.

#### **Positive Disclosures and Risk Assessment**

If a DBS check reveals any convictions or other relevant information:

- The Club will assess whether the nature of the offence(s) renders the individual unsuitable for working with children.

- A risk assessment will be conducted to review the contents of the disclosure certificate.
- The individual may be invited to an interview before a final recruitment decision is made.
- Where appropriate, the Head of Safeguarding, HR Manager, English Football League, The FA, and/or the Local Safeguarding Children Board Manager may participate in the risk assessment meeting.

### **Online and Social Media Screening**

As part of the shortlisting and due diligence process, the Club may carry out online searches for publicly available information relevant to an applicant's suitability for the role.

## **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 courses which will need to be refreshed every three years. e.g. members of the Safeguarding Team and DSOs. In addition, those staff also need to hold a relevant Mental Health First Aid qualification (child or adult) aligned to the needs of the primary workforce.

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

It is impacts 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-based 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 groups 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 the 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 exclude 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 with 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 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 the school, college or education establishment of any incidents, concerns or allegations made.

# 17

## Late Collection or Missing 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 through 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 of a child not being collected**

- Checking for any information about changes to the normal collection routine.
- In the event that a child is not collected on time, a minimum of two staff and/or responsible adults 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
- If a situation develops and you are left alone with a child, ensure another member of staff or responsible adult is present or within sight or hearing distance of the activity.
- If possible, escort the child to a designated responsible adult at the venue i.e. receptionist, teacher etc.
- Contact your line manager and then member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Attempting to contact the parents or person responsible at home, work or mobile phone.
- Attempting to contact emergency contacts.
- Follow the reporting procedures to report the incident.
- Arrangements may be put into place for a child if parents or the person responsible continue to collect their child late.

- If a parent or the persons responsible wish for their child to be collected by someone who does not have parental responsibility (including siblings), whether this is regularly or a pre-planned arrangement, the parent or the persons responsible must put this in writing prior to the collection of the child.
- In the event of alternative arrangements being made in an emergency, the child's parent or the person responsible must give verbal consent for an agreed person to collect the child. This must be recorded following the reporting process, and it is good practice to write to the parent or person responsible to confirm that this arrangement was made at their request and with their consent.
- Concerns about a child's safety or welfare associated with the late collection, this should be reported in accordance with the reporting procedure within this policy.

### **Dealing with a missing child**

- Should a member of staff, partner or parent/person responsible report a child missing, the following procedure must be followed.
- Firstly, the missing child should be reported to your line manager and alert a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Check registration and sign-in sheet to ensure the child was attending.
- Staff or partners will then begin a structured search of the site to ensure the safety of the remaining participants/group. Participants should not form part of the search and should remain with one or more members of staff or responsible adults.
- If after 15mins, the child has not been found, your line manager and a member of the Safeguarding Team must be informed by telephone and asked to contact the parent or person responsible.
- If the child's whereabouts are still not known after 20 minutes, it is the responsibility of the line manager or member of the Safeguarding Team to contact the police.
- The incident needs to be reported in accordance with the reporting procedure within this policy.

# 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, procedures, and relevant working documents.
- Know who the Head of Safeguarding and Safeguarding Team members are, and how to contact them.
- Prioritise the welfare of the child and always act in their best interests.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individuals or groups in their care.
- Record any concerns or allegations relating to child welfare via the Club's CPOMS reporting system, as outlined in this policy.
- Maintain confidentiality around sensitive information, sharing only on a need-to-know basis.
- Promote an open and supportive environment where staff and children feel safe to raise concerns, confident that appropriate action will be taken.
- Adhere to the Club's Codes of Conduct and Ethics.
- Encourage and consistently demonstrate high standards of behaviour.
- Where manual or physical support is required, ensure it is provided openly, appropriately, and with the child's consent, where possible.
- Physical contact must only occur when appropriate and must never be intrusive, unnecessary, or distressing.
- Obtain written parental or guardian consent if Club officials are required to transport children.
- Obtain written consent from parents/guardians for any significant travel arrangements (e.g. overnight stays).
- Ensure a qualified first aider is present at all activities involving children.
- At away events, staff must not enter a child's room or invite children into their own rooms.
- Maintain appropriate dress standards to promote a safe, respectful, and professional environment when working with children.
- Secure written consent for the Club to act in loco parentis, allowing permission for the administration of emergency first aid or medical treatment if required.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, including details of any treatment given. Submit all records via CPOMS.
- Follow the Club's Lone Working Policy, Lone Worker Risk Assessment, and Late Collection and Missing Person Procedures.
- If supervision in changing rooms is required, coaches and staff must always work in pairs, and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.

# 19

## Poor Practice & Abuse When Working with Children

Poor practice occurs whenever staff fail to uphold the highest standards of care and support in their professional conduct. When left unchallenged, poor practice can cause harm and may escalate into abuse. It is unacceptable and will be treated seriously, with appropriate action taken.

Please refer to the Club's Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Procedure, Whistleblowing Procedure, and Harassment and Bullying Policy for further guidance.

An individual may not always be aware that poor practice or abuse is taking place, as they may perceive the behaviour to be 'acceptable.' The following behaviours are regarded as examples of poor practice and may be considered high-risk safeguarding concerns. They must be avoided at all times:

### Examples of Poor Practice:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child, away from others.
- Being alone with a child in changing rooms, toilet facilities, or showers.
- Taking a child alone in a car on any journey, regardless of the distance.
- Sharing a room with a child.
- Engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Failing to challenge children using inappropriate language.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child — even as a joke.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing any allegation made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or unaddressed.
- Doing things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves.
- Engaging with a child on social media for personal reasons — refer to the Club's Social Media Policy.
- Communicating with a child via electronic means unless it is strictly for business purposes and through approved platforms.
- If in doubt... don't do it.

### Challenging Poor Practice

It is essential to challenge poor practice at all times. This includes behaviours such as:

- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Bullying
- Foul, aggressive, or provocative language
- Any form of controlling behaviour that may upset or harm a child

### Never ignore bullying or verbal abuse from supporters, parents/carers, coaches, or children. always:

- Listen to and support the individual being targeted
- Explain to the person displaying the behaviour that it is unacceptable
- Take appropriate action and report concerns
- Refer to the Club's Harassment and Bullying Policy, where relevant

# 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
- Welfare and Development Manager
- Safeguarding and Welfare Officer
- Academy Player Care and Safeguarding Officer
- Safeguarding Lead (Trust)
- 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.'

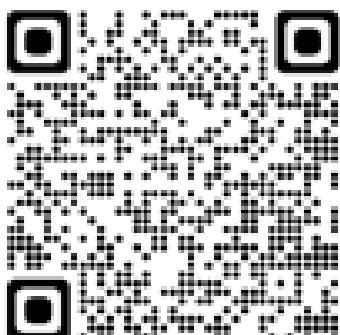
# 22

## 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

## 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 an 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 Club's HR Manager will also be informed at each stage of any allegation or concern. The Head of Safeguarding will hold management responsibility, and the HR Manager 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 Club's HR Manager, Legal Director or Senior Safeguarding Lead.
- 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 safeguarding allegations or concern against staff or 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 HR Manager.

# 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 in 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 to 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 member of the Safeguarding Team or directly Head of Safeguarding. They can contact local Prevent coordinators for help if needed. You should follow the notice, check, and 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 are.
- **Share:** you should refer to 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 as 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.

## Involuntary Celibates (Incels)

The term “*incel*” (short for *involuntary celibate*) originally referred to people—most often young men—who struggle to form romantic or sexual relationships. Over time, the label has become associated with some online communities that promote misogyny, fatalism, and extremist ideologies. These online spaces can act as echo chambers, reinforcing negative worldviews and, in some cases, contributing to radicalisation or real-world violence.

In the UK, incel-related ideology has gained increasing attention from law enforcement and safeguarding professionals. The 2021 Plymouth mass shooting, carried out by an individual with links to incel content, underscored the potential risks. While not all individuals involved in these communities are dangerous, incel culture is now recognised as a mental health and safeguarding concern—particularly for socially isolated young men.

### Staff should remain alert to warning signs, including:

- Obsessive interest in “blackpill” ideology (fatalistic beliefs about attractiveness, status, and gender roles)
- Expressions of extreme misogyny or violent fantasies
- Social withdrawal or sudden behavioural changes

Early, non-judgemental intervention is crucial. If you are concerned about a student, colleague, or community member, the following support routes are available:

- **Prevent (UK anti-radicalisation support line): 0800 011 3764**
- **ACT Early: [www.actearly.uk](http://www.actearly.uk)**

Raising awareness and encouraging open, supportive conversations can help reduce stigma, build resilience, and prevent escalation into harmful behaviours.

For further guidance, please refer to the club’s document, *Everything I’ve Learnt About Incels*, which offers additional context, insights, and practical strategies for identifying and addressing incel-related risks.

# 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.

Allegations of sexual abuse should still be reported, even if the alleged perpetrator or victim is deceased. While criminal prosecution may no longer be possible, it's important that disclosures are taken seriously. Reporting can help provide support for other victims, contribute to understanding wider patterns of abuse, and ensure organisations learn from past failures.

The Club has a duty to record and report such concerns through their safeguarding procedures. Information may be shared with the police, local authorities, or other relevant bodies to support ongoing safeguarding work. Victims or those affected should be offered emotional support, and the information can still play a vital role in improving future safeguarding practices. Support and further advice can be accessed through organisations such as NSPCC (0808 800 5000), NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood), Victim Support, or local Safeguarding Adults and Children's Boards.

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

# 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.

This section provides a brief overview for staff and partners of how to respond to incidents where nudes and semi-nudes (inappropriate) images have been shared.

- 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.
- .

# Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

## What do we mean by sharing nudes and semi-nudes?

In the latest advice for education settings (UK Council for Internet Safety 2024), this is defined as the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams online by children. Nudes and semi-nudes can be shared online via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps, forums, or involve sharing between devices using offline services. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics.' The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated.

This advice does not apply to adults sharing nudes or semi-nudes of under 18-year-olds. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police as a matter of urgency.

## What to do if an incident comes to your attention – how to respond to an incident.

### Report it a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.

- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download this is illegal (see note below).
- Note: In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of the Safeguarding Team only to view the image to safeguard. That decision should be based on the professional judgement of the Head of Safeguarding.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a child has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to a member of the Safeguarding Team or Head of Safeguarding and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
- Do not ask the child/children who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of a member of the Safeguarding Team or Head of Safeguarding.
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the Safeguarding Team or Head of Safeguarding.

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. Assure 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.

## Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM)

In accordance with the Online Safety Act 2023, the Club is committed to preventing the presence and spread of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) across its platforms and services. We have a legal duty to assess and mitigate risks, implement robust detection and reporting systems, and cooperate fully with law enforcement, including reporting any CSAM to the National Crime Agency (NCA)

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 that children and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper communications or false allegations.

- Written informed consent must be obtained from parents or the person responsible before communicating with children.
- Signed consent from parents or the person responsible must be obtained before using any method of communication with children.
- When communicating with children and their parents or guardians, always use an approved platform, e.g., Performance Management Application (PMA), Heja, etc. Communication via platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, BeReal, etc., is considered poor and unsafe practice.
- Staff or partners must not use personal devices or accounts to communicate with children or their parents/guardians. This includes sharing any personal contact information.
- Do not send texts or emails for personal conversations, or to share pictures, jokes, or any other items of a personal nature.
- Only use group texts or emails, and always copy in the parent/guardian or a designated club staff member in all communications with children. Never share personal information, such as contact details, with others.
- Ensure that texts or emails are only related to specific club activities, e.g., changes in travel arrangements, timings, or signposting to events.
- Report any inappropriate communication received from a child, parent, or guardian to the Safeguarding Team. The Head of Safeguarding or another designated team member will determine the appropriate action, including notifying parents/guardians and any relevant individuals or agencies.
- Do not respond to direct messages from a child. Never engage in one-to-one messaging. Always include the parent/guardian and/or an appropriate staff member.
- Do not respond to emails from a child unless they are directly related to club matters and include the parent/guardian or an appropriate staff member.
- Inform the Head of Safeguarding or a Safeguarding Team member if you receive any non-club-related communications. 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 the agreed work arrangements. Nor should they invite children or adults 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.
- Please see separate Lone Worker Policy and Risk Assessment documents.

# 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. Ratio 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.
- Adult and child toilets should be separate.

## 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 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 we 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 Deputy Safety Officer needs to be alerted of the situation and the correct procedures carried out. On a matchday, the Club's Head of Safety and Security is the safeguarding lead.
- The Club does not allow supporters aged under 18 to travel without an accompanying adult.
- Supporters aged under 18 must either be accompanied by their parent/guardian or a designated adult. Please find the 'Under 18 Consent Form' at [www.tickets.watfordfc.com](http://www.tickets.watfordfc.com) where an adult can be designated. That adult must also be travelling on an official Club coach for the journey.
- Completed forms should be returned to the Supporter Services team. Tickets will not be issued until the completed consent form has been received.
- Children attempting to travel without an adult will not be permitted to board official Club coach travel and responsibility for the child's onward journey will remain with the individual

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.**

How to Report a Safeguarding Concern

## **Appendix 4.**

Dealing With Concerns in a Football Setting

## **Appendix 5.**

DBS Assessment Procedure

## **Appendix 6.**

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Partners

## **Appendix 7.**

Internet Grooming

## **Appendix 8.**

Safeguarding Structure

## **Appendix 9.**

Key Safeguarding Contacts

## **Appendix 10.**

Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

## **Appendix 11.**

Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

## **Appendix 12.**

Men's First Team Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Appendix 13.**

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Appendix 14.**

Club Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Appendix 15.**

Watford Women Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Appendix 16.**

Trust Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

## **Appendix 17.**

Other Applicable Policies and Legislation

## **Appendix 18.**

Safeguarding Acronyms and Abbreviations

## **Appendix 19.**

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 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 of 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 soon 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 you 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 if 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 on to a coach or lead person anonymously by a person or person who does not want to be directly involved for whatever reason.

However, if 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 abuses 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 do I raise 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.

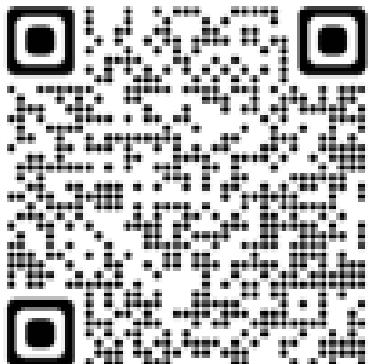
### Stage 2

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.



## 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.

## Remember the Five 'R's'

### 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](http://watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding) or use the QR code below:



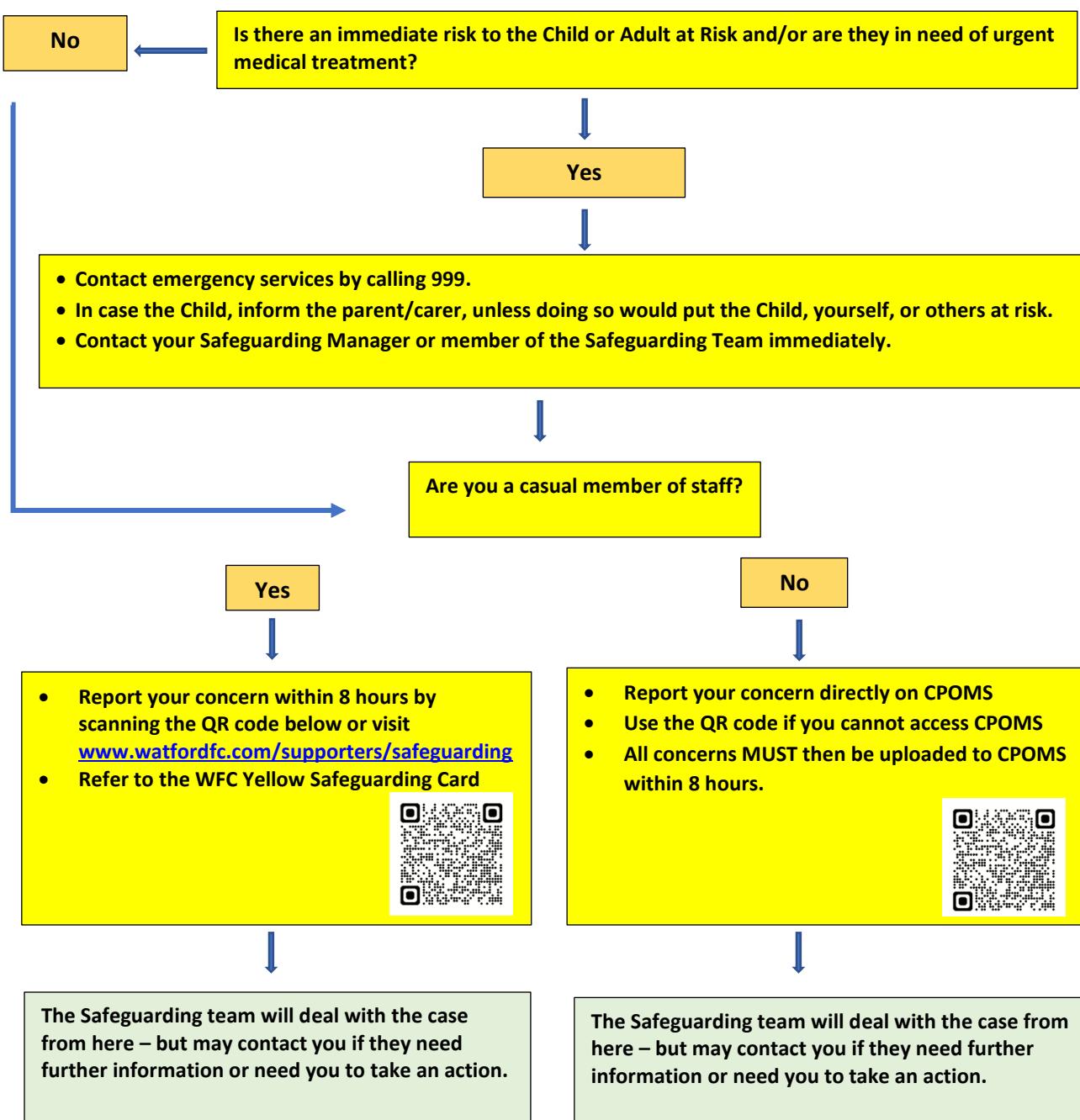
### RESPECT

- 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.

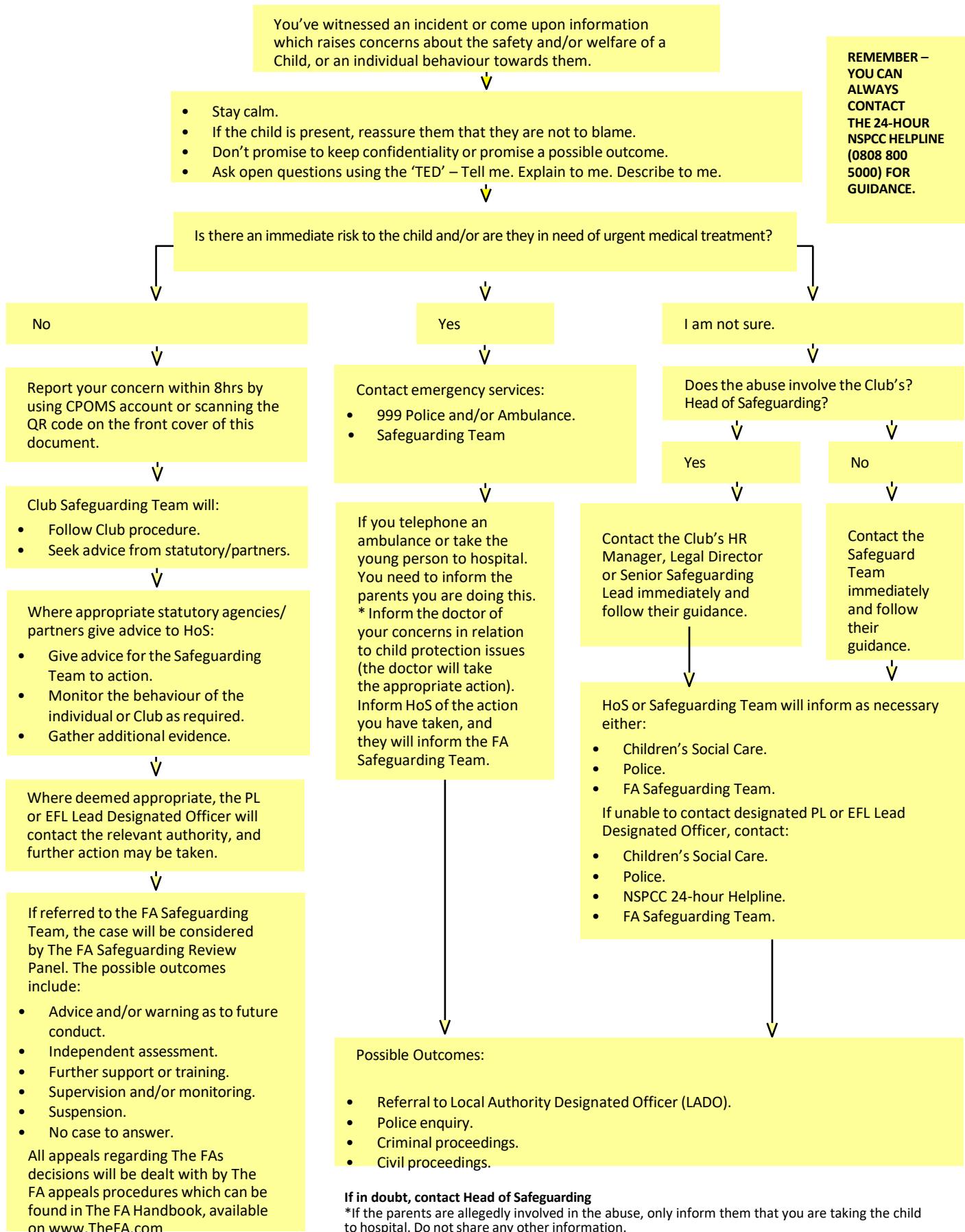
## Appendix 3. How To Report a Safeguarding Concern

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.

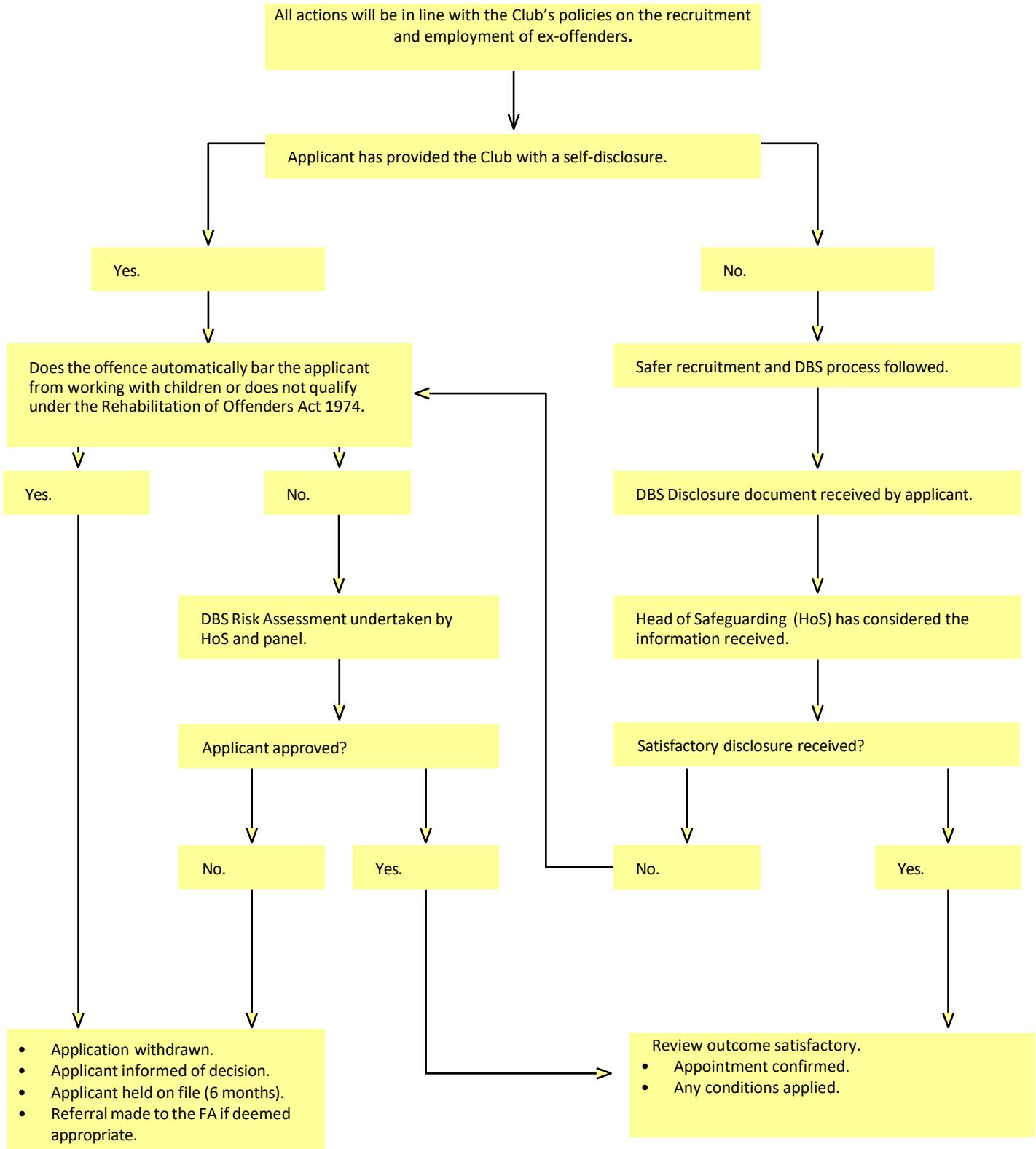
- Stay calm.
- If the individual is present, reassure them that they are not to blame,
- Don't promise to keep confidentiality or promise a possible outcome,
- Ask open questions by using TED – Tell me. Explain to me. Describe to me



## Appendix 4. Dealing With Concerns in a Football Setting



## Appendix 5. DBS Assessment Procedure



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 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-cautions-and-convictions-for-recruitment)

## Appendix 6. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Partners

A safeguarding allegation is raised concerning the conduct or behaviour of a staff member or partner.



Is the concern about the Head of Safeguarding?



Yes

No



**Inform the Club's HR Manager, Legal Director, or Senior Safeguarding Lead immediately.**

The person raising the concern must complete an Incident Report Form within 8 hours and submit it to the HR Manager, Legal Director, or Senior Safeguarding Lead.

**Inform the Head of Safeguarding immediately.**

The person raising the concern must complete a CPOMS report or submit an online referral within 8 hours.



### Initial Evaluation:

The Head of Safeguarding (or the HR Manager if the allegation involves the Safeguarding Team) determines whether the staff member or partner:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- Acted in a way that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children

A referral will be completed, and the incident recorded in CPOMS by the Head of Safeguarding, a Safeguarding Team member, or the HR Manager.



### External Notification and Risk Management:

- The Head of Safeguarding will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or the police for advice and support.
- The FA's Professional Game Safeguarding Team will also be informed along with English Football League (EFL) Safeguarding Lead via online reporting portal.
- Based on advice from the LADO or police, the Club will decide whether to suspend the staff member or partner pending further investigation.



### Internal Investigation and Outcome:

Once statutory investigations are complete—or in parallel where appropriate—the Club will:

- Conduct an internal investigation
- Decide on any sanctions to be taken against the staff member or partner
- If the staff member or partner is removed from their role, referrals will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the FA's Professional Game Safeguarding Team and EFL Safeguarding Team.

## Appendix 7. 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 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 8. Safeguarding Structure



CLUB BOARD



COMMUNITY SPORTS  
& EDUCATION  
**TRUST**  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1102239  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**STRATEGIC  
SAFEGUARDING GROUP  
(SSG)**

**HEAD OF SAFEGUARDING**

**SAFEGUARDING  
MANAGEMENT GROUP  
(SMG)**

**SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE  
MANAGER**

**WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER**

**SAFEGUARDING LEAD  
(TRUST)**

**SAFEGUARDING  
& WELFARE  
OFFICER**

**ACADEMY  
PLAYER CARE  
OFFICER**

**DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS (DSO)**

**SAFEGUARDING CHAMPIONS (ALL STAFF & PARTNERS)**

## Appendix 9. Key Safeguarding Contacts

### **Head of Safeguarding (HOS)**

07855 300439

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Manager (SWM)**

07718 492050

### **Welfare and Development Manager (WDM)**

07784 228546

### **Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT)**

07761 207888

### **Head of Safety and Security (HoSS)**

07707 289044

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

07964 082163

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO)**

07718 124522

### **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**

Protecting against grooming and sexual exploitation

### **www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding**

Online reporting

### **We - Watford Welcomes**

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

## Appendix 10. 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

 **Rob Clarke**

*Head of Safeguarding*

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

 **Richard Johnson**

*Academy Director*

[richard.johnson@watfordfc.com](mailto:richard.johnson@watfordfc.com)

 **Iain Taker**

*Legal Director*

[iain.taker@watfordfc.com](mailto:iain.taker@watfordfc.com)

 **Ian Pope**

*Operations and Facilities Director*

[ian.pope@watfordfc.com](mailto:ian.pope@watfordfc.com)

 **Rebecca McDermott**

*Safeguarding & Welfare Manager*

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

 **Professor Stuart Timperley**

*Non-Executive Director and*

*Senior Safeguarding Lead*

 **Rob Smith**

*Community Director (Trust)*

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

 **Rosemary Inskip**

*Safeguarding Trustee*

 **Steve Alexander**

*Head of Business Services (Trust)*

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

## Appendix 11. Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

### Safeguarding Lead

 **Rob Clarke**

***Head of Safeguarding***

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

### Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) Members

 **Rebecca McDermott**

***Safeguarding and Welfare Manager***

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

 **Anne-Marie Burn**

***Welfare and Development Manager***

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

 **Nathan Jopp**

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

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

 **Leah Crocket**

***Safeguarding and Welfare Officer***

[leah.crocket@watfordfc.com](mailto:leah.crocket@watfordfc.com)

 **Steve Alexander**

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

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

 **Clare Deacon**

***Safeguarding Lead (Trust)***

[clare.deacon@watfordfc.com](mailto:clare.deacon@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 12. Men's First Team Designated Safeguarding Officers

### Safeguarding Lead

 **Rebecca McDermott**

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***Safeguarding & Welfare Manager***

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

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 **Gianmarco Ceresa**

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***Team Manager***

[gianmarco.ceresa@watfordfc.com](mailto:gianmarco.ceresa@watfordfc.com)

 **Adam Payne**

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***Junior Sport Scientist***

[adam.payne@watfordfc.com](mailto:adam.payne@watfordfc.com)

 **Dr. Nishal Shah**

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***First Team Doctor***

[nishal.shah@watfordfc.com](mailto:nishal.shah@watfordfc.com)

 **Gayle Vowles**

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***Football Secretary***

[gayle.vowles@watfordfc.com](mailto:gayle.vowles@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 13. Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers

### Safeguarding Lead

 **Rebecca McDermott**

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**Safeguarding & Welfare Manager**

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

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 **Nathan Jopp**

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**Academy Player Care & Safeguarding Officer**

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

 **Leah Crocket**

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**Safeguarding and Welfare Officer**

[leah.crocket@watfordfc.com](mailto:leah.crocket@watfordfc.com)

 **Ryan Jackett**

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**Lead Youth Dev. Phase Coach (U15/U16)**

[ryan.jackett@watfordfc.com](mailto:ryan.jackett@watfordfc.com)

 **Adam Balletta**

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**Asst. Head of Coaching Lead FP/YDP (U9-U16)**

[adam.balletta@watfordfc.com](mailto:adam.balletta@watfordfc.com)

 **James Benathy**

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**Academy FP/YDP Coach**

[james.benathy@watfordfc.com](mailto:james.benathy@watfordfc.com)

 **Rebecca Tidmarsh**

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**Academy PDP Physio (U18)**

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

 **Chrissy Murray**

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**Academy Therapist**

[chrissy.murray@watfordfc.com](mailto:chrissy.murray@watfordfc.com)

## Appendix 14. Club's Designated Safeguarding Officers

### 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)

 **Ben Holt**

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***Retail Operations Manager***

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

 **Dave Messenger**

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***Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead***

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

 **Dave Newman**

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***Ticket and Supporter Services Manager***

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

 **Dan Palmer**

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***Senior Content Editor***

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

## Appendix 15. Watford Women Designated Safeguarding Officers

 **Rebecca McDermott**

***Safeguarding and Welfare Manager***

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

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 **Helen Ward**

***Head of Women's Football***

[helen.ward@watfordfc.com](mailto:helen.ward@watfordfc.com)

 **Renee Hector**

***Women's Head Coach***

[renee.hector@watfordfc.com](mailto:renee.hector@watfordfc.com)

 **Marcus Brown**

***Development Head Coach***

 **Abusham Pant**

***U16 Head Coach***

 **John Ryan**

***U14 Head Coach***

## Appendix 16. Trust Designated Safeguarding Officers

### Safeguarding Lead

 Clare Deacon

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**Safeguarding Lead (Trust)**  
[clare.deacon@watfordfc.com](mailto:clare.deacon@watfordfc.com)

### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

 Caoimhe Walker

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**Youth Health and Wellbeing Officer**  
[caoimhe.walker@watfordfc.com](mailto:caoimhe.walker@watfordfc.com)

 Michael Williams

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**Premier League Kicks Manager**  
[michael.williams@watfordfc.com](mailto:michael.williams@watfordfc.com)

 Madeline Hurley

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**EDI Officer**  
[madeline.hurley@watfordfc.com](mailto:madeline.hurley@watfordfc.com)

 Lucy Tearle

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**Community Projects Manager (Young People)**  
[lucy.tearle@watfordfc.com](mailto:lucy.tearle@watfordfc.com)

 Ines Perreira

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**Youth Health & Wellbeing Officer**  
[ines.perreira@watfordfc.com](mailto:ines.perreira@watfordfc.com)

 Paul Palmer

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**Business Support Officer**  
[paul.palmer@watfordfc.com](mailto:paul.palmer@watfordfc.com)

 Nicola Burton

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**Schools Sports Project Officer**  
[nicola.burton@watfordfc.com](mailto:nicola.burton@watfordfc.com)

 Joe Pizans

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**Cedars Community Centre Manager**  
[joe.pizans@watfordfc.com](mailto:joe.pizans@watfordfc.com)

 Laura Figg

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**Higher Education - Strategic Lead**  
[laura.figg@watfordfc.com](mailto:laura.figg@watfordfc.com)

 Elliot Bird

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## Appendix 17. Other Applicable Policies and Legislation

### Relevant Legislation/Regulations:

- The Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Children's and Families Act 2014
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Online Safety Act 2023

### 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

**Please note that these lists are not exhaustive.**

## Appendix 18. Safeguarding Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ABE</b>	<b>Achieving Best Evidence</b> - Guidance for Police & Social Workers in conducting interviews with children where allegation of abuse is being investigated
<b>CAIU</b>	<b>Child Abuse Investigation Unit</b> (Police)
<b>CAMHS</b>	<b>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</b>
<b>CEOP</b>	<b>Child Exploitation Online Protection</b> – NCA keeping children and young people safe online.
<b>CiN</b>	<b>Child in Need</b>
<b>CO</b>	<b>Care Order</b> - Places a child under the care of the Local Authority. This is otherwise known as a child 'being in care.'
<b>CPP</b>	<b>Child Protection Plan</b> - A plan created following a child protection conference that sets out how the child can be kept safe
<b>CSAM</b>	<b>Child Sexual Abuse Materials</b> - In accordance with the Online Safety Act 2023
<b>CSE</b>	<b>Child Sexual Exploitation</b>
<b>DBS</b>	<b>Disclosing and Barring Service</b> – formerly known as 'CRC' (Criminal Records Bureau)
<b>DDSL</b>	<b>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>
<b>DSL</b>	<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b>
<b>DSO</b>	<b>Designated Safeguarding Officer</b>
<b>DV/DA</b>	<b>Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse</b>
<b>DVPN</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Protection Notice</b>
<b>DVPO</b>	<b>Domestic Violence Protection Order</b> (escalation of DVPN)
<b>EHCP</b>	<b>Education, Health, and Care Plan</b>
<b>EDT</b>	<b>Emergency Duty Team</b> – Local Authorities out of hours team)
<b>EPO</b>	<b>Emergency Protection Order</b> - Protects a child from ongoing or imminent risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm where emergency action is needed for a maximum period of eight days
<b>EWO</b>	<b>Education Welfare Officer</b>
<b>FM</b>	<b>Forced Marriages</b>
<b>FGM</b>	<b>Female Genital Mutilation</b>
<b>FII</b>	<b>Fabricated or Induced Illnesses</b>
<b>HBA</b>	<b>Honour Base Abuse</b> – incident to protect or defend honour of a family.
<b>HSB</b>	<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour</b> - inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children
<b>ICO</b>	<b>Interim Care Order</b> - Local Authority to ask for the power to share Parental Responsibility with the parents of children they believe to be at risk.
<b>INCELS</b>	<b>Involuntary Celibates</b> - communities known for promoting misogyny, extremism, or harmful ideologies.
<b>JEM</b>	<b>Joint Evaluation Meeting</b> - a coordinated effort involving various agencies to manage allegations

	or concerns against adults who work with children
<b>KCSiE</b>	<b>Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)</b>
<b>LAC</b>	<b>Looked After Children</b> – formerly Children in Care.
<b>LADO</b>	<b>Local Authority Designated Officer</b> - works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children.
<b>LSCB</b>	<b>Local Safeguarding Children Board</b> - set up in each local authority and co-ordinates what is done to safeguard children in the area.
<b>MAPPA</b>	<b>Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement</b> - Assess and manage the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders: guidance for the police, prison service and probation trusts
<b>MARAC</b>	<b>Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference</b> - representatives from various agencies come together to address the highest-risk domestic abuse cases
<b>MARF</b>	<b>Multi Agency Referral Form.</b>
<b>MASH</b>	<b>Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub</b> – Single point for all professional agencies
<b>NCA</b>	<b>National Crime Agency</b>
<b>NFA</b>	<b>No Further Action</b>
<b>NEET</b>	<b>Not in Education, Employment or Training</b>
<b>OFSTED</b>	<b>Office for Standards in Education</b> - inspection agency for Children's Services in England
<b>PPO</b>	<b>Police Protection Order</b> – in emergency situation, children can be placed under police protection for up to 72 hours
<b>PRU</b>	<b>Pupil Referral Unit</b>
<b>Section 17 or S17</b>	General duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of 'Children in Need' in their area. (Children's Act 1989)
<b>Section 47 or S47</b>	Local Authority assessment of a child's welfare when there are concerns of significant harm (Children's Act 1989)
<b>SERAf</b>	<b>Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Form</b> - identify the factors that may render children and young people vulnerable to being targeted for child sexual exploitation (CSE).
<b>SCR</b>	<b>Serious Case Review</b> - is held after a child or vulnerable adult dies or is seriously injured under circumstances where abuse or neglect are thought to have been involved
<b>SEND</b>	<b>Special Education Needs and Disability</b>
<b>SOA 03</b>	<b>Sexual Offences Act (2003)</b>
<b>TAF</b>	<b>Teams around the Family</b> - provides a service to families who are likely to need help from two or more agencies (e.g. schools, health services, housing).
<b>UNCRC</b>	<b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> - An international convention signed by Britain on which we have based much of our current child safeguarding legislation
<b>UASC</b>	<b>Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child</b>
<b>ViSOR</b>	<b>Violent and Sex Offender Register</b> - management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public.

<b>VVE</b>	<b>Vulnerable, Violence and Exploitation</b>
<b>WT23</b>	<b>Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2023)</b>

## Appendix 19. 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:**

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**Date of Birth:**

**(Individual you are raising the concern on**

**behalf of – if known)**

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**Your Name**

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**Your Email**

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**Your Contact Number**

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

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**When did the incident occur?**

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**Time of the incident**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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