WatfordFC safeguarding

COMMUNITY SPORTS & EDUCATION TRUST
REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1102239

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy Name: Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

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Safeguarding concern immediate action

- Make safe. If anyone is in immediate danger, seriously injured, needs urgent medical help or a crime is in progress, call 999.

- Listen and reassure. Take the concern seriously. Do not promise secrecy, investigate, confront the alleged source of risk, or ask leading questions.

- Preserve evidence. Do not delete messages, wash clothing, tidy a location, or copy potentially illegal material. Follow Police or safeguarding-lead advice.

- Report immediately. Contact the Head of Safeguarding or another designated safeguarding lead and record the concern on CPOMS or the approved form.

- Use the alternative route. If the safeguarding lead is unavailable, implicated or delay would increase risk, contact the local authority adult safeguarding service and/or Police directly.

- Record facts. Include dates, times, locations, people present, the child's own words, immediate action, consent and capacity issues, information shared and decisions made.

- Follow up. The safeguarding lead records the decision, referral, rationale, outcome, and support offered. If appropriate action is not taken, escalate through the Board Senior Safeguarding Lead, whistleblowing route, or relevant external agency.

1

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.

2

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 programme 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 position 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

The Club has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures in place to protect children and promote their welfare. These policies and procedures are designed to meet the requirements of The Football Association (The FA) and the English Football League (EFL), including the FA Regulations for Safeguarding Children, and to comply with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

This policy applies across the Club and must be observed by all those working with children. The application of this policy and its procedures, and the promotion of good safeguarding practice, is mandatory. All requirements of this policy are obligatory and must be followed where there are any suspected instances of poor practice or abuse.

All staff, volunteers and partners working with or on behalf of the Club must make themselves aware of the Club's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. Where appropriate to their role with children, they will be supported through the Club's safeguarding training programme and must undertake any relevant training required for their role.

The person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at the Club is the Head of Safeguarding (HoS). The Club acknowledges and accepts its responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children who engage in activities conducted by or on behalf of the Club.

The Club takes a child-centred approach, with the welfare of children being of paramount importance. It is the responsibility of all staff working at the Club to safeguard the welfare of children by creating an environment in which they are protected from harm.

This policy applies directly to the Club and its activities and sets out the safeguarding expectations and arrangements for organisations that have a formal relationship with the Club, including:

- **Watford FC (the Club)** – directly governed by this policy.
- **Watford FC Academy (the Academy)** – directly governed by this policy.
- **Watford Women FC (WWFC)** – operated by an independent franchise partner under agreement with the Club, with the continued use of the Club's name and badge. The franchise partner is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the team and its safeguarding arrangements. The Club maintains appropriate safeguarding assurance and oversight through the relationship and will work together with our partners where safeguarding concerns arise.
- **Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust (the Trust)** – an independent charitable organisation with its own governance and operational arrangements. The Club maintains a strategic relationship with the Trust, including appropriate safeguarding assurance, oversight, and collaboration. The Trust remains responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of its activities and for ensuring that its own staff, volunteers, and programmes meet the required safeguarding standards.

The Club will maintain appropriate communication and information-sharing arrangements with the Trust and the franchise partner to ensure that safeguarding concerns are identified, reported, and escalated appropriately.

Nothing within this policy removes or replaces the safeguarding responsibilities of the Trust or their partners within their own organisations.

Safeguarding Standards, Prevent and External Agencies

These procedures ensure that appropriate national standards for safeguarding are met and implemented throughout the Club. The Club operates in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the safeguarding requirements of The Football Association (The FA) and the English Football League (EFL).

In respect of safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation, the Club follows the Government's Prevent duty and relevant Prevent guidance.

The Club recognises that radicalisation can affect individuals from any background and that vulnerability to radicalisation can arise for a range of reasons. The process of radicalisation may involve the grooming, exploitation, or manipulation of individuals by others and will therefore be considered within the Club's wider safeguarding approach.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism, the Club will seek appropriate advice and, where necessary, make a referral through the Prevent process. Where appropriate, individuals may be considered for support through the Channel programme, which provides early intervention and support to individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation.

The Club maintains appropriate working relationships and regular communication with local safeguarding partners, statutory agencies, and other relevant organisations. Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, the Club will make a referral to the appropriate local authority children's social care service and/or the Police, as appropriate. Where concerns relate to potential radicalisation, the Club will consider a Prevent referral and seek advice from the appropriate local Prevent team.

The Club will refer allegations or concerns about an adult who works or volunteers with children to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where the criteria for LADO involvement are met. This includes concerns that an individual may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against or relating to a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may otherwise be unsuitable to work with children. The Club will work with the LADO and other relevant agencies to ensure that such concerns are managed appropriately and without delay.

All referrals and external agency involvement will be managed in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures and relevant information-sharing requirements.

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 fulfill 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 helps prevent any form of abuse 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

Safeguarding Executive Group (SEG)

The Safeguarding Executive Group (SEG) provides strategic oversight and accountability across the Club and the Trust. It is jointly chaired by the Club's Board Senior Safeguarding Lead and Legal Director and includes the Trust's nominated representatives, currently the Trust Senior Safeguarding Lead and Community Director.

The SEG provides strategic direction, oversight, assurance and challenge in relation to safeguarding arrangements across the participating organisations. Each organisation retains responsibility for its own governance, operations and statutory duties. The SEG reports through the governance arrangements approved by the Club Board and the Trust's Board of Trustees.

Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

The Club has a Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG), led by the Club's Senior Safeguarding Lead at Board level, which provides strategic direction, leadership, and oversight of safeguarding across the Club. The SSG considers safeguarding performance, risks, emerging issues, and areas for improvement, ensuring safeguarding remains embedded within the Club's governance arrangements and is appropriately reported and escalated to the Board.

Operational safeguarding is led by the Head of Safeguarding, supported by the wider safeguarding and welfare team. The SSG and operational safeguarding team work together to ensure effective implementation of the Club's safeguarding strategy, policies, and procedures, with appropriate assurance, challenge, and continuous improvement.

Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

The Club's Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) supports the effective implementation of safeguarding across all areas of the Club and ensures that safeguarding remains a key priority within its day-to-day operations. The Group has a collective responsibility to support the Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG) and provide safeguarding leadership and support across Club departments.

The SMG brings together a range of expertise and experience from across the Club to promote effective safeguarding, welfare, and wellbeing, and to support a strong safeguarding culture.

The SMG works collaboratively with the SSG and wider safeguarding team to support the delivery of the Club's safeguarding strategy, policies, and procedures. The Group also supports effective communication across the Club, identifies safeguarding issues, and risks, and ensures that concerns are appropriately escalated through the Club's safeguarding governance arrangements.

6 Definitions

Definition of a Child

A child is defined as any person who has 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 those set out in Section 3 of this policy.

Definition of Safeguarding Team

The collective term for those who hold specific roles within safeguarding for the Club. These roles include, but are not limited to, Senior Safeguarding Leads, Head of Safeguarding, Safeguarding Leads 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 organisation 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 Club is committed to the following principles:

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All staff and partners must safeguard and promote children's welfare and take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm.
- Staff and partners are responsible for their conduct and must maintain professional boundaries when working with children.
- 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.
- The Club will provide safe and enjoyable activities in which children can participate and develop.
- Promote high ethical standards throughout the Club.

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 wellbeing come before organisational convenience or adult interests.
- Voice of the child: listen to children, take them seriously and consider their views on decisions that affect them.
- Participation: involve children in shaping the activities and environments they use where this is appropriate.
- Individual needs: understanding each child's experiences, background, communication needs and support needs.
- Consistent relationships: build safe, reliable and professional relationships with children.
- Prevention and early help: identify concerns early and seek support before risk increases.
- Inclusion: value and respect every child and challenge discrimination.
- Safe environments: design physical and online environments to support safety, openness and wellbeing.
- Accountability: train, supervise and hold staff accountable for safeguarding practice.
- Continuous improvement: review policy and practice regularly and act on learning.
- It aligns with the Children Act 1989, 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 must recognise, report and respond to concerns.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Safeguarding (HOS)

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

- Work closely with Club's Board and Senior Safeguarding Lead (SSL) 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 working relationships with the Club Board, Strategic Safeguarding Group, EFL Safeguarding Team, Designated Safeguarding Officers, Police, the local Safeguarding Adults Board, the local authority adult safeguarding service, the DBS and The FA Safeguarding Team. Where a concern also involves a child, follow the Club's child safeguarding procedure and consult the Local Authority Designated Officer where required.
- Work closely with the Club Board and Strategic Safeguarding Group to review the safeguarding strategy and respond to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, EFL rules and FA rules.
- Lead the Club's response to safeguarding concerns and cooperate with relevant agencies, including the Police, the local authority adult safeguarding service and Prevent or Channel services.
- Oversee safeguarding and welfare across the Club, including the Men's First Team, Academy, Player Care and Wellbeing teams, while maintaining appropriate safeguarding links with Watford Women FC and the Trust.

Safeguarding and Welfare Lead (SWL)

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

- Assist and support the Head of Safeguarding (HoS) in the delivery of effective safeguarding and welfare arrangements across the Club and in maintaining high standards of safeguarding practice.
- Act as deputy to the Head of Safeguarding in their absence and support the HoS in the management of safeguarding matters as required.
- Provide safeguarding expertise, advice, and guidance within the areas of the Club for which the role has responsibility, including supporting staff awareness, training, and the effective implementation of safeguarding procedures.
- Work closely with the HoS and wider safeguarding team to promote, embed, implement, and continually improve the Club's safeguarding provision.
- Provide safeguarding support to the Player Care Lead, working collaboratively to ensure that safeguarding and welfare considerations are appropriately identified, managed, and escalated.
- Support appropriate communication and information sharing with Club departments and, where necessary, the Trust and Watford Women FC. The Trust and Watford Women FC remain responsible for their own day-to-day safeguarding arrangements.

Welfare and Development Manager (WDM)

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

- Act as a link between safeguarding, welfare, and Club management, working closely with coaches, medical, performance and other relevant teams.
- Manage people and welfare initiatives, including apprenticeships, intern support, and general workforce operations.
- Promote wellbeing and safeguarding across the Club, supporting welfare initiatives and acting as a first point of contact for welfare concerns, with safeguarding concerns escalated to the appropriate safeguarding lead.
- Support staff development and compliance across the Club, including onboarding, training plans, performance reviews, and relevant regulatory training.
- Provide day-to-day operational support to the Head of Safeguarding and wider safeguarding team, helping to ensure that safeguarding and welfare priorities are effectively implemented across relevant areas of the Club.

Player Care Lead (PCL)

The role of the Club's Player Care Lead is to:

- Support the welfare and wellbeing of Academy and Men's First Team players. Arrange suitable support, training or guidance for players, staff and, where relevant, family members or carers.
- Work closely with the Safeguarding and Welfare Lead and relevant Club departments to coordinate effective player care and welfare arrangements and ensure that the individual needs of players are identified, supported, and appropriately managed.
- Maintain safe ways for players, coaches, staff and, where relevant, family members or carers to raise welfare and safeguarding concerns.
- Identify and report safeguarding concerns under this policy and work with the Head of Safeguarding and Safeguarding Team as required.

Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT)

The role of the Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT) 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.
- 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)

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.
- Be available at reasonable times as a first point of contact for adults at risk, staff, partners and, where appropriate, external agencies.
- Ensure that concerns, allegations and poor practice are reported promptly and recorded securely on CPOMS in line with data protection requirements.
- Attend Designated Safeguarding Officer meetings, complete agreed actions and maintain relevant professional development.

10 Safer Recruitment

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) & Safer Recruitment Policy

The Club assesses every paid and voluntary role to determine the level of pre-employment checking required.

Since 1 September 2026, a person may be undertaking regulated activity with children even where their work is supervised. The Club will therefore consider the duties of the role, how often the person works with children and whether the work includes overnight activity.

A role involving regulated activity with children is subject to:

- an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information;
- two suitable references; and
- completion of all required pre-employment checks before the person starts regulated activity.

The Club will only request the level of DBS check for which the role is legally eligible.

Any lawful, risk-managed exception must be recorded and approved by HR and the Head of Safeguarding.

Ongoing DBS Requirements

- Staff, volunteers, and partners in eligible roles must complete repeat DBS checks in line with the Club's safer recruitment procedure, normally every three years or sooner where required.
- Anyone undertaking regulated activity with children must complete an annual self-declaration.
- DBS eligibility must be reviewed where a person's role, duties or contact with children changes.
- A role will not be treated as outside regulated activity simply because the person is supervised.

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

- Applicants must disclose information that the Club is legally entitled to ask for and that is not protected by the DBS filtering rules.
- For roles covered only by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, applicants are not required to disclose spent convictions.
- For an eligible role, the Club may ask an exempted question and request the appropriate DBS check. Protected cautions and convictions must not be requested or taken into account.

- Current DBS filtering guidance is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance.www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the- rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974

Legal Framework

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and subsequent amendments provide the framework for regulated activity and barred-list checks.

From 1 September 2026, the supervision exemption was removed from regulated activity with children. This means that paid staff and volunteers who regularly teach, train, instruct, care for, or supervise children may be in regulated activity even when supervised.

The recruiting manager and HR must assess each role against current DBS eligibility guidance. Where the role involves regulated activity, an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information must be completed before the person undertakes that activity.

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 appropriate Local Authorities personnel may participate in the risk assessment meeting.

Online and Social Media Screening

As part of the shortlisting and due diligence process, the Club may conduct 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 important that all members of staff discuss the basics of 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, there will be 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 must use their authority responsibly, manage risk and protect children from discrimination and avoidable harm. They must understand this policy and the duties relevant to their role.
- 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 show integrity and good judgement. Anyone responsible for a child in a Club activity holds a position of trust and must follow this policy, the relevant code of conduct and the boundaries of their role.

  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 managing 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 for example, 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 responsibility of the parent or person responsible to ensure that their child is dropped off and collected by the person responsible 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, the parent or person responsible must use the agreed designated collection point when collecting the child.
- 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 15minutes, 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 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… do not 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 several 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 Lead
- Welfare and Development Manager
- Player Care Lead
- Watford Women's Safeguarding and Welfare 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 function 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

www.watfordfccsetrust.com/about-us/safeguarding/reporting/

23 Allegations Against an Adult

Managing Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations About Adults

The Club takes all concerns and allegations about adults who work with or on behalf of the Club seriously. The safety, welfare and best interests of children will always be at the centre of the Club's response.

The Club's Allegations Against Adults Policy will be followed where there are concerns that an adult who works with or on behalf of the Club has:

- harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or behaved, including outside of work, in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children.

Where the relevant threshold is met, the Club will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and within one working day, in line with local safeguarding procedures. The Club will also make referrals to the Police, local authority children's social care or other relevant agencies where appropriate or required.

The Club will work openly and appropriately with the LADO, Police, and other relevant agencies. Information will be shared appropriately and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Safeguarding has oversight of safeguarding concerns and allegations involving adults who work with or on behalf of the Club and will act as the Club's lead safeguarding case manager where appropriate.

The Club's HR Manager will be involved where required and will provide advice on employment and HR matters. Safeguarding and employment processes will be managed appropriately and may run alongside each other.

Where a concern or allegation involves the Head of Safeguarding, it must be reported directly to the Club's HR Manager, Legal Director or Senior Safeguarding Lead.

Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust and Watford Women's FC

The Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust (the Trust) and Watford Women's FC are separate organisations with their own governance, management, and safeguarding responsibilities.

The Club, the Trust, and Watford Women's FC each have their own procedures for managing safeguarding concerns and allegations against adults who work for or on behalf of their respective organisations.

Each organisation is responsible for managing concerns and allegations involving its own staff, volunteers, and representatives under its own procedures.

Where a concern involves an individual connected to the Trust or Watford Women's FC, the relevant organisation will manage the matter under its own allegations and safeguarding procedures. The Club will not replace or take over that organisation's internal process.

Where a concern crosses organisational boundaries or may affect the safety or welfare of children involved in Club activities, the Club will take appropriate action under its own safeguarding procedures. This may include sharing relevant information, working jointly with the Trust or Watford Women's FC, or making a referral to the LADO, Police, children's social care or another relevant agency where required.

The Club, Trust and Watford Women's FC will maintain appropriate communication and information-sharing arrangements to ensure safeguarding concerns are identified, reported, and escalated appropriately.

Nothing in this policy removes or replaces the safeguarding responsibilities of the Trust or Watford Women's FC. Each organisation remains responsible for managing concerns and allegations relating to its own people in accordance with its own procedures and applicable safeguarding requirements.

Other Processes

Safeguarding concerns may arise alongside disciplinary, grievance, complaints, or whistleblowing procedures. Where this happens, safeguarding will be addressed promptly, and any other process will be managed so that it does not compromise the safety or welfare of children, an external investigation, or the safeguarding process.

Where a complaint, whistleblowing concern or other matter includes a safeguarding concern or allegation, the safeguarding element will be managed under the appropriate safeguarding procedure and referred to the relevant safeguarding or statutory agency where necessary.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Club recognises that children, staff, volunteers, and partners may have disabilities or other needs that require reasonable adjustments when safeguarding concerns or allegations are managed.

The Club will make appropriate adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 while ensuring that safeguarding requirements continue to be met.

24 PREVENT – Radicalisation and Extremism

Prevent – Radicalisation and Extremism

The Club recognises the safeguarding risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and is committed to protecting children, young people and adults who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity.

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to legitimise support for, or use of, terrorist violence. There is no single profile, set of characteristics or pathway to radicalisation. A person's susceptibility may be influenced by a range of factors, including exposure to radicalising influences, personal circumstances, grievances, social isolation, or other vulnerabilities.

Extremism, as defined by the Government in 2024, is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve these aims.

The Prevent duty forms part of the Government's CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy and is established through the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015. The statutory Prevent duty applies to specified authorities set out in legislation. While the Club is not itself a specified authority under the statutory duty, the Club recognises the value of the Prevent framework and will follow relevant Prevent guidance as part of its safeguarding arrangements.

The Club recognises that children and young people may be susceptible to radicalisation through a range of influences, including online activity, social media, peer groups, and exposure to extremist material. Staff working with children should remain alert to safeguarding concerns that may indicate that a child or young person is being influenced, exploited, or drawn towards terrorism or extremist activity.

Children may be exposed to radicalising influences online, through social media, peer groups, or extremist material. Staff should remain alert to signs of grooming, exploitation, or pressure towards terrorist or extremist activity.

There is no definitive list of signs. Changes in behaviour, appearance, interests, friendships, or online activity may have many explanations. Record the facts, consider the wider circumstances, and report concerns without making assumptions about a child's beliefs or identity.

Staff are not expected to identify extremist symbols or investigate suspected radicalisation. Report the concern to the Head of Safeguarding or another member of the Safeguarding Team, who will seek specialist advice where necessary**.**

The Club follows a Notice, Check, Share approach:

- **Notice:** Be alert to behaviour, information or circumstances that raise a safeguarding concern, including concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism.
- **Check:** Consider the concern and seek advice from the Club's Safeguarding Team where appropriate.
- **Share:** Report the concern promptly to the Head of Safeguarding or an appropriate member of the Safeguarding Team in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures.

Manage radicalisation concerns in the same way as other safeguarding concerns.

Possible indicators include concerning online activity, exposure to extremist material, support for terrorist violence, threats or encouragement of violence, or signs that a child is being groomed or exploited.

Concerns relating to discriminatory or hateful behaviour, including racist, religiously motivated, homophobic, transphobic, or other forms of abuse, should also be reported in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures. Such behaviour should not automatically be treated as evidence of extremism or radicalisation but may require safeguarding action.

The Club recognises the importance of respecting individuals' lawful religious beliefs, political views, cultural identity, and freedom of expression. Religious observance, changes in dress or appearance, political views or personal beliefs should not, in themselves, be considered indicators of radicalisation or extremism.

Where appropriate, the Head of Safeguarding will seek advice from the relevant local Prevent team and consider whether a Prevent referral is required. Where an individual is assessed as being susceptible to radicalisation, they may be considered for support through the Channel programme or other appropriate safeguarding interventions through the Channel programme or other appropriate safeguarding interventions.

Involuntary Celibates (Incels)

Incel-Related Extremism and Misogynistic Extremism

The Club recognises the potential safeguarding risks associated with online communities and ideologies that promote extreme misogyny, hatred, violence or the dehumanisation of women and others. This includes concerns relating to Incel (involuntary celibate) extremism, which is recognised within the Government's Prevent framework as a category of concern.

The term "incel" is used by an online movement predominantly associated with men who identify as involuntarily unable to form romantic or sexual relationships. While identifying with the term does not, in itself, indicate a safeguarding concern or involvement in extremism, some online communities associated with incel ideology promote extreme misogyny, hatred towards women, glorification of violence and, in some cases, support for terrorist violence or other serious criminal behaviour.

The Club recognises that children and players may encounter such content through social media, gaming platforms, online forums, and other digital environments. Within a professional football setting, staff should remain alert to behaviour or online activity that may indicate that an individual is being groomed, exploited, or drawn towards extremist or violent ideologies.

Staff should not attempt to diagnose or label an individual as an "incel" or make assumptions based on social isolation, relationship difficulties, appearance, interests, or personal views. Concerns should be considered in the context of the individual's wider behaviour and circumstances.

Staff should report concerns where there are indicators such as:

- expressions of extreme hatred, hostility or violence towards women or girls;
- glorification, encouragement, or justification of violence;
- support for terrorist or extremist ideologies or organisations;

- repeated engagement with extremist or violent online material;
- threats of violence or statements suggesting an intention to harm themselves or others;
- evidence that an individual is being manipulated, groomed, or influenced by others towards extremist activity; or
- significant changes in behaviour or online activity which, when considered alongside other concerns, give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Particular care should be taken with young players and those who may be vulnerable because of isolation, exploitation, peer influence, or other personal circumstances. The presence of one indicator does not necessarily mean that an individual is being radicalised. Staff should use their professional judgement and seek advice from the Club's Safeguarding Team.

Where concerns are identified, staff should follow the Club's **Notice, Check, Share** approach.

The Head of Safeguarding will consider whether further safeguarding action or a referral to the relevant external agency is required. Where there are concerns that an individual may be susceptible to radicalisation, the Club may seek advice from the local Prevent team and consider making a Prevent referral. Prevent referrals are safeguarding referrals intended to provide early support to individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation.

Staff can also seek confidential advice through the ACT Early Support Line on **0800 011 3764**, which is available 24 hours a day. Club staff should normally use the Club's safeguarding reporting arrangements in the first instance, with the Safeguarding Team obtaining specialist Prevent advice where required.

The Club will promote respectful relationships, equality, positive online behaviour and challenge attitudes or behaviours that promote misogyny, hatred, or violence. Safeguarding concerns relating to misogyny, discrimination, abuse, or violence will be managed in accordance with the Club's wider safeguarding procedures.

25 Non-Recent Concerns of Abuse

The Club recognises that concerns relating to historical or non-recent abuse must be taken seriously. Any disclosure or concern relating to abuse that may have occurred in the past should be reported promptly to the Head of Safeguarding or an appropriate member of the Club's Safeguarding Team.

Concerns relating to recent or non-recent abuse within football may also be reported directly to The FA Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@thefa.com. The FA has a dedicated football safeguarding helpline for adults who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood: **0800 023 2642**. Current opening hours should be checked via The FA's safeguarding website.

Take all allegations and disclosures seriously, however long ago the abuse may have happened and whether the alleged source of risk or person affected is deceased. Share information with the Police, local authority children's social care, The FA, LADO, or another relevant agency where this is necessary and lawful.

The fact that an allegation is historical or non-recent does not mean that it should be disregarded. Information about historical abuse may identify risks to other children, assist ongoing investigations, identify patterns of behaviour or organisational learning, and enable individuals affected by abuse to access appropriate support.

The Club will record and manage concerns in accordance with its safeguarding procedures and will consider the views and wishes of the person making the disclosure, while recognising that information may need to be shared where this is necessary to protect children or prevent further harm.

Where appropriate, give people affected by non-recent abuse information about available support, including specialist services relevant to their circumstances.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the Police or emergency services should be contacted without delay.

26 Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse is abuse or harmful behaviour perpetrated by one child or young person towards another child or young person. It can take place in person, online or through a combination of both and may occur within friendships, intimate or peer relationships, teams, groups, or wider social networks.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- bullying and cyberbullying;
- physical abuse, threats, intimidation, and violence;
- sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and harmful sexual behaviour;
- sexual exploitation and the sharing of sexualised images or content;
- teenage relationship abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour;
- discriminatory or prejudice-based abuse, including racist, religiously motivated, homophobic, transphobic, or sexist abuse;
- serious violence and exploitation; and
- online abuse, coercion, grooming, harassment, and the distribution of harmful or abusive content.

Online child-on-child abuse is any form of peer abuse where digital technology, social media, gaming platforms, or other online communication is used to facilitate, enable or carry out the behaviour. This may include the sharing of sexual images, coercion, threats, harassment, grooming, exploitation, or the distribution of abusive or harmful content.

The Club recognises that children who cause harm to other children may also have safeguarding needs. All concerns will be considered on an individual basis, with the safety and welfare of all children remaining the priority. The Club will seek to understand the circumstances and needs of both the child who has been harmed and the child whose behaviour has caused harm.

Staff should not dismiss incidents as “banter,” “part of growing up” or typical behaviour where there is a potential safeguarding concern. All concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported in accordance with the Club’s safeguarding procedures.

Where appropriate, the Club will work with parents and carers, local safeguarding partners, the Police, children’s social care and other relevant agencies to ensure that concerns are assessed and responded to effectively.

The Club will take a preventative approach by promoting respectful relationships, appropriate boundaries, positive behaviour, online safety, and a culture in which children feel able to raise concerns and seek support.

27 Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

The Club recognises the safeguarding risks associated with child criminal exploitation, including county lines. Child criminal exploitation occurs where a child or young person is exploited, coerced, or manipulated into taking part in criminal activity. County lines is a form of criminal exploitation commonly associated with organised drug-dealing networks, which may exploit children and young people to transport or store drugs, money, or weapons. Children may be subjected to threats, intimidation, violence, sexual exploitation, or other forms of coercion.

The Club recognises that children involved in criminal exploitation should be treated as children at risk of harm and not simply as offenders. Staff should remain alert to the possibility that exploitation may take place through friendships, peer groups, social media, gaming platforms, or other relationships and may be hidden from those around the child.

Cuckooing refers to the practice of criminals taking over a person's home or other accommodation, often using it as a base for criminal activity. This can involve the exploitation of vulnerable adults and may also place children at risk.

Possible signs and indicators may include:

- a child regularly travelling to or staying in locations away from home, particularly where there appears to be no clear explanation;
- unexplained periods of absence, going missing or changes in routine;
- receiving unexplained money, gifts, expensive clothing, phones, or other items;
- having access to multiple mobile phones, SIM cards, or devices without a clear reason;
- becoming secretive about friendships, movements, or online activity;
- contact with older individuals or new associates who appear to be exerting influence or control;
- evidence of threats, intimidation, violence, debt, or fear of reprisals;
- changes in behaviour, appearance, attendance, performance, or engagement;
- being involved in anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, or unexplained incidents;
- evidence of online grooming, coercion, or the use of social media to facilitate exploitation; or
- something a child tells you or behaviour that causes you to have a safeguarding concern.

In a professional football environment, staff should be mindful of concerns that may arise through changes in a player's attendance, behaviour, finances, friendships, travel arrangements, or use of social media. Particular attention should be given where concerns involve young players living away from home, host family arrangements, residential settings, or other circumstances where children may be more vulnerable.

Staff should not investigate suspected criminal exploitation themselves. Any concern should be reported promptly in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.

28 Photographs, Filming and Imaging

Use of Images and Photography

The Club will use images and recordings of children responsibly and in a way that protects their safety, dignity, and privacy. It will follow relevant FA guidance and applicable safeguarding and data protection requirements.

All photographs and recordings of children taken for Club purposes will be undertaken by Club officials or approved third parties. Those involved in photography or filming must be appropriately briefed on the Club's safeguarding requirements and, where applicable to their role, complete the required safeguarding checks and training.

Before taking or publishing an image for Club purposes, follow the Club's consent and privacy arrangements. Explain how the image will be used and where it may appear. Do not use it for a materially different purpose without a further lawful basis and appropriate information.

Parents or carers should inform the Club of any change in circumstances that may affect the use of a child's image, including any safeguarding concern, court order, or other legal restriction.

The Club will ensure that:

- children are appropriately dressed and presented in a way that is suitable for the activity and publication;
- images focus, where possible, on the activity rather than unnecessarily identifying an individual child;
- images are respectful, appropriate and do not place a child at risk of harm, embarrassment, or exploitation;
- personal information accompanying images is kept to the minimum necessary and appropriate;
- children subject to court orders, care proceedings or other legal or safeguarding restrictions are not identified or have their images published where this is prohibited or would create a risk;
- images and recordings are stored securely and only accessed by authorised persons;
- images and recordings are retained and disposed of in accordance with the Club's data protection and retention requirements; and
- images must not be taken, stored, or shared on personal devices, including personal mobile phones, tablets, or personal cloud storage.

Club photographers and approved third parties must display appropriate Club identification when undertaking photography or filming on behalf of the Club and must comply with all Club safeguarding and photography requirements.

Recordings made for legitimate Club purposes, including coaching, analysis, player development, match or event recording and safeguarding purposes, must be undertaken using Club-approved equipment and systems and stored securely.

Mobile phones, cameras, and other recording devices must not be used in changing rooms, showers, toilets, or other areas where children may reasonably expect privacy.

Any concerns about inappropriate photography, filming, use or sharing of images involving children must be reported immediately to the Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

The Club will take particular care where images or recordings may reveal a child's location, personal circumstances or other information that could place them at risk. Images will only be published through Club-approved channels and in accordance with the Club's safeguarding and data protection arrangements.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

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

The Club uses the term "sharing nudes and semi-nudes" to describe the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or livestreams involving anyone under the age of 18. This includes images taken by a child or another person and images that have been digitally altered or created using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes or "deep nudes". Images may be shared through social media, gaming platforms, messaging applications, online forums or directly between devices. Young people may use a range of terms to describe this behaviour.

Every incident requires a safeguarding response, whether the image was shared without agreement or is described by the children involved as consensual. Apparent agreement does not remove the safeguarding concern. The Club will consider the child's age and understanding, any pressure or coercion, differences in age or power, how the image was created and shared, and the risk of further harm.

The reasons why children and young people create or share nudes and semi-nudes can vary and are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Each incident must therefore be considered on its individual circumstances, with the welfare and protection of the child or young person as the primary consideration.

Where an adult is involved in the creation, possession, request or sharing of nude or semi-nude imagery involving a person under 18, this must be treated as a safeguarding concern and referred immediately to the Head of Safeguarding. The Club will consider whether an immediate referral to the Police and/or local authority children's social care is required. Current guidance identifies adult involvement, grooming, coercion, blackmail, and immediate risk of harm as circumstances requiring an urgent multi-agency response.

What to do if an incident comes to your attention

All incidents involving nudes or semi-nudes must be reported immediately to the Head of Safeguarding or an appropriate member of the Club's Safeguarding Team.

Staff must:

- Not view, copy, print, save, download, store or share the image or video.
- Not ask a child or young person to send, show, or download the image.
- Not forward the image or video to anyone else.
- If the image is shown inadvertently, do not retain or share it and report the incident immediately to the Safeguarding Team.
- Not delete the image or ask the child or young person to delete it, as the Safeguarding Team may need to consider what action is required.

- Not investigate the incident themselves or ask detailed questions about the image or its contents. The Safeguarding Team will determine what information is required and how the matter should be managed.
- Not share information about the incident with other staff, players, parents, or carers unless directed to do so by the Safeguarding Team.
- Not blame, shame, or criticise any child or young person involved.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling a trusted adult, explain that the matter needs to be reported, and reassure them that they will be supported.

In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Safeguarding or another appropriately designated safeguarding professional may need to view the imagery as part of a safeguarding assessment. This should only occur where necessary to safeguard the child or young person and in accordance with the current UKCIS guidance.

The Head of Safeguarding will assess the circumstances of each incident and determine the appropriate safeguarding response. This may include consultation with parents or carers, where appropriate, and referrals to children's social care, the Police, or other relevant agencies. Parents or carers will normally be involved unless there is a safeguarding reason why doing so may place the child or young person at further risk.

Where an incident involves coercion, grooming, blackmail, threats, distribution without consent, adult involvement, sexually abusive or violent content, a child under 13, or an immediate risk of harm, the Club will seek urgent advice and make appropriate referrals to the Police and/or local authority children's social care.

The Club will respond proportionately to incidents involving children and young people and will consider the motivation, circumstances, age, maturity, vulnerability, and level of risk involved. The focus will remain on safeguarding, supporting those affected and preventing further harm.

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

Social Media and Electronic Communication

The Club recognises that social media and other electronic communication can be positive ways to engage with children, young people, and wider audiences. However, they can also create safeguarding risks.

Adults working with or on behalf of the Club must:

- not add, follow, accept, or otherwise connect with children for whom they have responsibility on personal social media accounts;
- not use personal social media accounts to communicate privately with children for whom they have responsibility;
- avoid one-to-one electronic communication with children wherever possible. Where communication is necessary, it should be through an approved Club channel and, where appropriate, include the child's parent, carer, or other responsible adult;
- use only Club-approved communication methods and accounts when communicating with children in relation to Club activities; and
- report any inappropriate or concerning online communication involving a child in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures.

The Club's Social Media Policy provides further guidance on the appropriate use of social media and electronic communication and should be read alongside this policy.

These requirements apply regardless of the social media platform or method of electronic communication used.

31 Communicating with Children

The following guidance supports the Club's safeguarding responsibilities and helps ensure that communication with children is appropriate, transparent, and professional, while also protecting adults from misunderstandings or unfounded allegations.

Communication requirements

- Obtain written consent from a parent, carer, or other person with parental responsibility before communicating with a child through electronic means.
- Use only Club-approved platforms and communication channels, such as the Performance Management Application (PMA), Heja or other platforms approved by the Club.
- Staff, volunteers, and partners must not use personal social media accounts, personal email addresses, personal messaging accounts, or personal telephone numbers to

communicate with children or their parents/carers.

- Do not share personal contact details with children or use communication channels for personal or non-Club-related conversations.
- Communication must be limited to matters relating to the child's involvement with the Club, such as training, fixtures, travel arrangements, timings, events, or other Club activities.
- Wherever possible, communication with children should take place through a group communication or include the child's parent/carer or another appropriate Club representative.
- Staff and partners must not engage in private or one-to-one messaging with a child. If a child sends a direct message, the communication should not continue privately. Where a response is necessary, it should be moved to an approved channel and include the parent/carer and/or an appropriate Club representative.
- Emails from a child should only be responded to where they relate directly to Club matters and the communication includes, or is copied to, the child's parent/carer or an appropriate Club representative.
- Personal photographs, jokes, messages, or other content unrelated to Club activities must not be shared with children.

Concerns and inappropriate communication

Any inappropriate, concerning, or non-Club-related communication received from a child, parent or carer must be reported to the Head of Safeguarding or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Messages, images, or other relevant information must not be deleted. They should be retained and provided to the Safeguarding Team so that the concern can be assessed and appropriate action taken.

The Head of Safeguarding or a designated member of the Safeguarding Team will determine the appropriate response, including whether parents/carers or any relevant statutory or regulatory agencies need to be informed.

These requirements apply to all electronic communication with children, regardless of the platform or technology used.

32 Lone Working and One-to-One Situations

Lone Working

For the purposes of this Policy, a lone worker is a member of staff, volunteer or partner who carries out activities without direct contact with, or supervision from, another member of staff or appropriate adult.

Lone workers are expected to:

- work in an open and transparent manner and avoid any conduct that could reasonably raise safeguarding concerns;
- ensure lone working is appropriately risk assessed, particularly where children or young people are involved;
- ensure that an appropriate person knows where they are working, the nature of the activity and the expected duration, where appropriate;
- follow agreed check-in, communication, and emergency arrangements;
- not visit children or young people in their homes outside agreed Club arrangements;
- not invite children or young people to their own home, or to the home of a family member, colleague, or friend;
- ensure that any contact or meetings with children or young people outside agreed working arrangements are authorised by, and known to, the Club; and
- report any safeguarding concern, incident or unexpected situation arising during lone working in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures.

Further requirements and practical guidance for lone working are set out in the Club's Lone Worker Policy and relevant Risk Assessments.

33 Supervision Ratios

Supervision of Children and Young People

Staff and partners must provide appropriate supervision of children and young people in their care at all times. The level of supervision required will depend on the activity and the needs of the children and young people involved.

There is no single statutory supervision ratio that applies to organisations outside the education and early years sectors. The Club will follow relevant safeguarding guidance and use risk assessment to determine appropriate supervision levels.

As a minimum, the Club expects **at least two adults to be present when working with or supervising children and young people**, wherever practicable. Two adults should not be regarded as a fixed ratio; some activities or groups may require additional adults.

Supervision arrangements should consider:

- the age, number and needs of the children and young people;
- their behaviour, abilities, and level of independence;
- any disabilities or additional needs;
- the nature, location, and duration of the activity;

- the level of risk associated with the activity;
- whether the activity involves travel, changing facilities, overnight stays, or other additional safeguarding considerations; and
- the experience and suitability of the adults providing supervision.

Where young people are involved in helping to supervise younger children, only adults aged 18 or over should be counted when calculating adult-to-child ratios.

Children with Disabilities or Additional Needs

Children and young people with disabilities or additional needs may require increased supervision or additional support. The Club will consider their individual needs when determining appropriate supervision arrangements.

A risk assessment should be completed for activities where appropriate and should inform the level of supervision required. Where practicable, the views of children and their parents or carers should be considered when assessing and meeting individual needs.

Further guidance on supervision requirements may be provided by the NSPCC and other relevant safeguarding bodies and should be considered alongside the Club's risk assessment processes.

Toilet Arrangements

Toilet arrangements must protect the privacy, dignity and safety of children and young people.

- Where possible, children should use toilets appropriate to their age and gender, with adult and child toilet facilities kept separate where facilities allow.
- Adults should not enter toilets or changing areas unnecessarily and should respect children's privacy.
- An adult who has not completed the Club's required safeguarding checks and approval processes must not have unsupervised responsibility for children or take a child to the toilet alone.
- Where children require assistance with toileting, this should be managed in accordance with the child's individual needs, agreed arrangements and the Club's safeguarding procedures.
- For larger groups, children should be encouraged to use toilet facilities in groups where appropriate, while sufficient adults remain available to supervise the rest of the group and maintain an accurate head count.
- Supervision arrangements should take account of the age, needs, abilities, and circumstances of the children.

First Aid

The Club will ensure that appropriate first-aid arrangements are in place for activities involving children and young people.

- The level of first-aid provision must be appropriate to the activity, location, number and needs of the children, and the risks involved.
- Activities should have access to an appropriately trained and qualified first aider, where required by the relevant risk assessment.
- One-off events and activities should include first aid and medical arrangements as part of the risk assessment.
- Where an external medical or first-aid provider is used, the Club should ensure that the provider is appropriately qualified, competent, and able to meet the needs of the activity or event.
- Staff should know how to access first-aid assistance and how to report and respond to accidents and medical emergencies.

Travelling with Children and Young People

Travel arrangements must be planned to ensure children and young people are appropriately supervised and safeguarded.

The appropriate level of adult supervision will depend on:

- the number and age of the children;
- their individual needs, behaviours, and abilities;
- the nature, duration, and destination of the journey;
- the type and size of vehicle being used;
- the length and complexity of the journey; and
- any additional risks identified through the relevant risk assessment.

Where children are travelling in a vehicle, arrangements should ensure that the driver can concentrate fully on driving and that children are appropriately supervised. Where the size or nature of the journey requires it, a second adult or additional adults should accompany the group.

Travel arrangements should be risk assessed in advance, with appropriate emergency contact, communication, and contingency arrangements in place.

Adults responsible for transporting or supervising children must meet the Club's relevant safeguarding, driving, and suitability requirements.

34

Confidentiality

Staff and partners may receive confidential information about children to carry out their role. They must use it only for a legitimate work purpose.

- They must never use information about a child or family for their own or another person's advantage.
- Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass children.
- Share personal information only with people who need it for a legitimate purpose. Use anonymised information where identity is not necessary.
- A safeguarding concern may require information to be shared with the Safeguarding Team or an external agency. Share without delay when this is necessary to protect a child or another person. Consent is not the default lawful basis for safeguarding information sharing.
- If unsure, seek prompt advice from the Head of Safeguarding or another designated lead. Do not let uncertainty delay emergency action or a necessary referral. Send media enquiries to the communications team and legal enquiries to the appropriate legal contact.
- Personal information must be handled in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Club's data handling policies. Staff and partners must:
- treat information about children and families as private and secure; and
- seek safeguarding or data protection advice when unsure whether information should be shared.

35 Matchday Requirements

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

Supporters under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a responsible adult when attending Watford FC matches, both home and away.

This requirement also applies to supporters aged between 14 and 17 years who wish to attend matches without being accompanied by a responsible adult, unless an appropriate consent form has been completed in advance of purchasing tickets.

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

- Contact a responsible adult to either attend the match with the child or make appropriate arrangements for the child to leave the stadium.
- Require the child to leave the stadium unless an appropriate consent form can be produced.
- The Club's responsibility towards the child begins from the moment the child enters the stadium and ends when the child leaves the stadium.
- If an accompanied child under the age of 14, or an adult at risk, is left unattended at a match or is found alone within the stadium, their welfare and safety must be protected. The Head of Operations must be alerted immediately and the appropriate safeguarding procedures followed. On a matchday, the Head of Operations is the designated safeguarding lead.
- The Head of Operations and Senior Deputy Head of Safety and Security have primacy for operational safeguarding decisions and will ensure that safeguarding concerns are appropriately managed and escalated in accordance with Club procedures. They will work closely with the Head of Operations Senior Deputy Head of Safety and Security, the safeguarding team, and other relevant personnel to ensure the welfare and safety of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- A separate **Matchday Safeguarding Policy** is in place and should be referred to for further guidance on safeguarding arrangements and procedures.
- The Club does not permit supporters under the age of 18 to travel without an accompanying adult. Supporters under the age of 18 must either be accompanied by their parent/guardian or a designated responsible adult.

  The **Under 18 Consent Form** is available at www.tickets.watfordfc.com, where an adult can be designated as responsible for the young person. The designated adult must also travel on the official Club coach for the journey.

  Completed consent forms must 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. Responsibility for the child's onward journey will remain with the individual responsible for them.

  Further details outlining the Club's ticketing terms and conditions for home matches, away matches and season ticket purchases, together with the relevant consent form, can be found at www.tickets.watfordfc.com.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Signs and Indicators of Abuse		**Appendix 11.** Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)
Appendix 2. What to Do if You Receive a Safeguarding Disclosure		**Appendix 12.** Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)
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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 in 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, withdrawal, 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 focus on one ideology. They express a desire/ with 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

Respond to the disclosure as it happens. Make sure the child's immediate needs are met and help them feel supported. Do not investigate. Take the disclosure seriously even if you are unsure whether it is accurate. Your role is to listen, make the situation safe, report and record.

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 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. Physical contact may upset them.

Stage 2

Once the child is safe and supported, tell the Head of Safeguarding or another member of the Safeguarding Team immediately. Contact children's social care or Police directly if there is immediate danger, delay would increase risk, safeguarding leads cannot be reached, or a safeguarding lead is implicated.

Stage 3

Report and record the concern immediately. Use CPOMS or the Club's online reporting form and write what you saw and heard while it is fresh in your memory.

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 were 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**

What Happens Next?

The Head of Safeguarding or Safeguarding Team should confirm that the concern has been received and explain any action you need to take. They may be unable to share confidential details. If you receive no acknowledgement, follow up and escalate if you remain concerned.

If you believe the concern has not been handled appropriately, contact the Board Senior Safeguarding Lead, use the confidential reporting procedure or contact children's social care, Police, EFL or The FA as appropriate.

A disclosure is not the only reason to report. You may notice signs, witness an incident or receive information from someone else.

Anonymous and partial information must still be recorded and reported. Do not wait for proof.

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

The Club will assess every concern and take proportionate action. This may include a referral to the Police, local authority children's social care, LADO, DBS, EFL, The FA or another relevant body.

Remember the child's welfare is of paramount importance.

Safeguarding Procedures

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

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

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

Process for Raising a Concern

How do I raise concern? You do not need to have firm evidence before raising 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.

If there is immediate danger, call 999 before making the internal report.

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 poof 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, MASH or local children social care

RECORD

- You should also make sure you make 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 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,**
- **Do not promise to keep confidentiality or promise a possible outcome,**
- **Ask open questions by using TED – Tell me. Explain to me. Describe to me**

Is there an immediate risk to the Child or Adult at Risk and/or are they in need of urgent medical treatment?

No

Yes

- **Contact emergency services by calling 999.**
- **Inform the parent/carer, unless doing so would put the Child, yourself, or others at risk.**
- **Contact your Safeguarding Lead or member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.**

Are you a casual member of staff?

Yes

- **Report your concern within 8 hours by scanning the QR code below or visit www.watfordfc.com/supporters/safeguarding**
- **Refer to the WFC Yellow Safeguarding Card**

The Safeguarding team will deal with the case from here – but may contact you if they need further information or need you to take an action.

No

- **Report your concern directly on CPOMS.**
- **Use the QR code if you cannot access CPOMS.**
- **All concerns MUST then be uploaded to CPOMS within 8 hours.**

The Safeguarding team will deal with the case from here – but may contact you if they need further information or need you to take an action.

Appendix 4. Dealing With Concerns in a Football Setting

You have witnessed an incident or come upon information which raises concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a Child, or an individual behaviour towards them.

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

REMEMBER – YOU CAN ALWAYS CONTACT THE 24-HOUR NSPCC HELPLINE (0808 800 5000) FOR GUIDANCE.

Is there an immediate risk to the child and/or are they in need of urgent medical treatment?

No

Report your concern within 8hrs by using CPOMS account or scanning the QR code on the front cover of this document.

Club Safeguarding Team will:

- Follow Club procedure.
- Seek advice from statutory/partners.

Where appropriate statutory agencies/ partners give advice to HoS:

- Give advice for the Safeguarding Team to action.
- Monitor the behaviour of the individual or Club as required.

Where deemed appropriate, the PL or EFL Lead Designated Officer will contact the relevant authority, and further action may

If referred to the FA Safeguarding Team, The FA Safeguarding Review Panel will consider the case. The possible outcomes include:

- Advice and/or warning as to future conduct.
- Independent assessment.
- Further support or training.
- Supervision and/or monitoring.
- Suspension.
- No case to answer.

All appeals regarding The FAs decisions will be dealt with by The FA appeals procedures which can be found in The FA Handbook, available on www.TheFA.com

Yes

Contact emergency services:

- 999 Police and/or Ambulance.
- Safeguarding Team

If you telephone an ambulance or take the young person to hospital. You need to inform the parents you are doing this. * Inform the doctor of your concerns in relation to child protection issues (the doctor will take the appropriate action). Inform HoS of the action you have taken, and they will inform the FA Safeguarding Team.

I am not sure.

Does the abuse involve the Club's? Head of Safeguarding?

Yes

Contact the Club's HR Manager, Legal Director or Senior Safeguarding Lead immediately and follow their guidance.

No

Contact the Safeguard Team immediately and follow their guidance.

HoS or Safeguarding Team will inform as necessary either:

- Children's Social Care.
- Police.
- FA Safeguarding Team.

If unable to contact designated PL or EFL Lead Designated Officer, contact:

- Children's Social Care.
- Police.
- NSPCC 24-hour Helpline.
- FA Safeguarding Team.

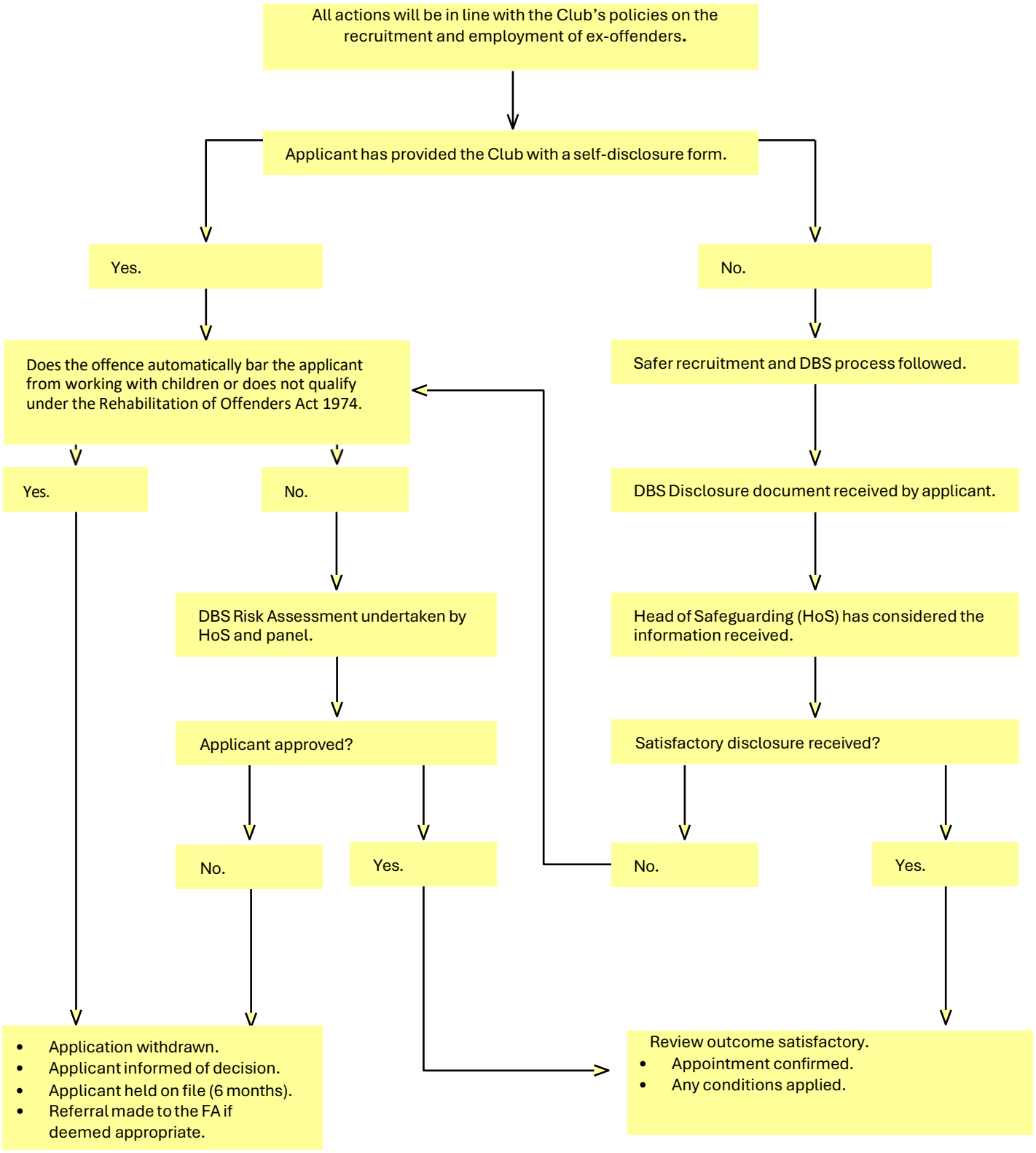
Possible Outcomes:

- Referral to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Police enquiry.
- Criminal proceedings.
- Civil proceedings.

If in doubt, contact Head of Safeguarding

*If the parents are allegedly involved in the abuse, only inform them that you are taking the child to hospital. Do not share any other information.

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)

Appendix 6. Managing Allegations Against an Adult

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

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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.

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

- Behave 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.

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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

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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.

Please Note - The reporting process set out above applies to Club staff and representatives. Trust and Watford Women's FC staff should follow their own organisation's safeguarding and allegations procedures.

Appendix 7. Internet Grooming & Online Exploitation

Online grooming is a process used to build trust, create dependency or use pressure, threats or deception to exploit a child. It may involve sexual, financial, criminal or other abuse.

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

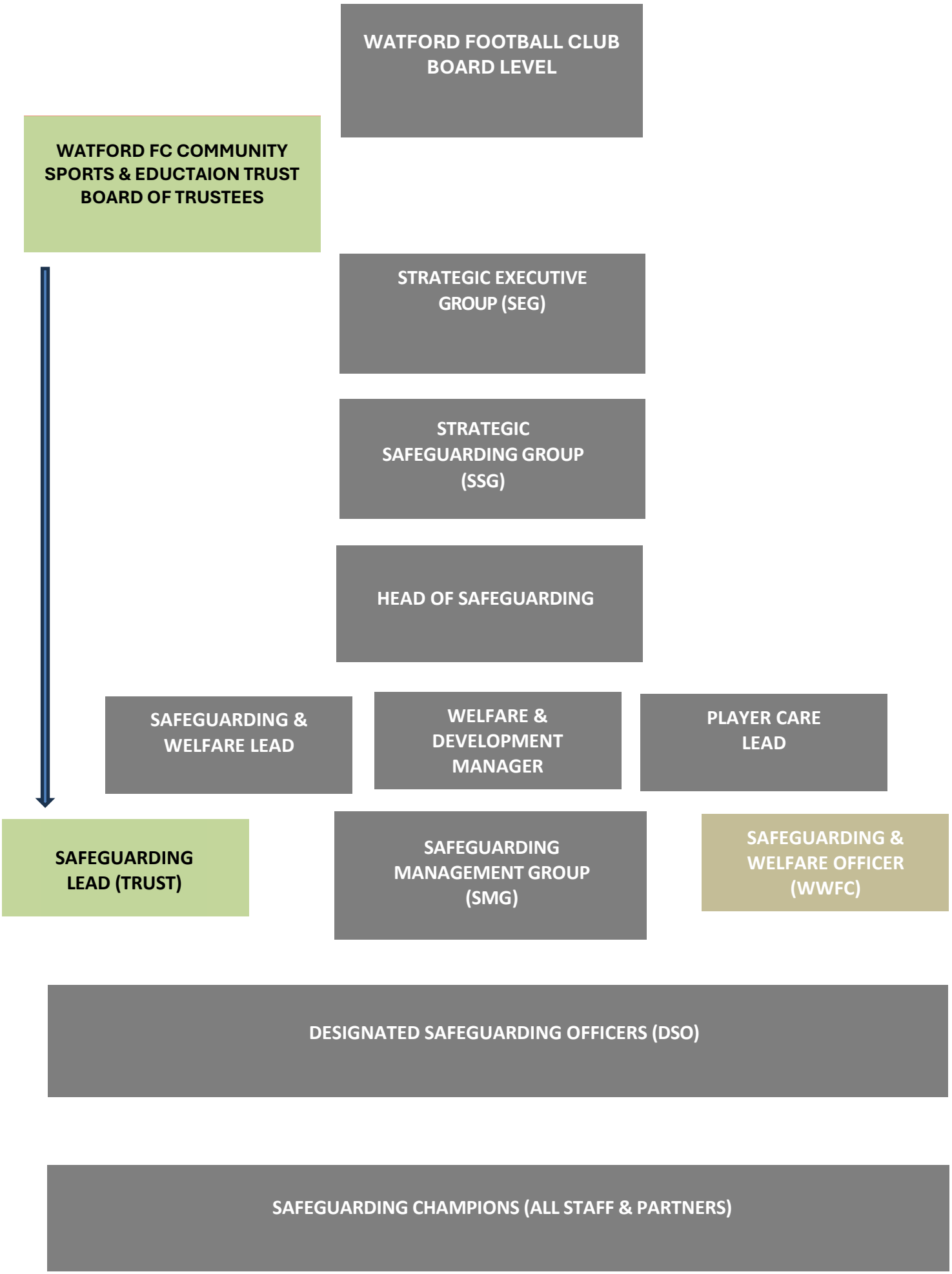
What might a friend see?

- 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



Appendix 9. Key Safeguarding Contacts

Head of Safeguarding (HOS)
07855 300439

Head of Operations (HoO)
07707 289044

Senior Deputy Head of Safety and Security (SDHoSS)
07514 658482

Safeguarding and Welfare Lead (SWL)
07718 124522

Welfare and Development Lead (WDL)
07784 228546

Player Care Lead (PCL)
07964 082163

Safeguarding Lead (Trust) (SLT)
07761 207888

WWFC Safeguarding & Welfare Officer (S&WO)
07938 482590

Police
101 or 999 in an emergency

English Football League Safeguarding Team
01772 325490 // safeguarding@efl.com

Premier League Safeguarding Team
0207 864 9000 // safeguarding@premierleague.com

FA's Safeguarding Team (24hrs)
0844 980 8200 // 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. Safeguarding Executive Group (SEG)

Safeguarding Executive Group (SEG) Members

Professor Stuart Timperley
Non-Executive Director & Senior Safeguarding Lead

Rosemary Inskipp
Trustee & Senior Safeguarding Lead

Iain Taker
Legal Director
iain.taker@watfordfc.com

Rob Smith
Community Director
rob.smith@watfordfctrust.com

Appendix 11. Strategic Safeguarding Group (SSG)

Safeguarding Board Leads

Scott Duxbury
Chairman & 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

Professor Stuart Timperley
Non-Executive Director & Senior Safeguarding Lead

Iain Taker
Legal Director
iain.taker@watfordfc.com

Ian Pope
Operations & Facilities Director
ian.pope@watfordfc.com

Richard Johnson
Academy Director
richard.johnson@watfordfc.com

Appendix 12. Safeguarding Management Group (SMG)

Safeguarding Lead

Rob Clarke
Head of Safeguarding
rob.clarke@watfordfc.com

Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) Members

Rob Clarke
Head of Safeguarding
rob.clarke@watfordfc.com

Leah Crocket
Safeguarding & Welfare Lead
leah.crocket@watfordfc.com

Anne-Marie Burn
Welfare & Development Manager
annemarie.burn@watfordfc.com

TBA
Player Care Lead
TBA@watfordfc.com

Alison Chadwick
Senior Deputy Head of Safety & Security
alison.chadwick@watfordfc.com

Jessica Doran
Safeguarding & Welfare Officer (WWFC)
jessica.doran@watfordfc.com

Clare Deacon
Safeguarding Lead (Trust)
clare.deacon@watfordfctrust.com

Kristian Hitchins
Head of Business Services (Trust)
kristian.hitchins@watfordfctrust.com

Appendix 13. Men's First Team Designated Safeguarding Officers

Safeguarding Lead

TBA
Player Care Lead
TBA@watfordfc.com

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Gianmarco Ceresa
Team Manager
gianmarco.ceresa@watfordfc.com

Adam Payne
Junior Sport Scientist
adam.payne@watfordfc.com

Dr. Nishal Shah
First Team Doctor
nishal.shah@watfordfc.com

TBA
Player Care Lead
TBA@watfordfc.com

Jon Marks
Head of Football Administration
jon.marks@watfordfc.com

Appendix 14. Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers

Safeguarding Lead

Leah Crocket
Safeguarding & Welfare Lead
leah.crockett@watfordfc.com

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Leah Crocket
Safeguarding & Welfare Lead
leah.crocket@watfordfc.com

Ryan Jackett
Academy PDP Coach
ryan.jackett@watfordfc.com

James Banathy
Academy FP/YDP Coach
james.benathy@watfordfc.com

Chrissy Murray
Academy Therapist
chrissy.murray@watfordfc.com

TBA
Player Care Lead
TBA@watfordfc.com

Adam Balletta
Asst. Head of Coaching Lead FP/YDP
adam.balletta@watfordfc.com

Rebecca Tidmarsh
Academy PDP Physio (U18)
rebecca.tidmarsh@watfordfc.com

Rebecca McDermott
Academy Operations Manager
rebecca.mcdermott@watfordfc.com

Appendix 15. Men's Matchday Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding Lead

Richard Green
Head of Operations
rick.green@watfordfc.com

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Richard Green
Head of Operations
rick.green@watfordfc.com

Ian Pope
Operations & Facilities Director
ian.pope@watfordfc.com

Alison Chadwick
Senior Deputy Head of Safety & Security
alison.chadwick@watfordfc.com

Paul Dhanjal
Deputy Head of Safety & Security
paul.dhanjal@watfordfc.com

Carol Robinson
Operations & Facilities Administrator
carol.robinson@watfordfc.com

Appendix 16. Watford Women Designated Safeguarding Officers

Safeguarding Lead

Jessica Doran
Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
jessica.doran@watfordfc.com

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Jessica Doran
Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
jessica.doran@watfordfc.com

Helen Ward
Head of Women's Football
helen.ward@watfordfc.com

Renee Hector
Women's Head Coach
renee.hector@watfordfc.com

Appendix 17. Trust Designated Safeguarding Officers

Safeguarding Lead

Clare Deacon
Safeguarding Lead (Trust)
clare.deacon@watfordfctrust.com

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Luke Beaumont
Schools Sports Projects Officer
luke.beaumont@watfordfctrust.com

Elliot Bird
Schools Sports Projects Officer
elliot.bird@watfordfctrust.com

Luke Denis Le Seve
Health & Wellbeing Officer
luke.denisleseve@watfordfctrust.com

Madeline Hurley
EDI Officer
madeline.hurley@watfordfctrust.com

Laura Figg
Higher Education – Strategic Lead
laura.figg@watfordfctrust.com

Tasha Hiscock
Community Centre Manager
tasha.hiscock@watfordfctrust.com

Nathan Masters
Player Development Manager
nathan.masters@watfordfctrust.com

Matthew Nelson
Compliance and Risk Officer
matthew.nelson@watfordfctrust.com

Paul Palmer
Business Support Officer
paul.palmer@watfordfctrust.com

Ines Perreira
Youth & Health Wellbeing Officer
ines.perreria@watfordfctrust.com

Lucy Tearle
Community Projects Manager (Young People)
lucy.tearle@watfordfctrust.com

Appendix 18. Other Applicable Policies and Legislation

Relevant Legislation/Regulations:

- The Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Children's and Families Act 2014
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Online Safety Act 2023
- The Football Association (The FA) Safeguarding Children Regulations and Safeguarding Children Policy

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 19. Safeguarding Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABE	**Achieving Best Evidence** - guidance for interviewing victims and witnesses, including children and vulnerable or intimidated adults, during criminal investigations and for the use of special measures.
CAIU	**Child Abuse Investigation Unit** (Police)
CAMHS	**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**
CEOP	**Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command** - part of the National Crime Agency (NCA), working to protect children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation online.
CiN	**Child in Need**
CO	**Care Order -** Places a child under the care of the Local Authority. This is otherwise known as a child 'being in care.'
CPP	**Child Protection Plan** - A plan created following a child protection conference that sets out how the child can be kept safe
CSAM	**Child Sexual Abuse Material(s)**
CSE	**Child Sexual Exploitation**
DBS	**Disclosure and Barring Service –** responsible for processing criminal record checks and maintaining the Adults' and Children's Barred Lists.
DDSL	**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**
DSL	**Designated Safeguarding Lead**
DSO	**Designated Safeguarding Officer**
DAPN	**Domestic Abuse Protection Notice -** a police-issued notice intended to provide immediate protection from domestic abuse. It forms part of the Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) framework.
DAPO	**Domestic Abuse Protection Order -** a court order designed to protect victims from domestic abuse and impose prohibitions and/or positive requirements on perpetrators.
DA	**Domestic Abuse**
EHCP	**Education, Health, and Care Plan**
EDT	**Emergency Duty Team –** Local Authorities out of hours team)
EPO	**Emergency Protection Order -** 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
EWO	**Education Welfare Officer**
FM	**Forced Marriages**
FGM	**Female Genital Mutilation**
FII	**Fabricated or Inducted Illness -** where a child is suspected of being subjected to illness fabrication or induction by another person.
HBA	**Honour Based Abuse -** abusive or violent behaviour associated with perceived breaches of the so-called honour or behavioural expectations of an individual, family or community.
HSB	**Harmful Sexual Behaviour -** inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children

ICO	**Interim Care Order -** Local Authority Parental Responsibility with the parents of children they believe to be at risk.
INCELS	**Involuntary Celibates** - communities known for promoting misogyny, extremism, or harmful ideologies.
KCSIE	**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 –** statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England concerning safeguarding and safer recruitment. The 2026 edition came into force on 1 September 2026.
LAC	**Looked After Children –** formerly Children in Care.
LADO	**Local Authority Designated Officer -** 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.
LCSPR	**Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review -** statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England concerning safeguarding and safer recruitment. The 2026 edition came into force on 1 September 2026.
LSCP	**Local Safeguarding Children Partnership –** the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangement established by the safeguarding partners. This replaced the former Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) arrangements.
MAPPA	**Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements** – arrangements for assessing and managing the risks posed by certain sexual, violent and other relevant offenders.
MARAC	**Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference -** representatives from various agencies come together to address the highest risk domestic abuse cases
MARF	**Multi Agency Referral Form.**
MASH	**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub –** a multi-agency arrangement for information-sharing, assessment and safeguarding responses. It is not necessarily a "single point for all professional agencies".
NCA	**National Crime Agency**
NFA	**No Further Action**
NEET	**Not in Education, Employment or Training**
OFSTED	**Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills** – the independent inspectorate responsible for inspecting education, children's services and skills provision within its remit.
PPO	**Police Protection Office –** action taken by the police under section 46 of the Children Act 1989 where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm.
PRU	**Pupil Referral Unit**
Section 17 or S17	General duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of 'Children in Need' in their area. (Children's Act 1989)
Section 47 or S47	Local Authority assessment of a child's welfare when there are concerns of significant harm (Children's Act 1989)

SERAF	**Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Form** - identify the factors that may render children and young people vulnerable to being targeted for child sexual exploitation (CSE).
SEND	**Special Education Needs and Disability**
SOA 03	**Sexual Offences Act (2003)**
TAF	**Team Around the Family** – a multi-agency approach that brings together practitioners and the family to coordinate support where a child or family requires assistance from more than one service.
UNCRC	**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child –** an international human rights treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. The United Kingdom ratified the Convention in 1991.
UASC	**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child**
VVE	**Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation –** a term used by some safeguarding and policing organisations to describe risks and vulnerabilities associated with violence, exploitation and related harms. Local terminology may vary.
ViSOR	**Violent and Sex Offender Register –** a secure database used by relevant agencies in the management and risk assessment of certain sexual and violent offenders.
WT26	**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 –** statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children in England. It replaced the 2023 edition in 2026.

Appendix 20. 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; this form can be used and emailed directly to the Head of Safeguarding or another appropriate member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Failure to complete this form properly could result in the Club being unable to investigate an allegation/incident.

If you have a safeguarding concern, please complete this form. (All fields are mandatory to complete)

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

Date of Birth:
(Individual you are raising the concern on behalf of – if known) _____

Your Name _____

Your Email _____

Your Contact Number _____

How are you connected to the individual? _____

When did the incident occur?

Time of the incident

Where did the incident occur (location)?

Please give a description of what has happened/disclosed?

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

Who was the incident reported to (if anyone)?

What actions were taken (if any)?

Is there anything else you wish to share?

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