

West Midlands County Schools' Football Association

Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

West Midlands County Schools' Football Association acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any Association football activity. We subscribe to The Football Association's (The FA) Safeguarding Children – Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

The key principles of The FA Safeguarding Children Policy are that:

- The child's/young person's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.
- We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse.
- This Association recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in the Association.

West Midlands County Schools' Football Association has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, Association official or medical staff.

We endorse and adopt The FA's Responsible Recruitment guidelines for recruiting volunteers and we will:

- Specify what the role is and what tasks it involves.
- Request identification documents.
- As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them.
- Ask for and follow up with 2 references before appointing someone.
- Require an FA DBS Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with ESFA policy.

All current West Midlands County Schools' Football Association members who are regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children and young people will be required to complete a DBS Enhanced Disclosure via The FA DBS Unit.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of this Schools' Football Association, guidance will be sought from ESFA Welfare Officers and The FA.

It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via The FA DBS Unit Enhanced Disclosure and that all decisions will be made in the best interests of children and young people.

It is accepted that The FA aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children and to minimize the risk of 'grooming' within football.

West Midlands County Schools' Football Association supports The FA's Whistleblowing Policy:

Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can 'whistle blow' by contacting:

The FA Safeguarding Team on 0844 980 8200 4787,
by writing to The FA Case Manager at
The Football Association,

Wembley Stadium,
PO Box 1966,
London SW10 9EQ

Or alternatively by going direct to the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC. This Association encourages everyone to know about it and utilize it if necessary.

West Midlands County Schools' Football Association has appointed an Association Welfare Officer in line with The FA's role profile and required completion of the Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officers Workshop. The post holder (**Nick Loftus**) will be involved with Welfare Officer training provided by The FA/ESFA and/or County FA. The Association Welfare Officer is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person.

The Association Welfare Officer will liaise directly with the ESFA Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a pro-active role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst Association members.

We acknowledge and endorse The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse.

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our Association. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the Association Welfare Officer in cases of serious bullying the ESFA Child Welfare Officer may be contacted.

Respect codes of conduct for Players, Parents/Spectators, Officials and Coaches have been implemented by this Association.

In order to validate these Respect codes of conduct the Association has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by the ESFA/FA in more serious circumstances.

Reporting your concerns about the welfare of a child or young person:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility if you are worried about a child it is important that you report your concerns – no action is not an option.

- i. If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Association Welfare Officer.

- ii. If the issue is one of poor practice the Association Welfare Officer will either:
 - deal with the matter themselves or
 - seek advice from the ESFA Child Welfare Officer
- iii. If the concern is more serious – possible child abuse, where possible, contact the ESFA Child Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.
- iv. If the child needs immediate medical treatment take them to a hospital or call an ambulance and tell them this is a child protection concern. Let your Association Welfare Officer know what action you have taken, they in turn will inform the ESFA Child Welfare Officer.
- v. If at any time you are not able to contact your Association Welfare Officer or the matter is clearly serious then you can either:
 - contact your ESFA Child Welfare Officer directly
 - contact the Police or Children's Social Care
 - call the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

NB – The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are available via www.TheFA.com/Footballsafe – click on the 'downloads' under Policy and Procedures. The policy outlines in detail what to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child and includes flow diagrams which describe this process. How to make a referral is also covered in the Safeguarding Children workshop. For more information on this workshop contact your ESFA Child Welfare Officer.

Further advice on FA Safeguarding Children matters can be obtained from ESFA Child Welfare Officer:

Martin Duffield

Email: martin.duffield@schoolsfa.com

Phone: 07852276416 or 01384242526

Your West Midlands County SFA Safeguarding Officer is Nick Loftus

Email: nickloftus@wolves.co.uk

Phone: 07968947554