



CLUB WELFARE OFFICER SUPPORT PACK 21/22

Meet the Cambridgeshire FA Safeguarding Team



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The key role of a Club Welfare Officer



Volunteer Welfare Officers

Football is proud to have a network of 8,500 welfare officers across the grassroots youth game, supporting safe and fun environments for everyone. If you are already a welfare officer then thank you for all that you are doing. If you want to find out more about the role and/or are considering becoming a welfare officer then the following information is for you.

Responsibilities:

1. Be clear about the club's/league's responsibilities when running activities for children and young people.
2. Help club/league personnel to recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and to actively play their part.

Make sure everyone knows you

To be effective as welfare officer it's vital that everyone in your club/league knows who you are and how you can be contacted especially the players, parents and coaches. You should sit on the club/league committee and as a club welfare officer you should know your coaches and manager. If you are part of a large or expanding club/league you may wish to encourage the committee to appoint an additional welfare officer(s) to support the work you are doing. We would recommend clubs with more than 10 teams consider having additional welfare officers.

Required Qualifications



Please note: All courses are now delivered centrally by The FA.

Please remember to select Cambridgeshire FA as your county when booking courses.

Safeguarding Children Course

The course is designed to give you an understanding of safeguarding concerns, as well as how to provide a secure environment for young people.

Upon completion of the course, you'll receive a Safeguarding Children qualification and certificate that will appear on your FAN account and will be valid for two years. You can return to the course to refresh your knowledge at any time.

[Click here to book your place](#)

Welfare Officers Course

This two-hour course is mandatory for anyone taking on the role of Welfare Officer for their grassroots club or league. Building on the Safeguarding Children Course, it focuses on the specifics of the role, what is required, and the key tools needed to carry out the role. It also explains where to go for professional support and guidance, and how to access more information if needed.

Delivered via a virtual classroom, learners should expect an interactive session and will be encouraged to participate through a chat function as well as via microphone, where relevant.

[Click here to book your place](#)

Safeguarding for Committee Members

This course will support you, as a committee member, to identify your individual and collective responsibility in safeguarding, so as a team you create an environment where the wellbeing of children and young people (under 18s) is central to all that you do.

[Click here to book your place](#)

You will also be required to have an in-date FA Accepted Enhanced DBS Check.



DBS Checks



The FA's Policy

As part of our safeguarding children strategy, The FA requires those working in eligible roles with children and young people to pass a criminal records check. This is in line with legislation and government guidance and is standard practice.

The FA provide the framework and guidance for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in football and the leagues and clubs then have to implement this to ensure that those who are required to have checks done, do so.

The majority of checks are processed electronically, ensuring that people can be confirmed to work with children and young people swiftly. Where the check highlights relevant information, this is investigated further and a risk assessment is carried out to establish whether or not they will be accepted to work with children and young people in football.

Who in my club needs a DBS check?

- All coaches and managers in youth football
- Club Welfare Officer
- Qualified referees officiating in youth football
- Coaches, managers and first-aiders in open age teams who have any players U18 registered for them

From October 2021 DBS checks will need to be completed through Whole Game System, to access guidance on how to do this [please click here](#)
For further details on DBS checks [please click here](#)





Distinguishing between poor practice & abuse

What is abuse?

Concerns identified as child abuse will fall within the following five categories:

1. Physical Abuse - A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person
2. Neglect - A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met, or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised
3. Sexual Abuse - An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs
4. Emotional Abuse - Persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person
5. Bullying - Persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person

Please note:

- *The judgement about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice may not be able to be made at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information*
- *Most poor practice concerns can be dealt with by the club or alternatively with support and guidance from the County FA*
- *All child abuse will be dealt with by The FA (in conjunction with the statutory agencies) and with the support of the County FA*

What is poor practice?

Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of children and young people are not afforded the necessary priority, so as their welfare is compromised.

Some examples are likely to be:

- When insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players)
- Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals and regularly or unfairly rejecting others (e.g. singling out and only focusing on the talented players and failing to involve the full squad)
- Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (e.g. changing in a 1:1 situation with a young referee)
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (e.g. a coach who ridicules and criticizes players who make a mistake during a match)
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g. allowing young players to set up goal posts unsupervised by adults)
- Failing to adhere to the club's codes of practice (e.g. openly verbally abusing the referee).



Dealing with poor practice

You become aware of a poor practice and / or possible abuse situation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm • If a child or young person is present, reassure him or her they are not to blame • Don't make promises of confidentiality or outcome • Keep questions to a minimum 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the concern poor practice or abuse? • For clarification, see guidance 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Club Constitution & Codes of Conduct / Procedures • Seek advice from the County Designated Safeguarding Officer 	
Where appropriate, the County Designated Safeguarding Officer will either: -	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice for the Club Welfare Officer to action • Monitor the behaviour of individual or club as required • Gather additional evidence • Refer concern to The FA Case Management Team for advice 	
Where deemed appropriate, contact will be made with and action taken by: -	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County FA Discipline Team • The County FA Football Development Officer • The County FA Development Manager • The Youth League Welfare Officer 	
Possible Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further information requested • Advice/warning as to future conduct/sanctions • Further training/support needed • No case to answer • Referral to The FA Case Management Team for action 	

You become aware of a poor practice and / or possible abuse situation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay calm• If a child or young person is present, reassure him or her they are not to blame• Don't make promises of confidentiality or outcome• Keep questions to a minimum	
Is the concern child abuse? Yes	
Is the child or young person in need of medical attention?	
Yes	No

- ↓
- Take the child or young person to hospital or telephone for an ambulance
 - Inform the doctor of your concerns in relation to child protection issues (doctor will take appropriate action)

Dealing with abuse continued



Refer to the Police and Social Services for investigation. They will advise on contacting parents	
Inform the County Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible of your actions that you have taken	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a factual record of events • Forward a copy of the information recorded to the County Designated Safeguarding Officer, including any action taken • The County Designated Safeguarding Officer will take appropriate action and alert The FA Case Management Team 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FA Case Management Team will investigate the allegations and liaise with other agencies involved. • The FA Case Management Team will consider all evidence • The FA Case Management Team make a final decision of the case 	
<p>Outcomes will either be: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and/or warning as to future conduct • Further support or training • Supervision and/or monitoring • Suspension • No case to answer 	

FA Policies

Over the years The FA has been asked for advice and guidance to help clubs create fun, safe and inclusive environments. This advice is available to download from their website. They have also gathered all the Guidance Notes as a complete directory below for easy reference.

[Please click here to access](#) the complete directory of best practice and guidance notes.



Here are some direct links to the policies and guidance documents that we are most frequently asked about. Please click the images below to directly download each policy.



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:
2.1

HOW TO REPORT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

FOR CLUB/LEAGUE

Version: 1.2
Published: DECEMBER 2020




GUIDANCE NOTES NO:
3.2

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS

FOR CLUBS

Version: 1.2
Published: JUNE 2020




GUIDANCE NOTES NO:
8.3

PHOTOGRAPHING AND FILMING CHILDREN

FOR ALL

Version: 1.2
Published: JULY 2020



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:
7.1

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN FOOTBALL

FOR 16/17-YEAR-OLDS

Version: 1.2
Published: FEBRUARY 2020



COMMON SENSE CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE EVERYONE'S SAFETY

It's important to remember the majority of photographs and film taken are appropriate and taken in good faith. If we take the following measures we can help to ensure the safety of children in football.

DO:

1. Share The FA's guidance on taking photos and filming with everyone who becomes a club member (officials, parents/carers);
2. Ensure the club has written parental consent to use a player's photo and/or film footage in the public domain e.g. on the club website, Facebook page or in a newspaper article. This is essential in relation to point 3 below;
3. Ensure that any child in your club who is under care proceedings where there are legal restrictions, is protected by ensuring their image is not placed in the public domain. This can be done by using The FA's **Club Annual Membership Information and Consent Form**. See **Guidance Notes 8.2** for this form;
4. Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed (a minimum of vest or shirt and shorts);

5. Aim to take pictures which represent the broad range of youngsters participating safely in football e.g. boys and girls, disabled people, ethnic minority communities;
6. Advise parents/carers and spectators that there can be negative consequences to sharing photos or film footage linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media (Facebook, Twitter) – and that care should be taken about 'tagging';
7. Establish procedures to respond to and manage any concerns, including clear reporting structures and a system to contact the Police when necessary.

DON'T:

1. Publish photographs with the full name(s) of the individual(s) featured unless you have written consent to do so and you have informed the parents/carers as to how the photo will be used;
2. Use player profiles with pictures and detailed personal information online;
3. Use an image for something other than that which it was initially agreed, e.g. published in local press when initially produced for a clubhouse commemorative picture;

4. Allow photos or film footage to be recorded in changing rooms, showers or toilets – this includes the use of mobile phones that record images;
5. Include any advertising relating to alcohol or gambling in photographs or film footage of children.

REMEMBER

- It's not an offence to take appropriate photographs or film footage in a public place even if asked not to do so;
- No-one has the right to decide who can and cannot take photos or film on public land;
- If you have serious concerns about a possible child protection issue relating to the taking of photos or film footage then call the Police. This action should only be taken where you believe that someone may be acting unlawfully or putting a child at risk;
- The land or facility owner can decide whether or not photography and/or filming at football activities will be permitted when carried out on private land. However you need to make this known before allowing individuals access to the private property. If they do not comply then you may request they leave;

- Try not to use photos or film footage that include individuals wearing jewellery (as wearing jewellery whilst playing is contrary to the Laws of the Game as well as being a health and safety issue);
- That swimming as a social activity for football clubs presents a higher risk for potential misuse than football, so photos or film footage should:
 - Focus on the activity rather than a particular child;
 - Avoid showing the full face and body of a child – instead show children in the water, or from the waist or shoulders up;
 - Avoid photos and camera angles that may be more prone to misinterpretation or misuse than others.

If you are concerned about the inappropriate use of photos or film footage please report this to your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer or to The FA Safeguarding Team via Safeguarding@TheFA.com. [Click here](#) for a full list of key contacts at County FAs.

* Including filming



Get in touch

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Your game, your experience, our goal