



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

1.7

IMPORTANT: From 28 June 2022 the law states that those in a position of trust in sports organisations, such as a coach, cannot legally have a sexual relationship with young people they look after, under 18 years old. The FA is updating its guidance in line with this legislative change. In the interim please seek further guidance via the NSPCC CPSU (Child Protection in Sport Unit) [here](#).

THE FA'S RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST STATEMENT

FOR CLUBS

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FOR ALL

THE FA's RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST STATEMENT

Everyone who works/volunteers with children and young people (anyone under the age of 18) is responsible and accountable for the way in which they behave towards them. Every child has a right to be treated with respect and dignity.

- It's expected that all adult-child relationships maintain clear boundaries at all times, are supportive, positive and aimed at improving the young person's skills, development and progress. The adult-child relationships should all focus on the respective activity/event.
- No intimate or sexual relationship should take place while the member of staff or volunteer is in a position of trust relationship with a player.
- In addition, inappropriate, intimate or sexual relationships between an adult and a young player aged 16 and 17 may be unlawful, irrespective of gender and sexual orientation.

The FA's position

"It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people (Sexual Offences Act 2003)".

The principle of this section of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 is applied by The FA. Therefore, if you engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with a young player it is a breach of The Football Association Regulations and as such may result in disciplinary action and where appropriate a referral will be made to the statutory agencies, including the Police, and applicable Local Authorities bodies, for example, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Where a relationship of trust exists, it does not make any difference whether or not the relationship is consensual. The imbalance of power makes it an abuse of that relationship of trust.



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Taking positive action

- ✓ Maintain a relationship with all participants that are appropriate to your role and reflects positively on the organisation for whom you work or volunteer.
- ✓ As someone in a position of authority you should not seek or engage in sexual activity or sexualised communication with any under-18s via social media including 16/17-year-olds for whom you are responsible.
- ✓ If you think a young person's behaviour indicates they are seeking to develop or engage in an inappropriate relationship with you, immediately bring this to the attention of your Designated Safeguarding Officer or line manager. Be careful not to respond to the young person in any way that could be interpreted as encouraging them. Make a written record of your concerns and relevant details.
- ✓ If you suspect an individual with a specified role in football is abusing a position of trust, or may abuse, you should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Make a written record of your concerns and relevant details.
- ✓ If you feel your concern has not been dealt with appropriately, refer the matter directly to The FA Safeguarding Team via **0800 083 5902** or via email [**Safeguarding@TheFA.com**](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com)
- ✓ Alternatively, you can seek advice from the 24-hour NSPCC Helpline – **0808 800 5000**





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