



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Walking Football Association (WFA) aims to create an atmosphere where all children feel valued and safe and a place where their welfare is promoted.

Safeguarding principles

Part of the philosophy of WFA is our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and adults at risk. We expect all staff, volunteers, participants, any partner agencies or any commissioned service providers to share this commitment.

The aims of the WFA's Safeguarding Policies are to:

- Develop a positive and pro-active approach to safeguarding in order to best protect all children, young people and adults at risk who use our facilities or engage in associated activities, enabling them to participate and achieve in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- Facilitate the provision of a range of child protection and awareness training for all staff or volunteers.
- Demonstrate best practice in the area of safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk.
- Promote ethical work with children, young people and adults at risk.

- Work towards achieving the National Standards and post Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport devised by the Child Protection in Sport Unit of the NSPCC.

The key principles underpinning this Policy Statement are that:

- The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with children, young people and their parents/carers is an essential element of our work.

The Walking Football Association is committed to working together with Children's Services Departments, and Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's) in accordance with their procedures and in line with the most recent HM Government guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015). In addition the WFA is committed to working together with agencies within football to create a safer environment in which all can enjoy the game.

Where the WFA believes, or is informed that circumstances exist which may harm any child(ren), young person(s), vulnerable adults or poses or may pose a risk of harm to them, the WFA will refer the matter to a statutory agency such as the Police or Social Care Team for further investigation.

Vulnerable Adults

On issues of adult safeguarding The WFA has a vulnerable adults policy. The WFA is aware of a number of projects working with older people, people with disabilities and **those** with mental health issues.

Child Protection

A child is defined as:

Any person aged under 18

Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and the organisation will pay attention to how children feel.

We will be rigorous and vigilant in protecting everyone using our services from abuse, bullying and intimidation. We will do this through a careful recruitment and selection process, on-going supervision and monitoring arrangements and guidance on appropriate behaviour.

Everyone involved with The WFA is obliged to make sure that anyone using the services is safe.

There are 6 main elements to our Policy, which are described in the following sections:

- The types of abuse that are covered by the policy;
- The signs of abuse that Coaches, Staff and Volunteers should look out for;
- Roles and responsibilities for Safeguarding;
- Expectations of Coaches, Staff and Volunteers with regard to Safeguarding, and the procedures and processes that should be followed, include the support provided to children;
- How the WFA will ensure that all Coaches, Staff and Volunteers are appropriately trained, and checked for their suitability to work within the organisation;
- How the policy will be managed and have its delivery overseen.

Through implementation of this policy we will ensure that the WFA provides a safe environment for children to participate. We will cross reference to other policies relevant to our safeguarding in the WFA and make reference to them in this policy where relevant.

Types of Abuse

Children who may require early help

All Coaches, Staff and Volunteers working within the WFA should be alert to the potential need for early help for children, considering following the procedures identified for initiating early help a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.

- Is showing signs of displaying behaviour or views that are considered to be extreme

These children are therefore more vulnerable; the WFA will identify who their vulnerable children are and ensure that they know the processes to secure advice, help and support where needed.

Child Abuse

In relation to children safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined as;

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's' health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015):

- **Physical abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse** - is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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. It may include a failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

Bullying and forms of bullying including Cyber Bullying is also abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse

Signs of Abuse (Child Protection)

Physical abuse

Particularly if involved in physical activities, most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical / social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given; these can often be visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body.
- Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh.
- Cigarette burns.
- Human bite marks.
- Broken bones.
- Scalds, with upward splash marks.
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents/carers being approached for an explanation.
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Flinching when approached or touched.
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather.
- Depression.
- Withdrawn behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking.
- Being unable to play.
- Fear of making mistakes.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Self-harm.
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

Sexual Abuse

It is recognised that there is underreporting of sexual abuse with in the family. Club Coaches, staff and volunteers should play a crucial role in identifying / reporting any concerns that they may have through, for example, the observation and play of younger children and understanding the indicators of behaviour in older children which may be underlining of such abuse.

All Coaches, Staff and Volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area.
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area.
- Sexually transmitted disease.
- Vaginal discharge or infection.
- Stomach pains.
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down.
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn.
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people.
- Having nightmares.
- Running away from home.
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level.
- Sexual drawings or language.
- Bedwetting.
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia.
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts.
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about.

- Substance or drug abuse.
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money.
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence).
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Neglect

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or 'smelly'.
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- Losing weight, or being constantly underweight.
- Inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.
- Not having many friends.
- Complaining of being tired all the time.
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

Child Sexual Exploitation (Child Protection)

Risk factors may include;

- Going missing
- Engagement in offending
- Disengagement from education
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Unexplained gifts/money
- Repeat concerns about sexual health
- Decline in emotional wellbeing

All suspected or actual cases of CSE are a Safeguarding concern in which Child Protection procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police. If any

coaches or staff are concerned about a participant, they will refer to the Senior Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All Coaches, Staff, Volunteers and Directors have responsibility for the following:

- Being aware of the WFA policy as well as the WFA's other safeguarding policies.
- Listening to, and seeking out, the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people, ensuring in this that the child's voice is heard and referred to;
- Knowing who the WFA Senior Safeguarding Officer and the Designated Safeguarding Officer for the various departments as it grows;
- Being alert to the signs of abuse, including specific issues in Safeguarding and their need to refer any concerns to the Safeguarding Leads;
- That any concerns any staff have about senior staff should be referred to the Chairman of the WFA.
- To be aware of Whistleblowing procedures and where to obtain further information, advice and support
- Ensuring that their Child Protection training is up to date, undertaking refresher/update training at least annually;
- Sharing information and working together with agencies to provide children and young people with the help and support they need;
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her Child Protection Plan;
- Seeking early help where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, police) to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment;

Directors are responsible for:

- Taking leadership responsibility for the WFA's Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements;
- That they are up to date with emerging issues in Safeguarding and recognise the strategies by National Government.
- Ensuring that they have a nominated link Director for Child Protection and Safeguarding who can also provide a link to the Local Authority on matters of Safeguarding and liaising with other partners and agencies;
- Ensuring that appointed the Senior Safeguarding Officer and the Designated Officers are fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out the role and have access to appropriate regular training to help them keep up to date;
- That there are procedures are in place in handling allegations against Coaches, Staff, or Volunteers.
- That all Staff, (including volunteers and frequent visitors) who will be working in the WFA are given a mandatory induction which includes knowledge regarding abuse, neglect, specific safeguarding issues and familiarisation with Child Protection responsibilities. The induction will also include procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a Child's Safety or welfare, and knowledge about the policies and procedures;
- That all Coaches and Staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure ongoing personal/professional development;
- That all Coaches and Staff including volunteers receives the appropriate training which is regularly updated;
- That important policies such as those for behaviour and bullying, are kept up to date.
- Ensures that all Coaches, Staff, Directors and Volunteers are made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy.
- That all Child Protection records are kept centrally, kept up to date, are secure and reviewed annually.

Recruitment, Staffing:

- We must prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check Coaches and Staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.

- We must ensure Coaches, Staff and Volunteers undergo appropriate checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) relevant to their post;
- We must have procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed, removed due to Safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned; aware that this is a legal duty.
- That our Volunteers are adequately supervised, being aware of the differences between supervised and unsupervised interaction with the children;
- We will be mindful of who we are hiring our premises to and refuse the hiring of premises for any activity deemed not in the interests of the children/young people, the Club, the local community and or viewed to be inflammatory e.g.- banned political groups

Records

All concerns about a child will be recorded and records kept. This record will be a separate child protection/welfare record held on a separate child protection file and each concern clearly recorded with all decisions, actions taken and with outcomes and feedback to the referrer. We will endeavour to keep centralised records, hold them as private and confidential records but allow access to key staff that is designated in a role to safeguard children at the WFA.

Dealing with allegations against coaches, staff and volunteers who work with children

If a member of staff has concerns about another member of staff, then this will be referred to the Senior Safeguarding Officer. Where there are concerns about the Senior Safeguarding Officer this will be referred to the Chairman of the WFA.

The WFA will ensure we have followed all the necessary duties and processes under this process and under the Whistleblowing Policy.

Management of the Policy

The Directors will;

- Ensure all directors are effective in the management of safeguarding;
- Ensure all Coaches and Staff including all other Directors and volunteers read and have access to the policy
- That is overseen to ensure its implementation
- Review its content on an annual basis.

Contacts

- John Croot- Senior Safeguarding Officer- 07896 314692
Paul Carr - Chief Executive- 07517 033248

External practitioners and advice

- FA/NSPCC 24-Hour Help-line - 0808 800 5000 alternatively you can text on 88858
- The Police - 101
- Social care emergency (out of hours) – 01629 532600
- Childline- 0800 11 11

