

Dawley Wanderers Football Club

Children's Welfare and Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed and updated 6th September 2024

1. Introduction

Dawley Wanderers Football Club recognises that every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18, who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of everyone involved in the football club. Dawley Wanderers Football Club recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by seeking to protect them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

Dawley Wanderers is therefore committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children and young people to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities.

2. Key Principles

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- 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 and carers is essential.

Dawley Wanderers Football Club is committed to working in partnership with the Police, Social Care Departments, and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) in accordance with their procedures. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect all children and young people.

Dawley Wanderers Football Club holds with the principle that there are some roles within sport where adults have responsibility for, authority and influence over young people and therefore have an ethical obligation to safeguard and protect young people from exploitation. Whilst legally young people aged 16 and 17 have reached the age of consent for sexual activity, any inappropriate sexual relations with young people aged 16 or 17 will be considered a breach of a 'Position of Trust' within affiliated football and will be referred to the appropriate football regulatory authorities and may also be referred to the statutory agencies.

3. Definitions of Abuse

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

- 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
- Neglect:** A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised
- Sexual Abuse:** An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person
- Bullying:** Persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person 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.

Hazing is any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the mental, physical, or emotional wellbeing of a child or young person. Hazing is not tolerated in affiliated football.

4. Dawley Wanderers Football Club's approach to safeguarding

1. Dawley Wanderers Football Club endorse and adopt The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines for recruiting volunteers and will:
 - Specify to the volunteer 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
 - Where eligible require an FA DBS
2. All current Dawley Wanderers volunteers working in eligible roles, with children and young people – such as managers and coaches – are required to hold a valid FA DBS check.
3. If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of Dawley Wanderers Football Club guidance will be sought from The Football Association. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via the DBS Process and that all suitability decisions will be made in accordance with legislation and the best interests of children and young people.

4. 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 minimise the risk of 'grooming' within football.
5. Dawley Wanderers Football Club supports The FA's 'whistle blowing' policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can 'whistle blow' by contacting The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863, by writing to The FA Case Manager at The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London, SW1P 9EQ, by emailing Safeguarding@TheFA.com or by going direct to the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC. Dawley Wanderers Football Club encourages everyone to know about it and utilise it if necessary.
6. Dawley Wanderers Football Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with The FA's role profile, who has completed the FA Safeguarding Course and Welfare Officers Workshop. The post holder will be involved with Welfare Officer training provided by The FA and/or County FA. The Club Welfare Officer is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person. The Club Welfare Officer will liaise directly with the County FA (CFA) Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst club members. Please contact the Dawley Wanderers Football Club Welfare Officer via telephone or SMS text message, Marie Bell dawleywandererswelfare@gmail.com or 07814 897932
7. We acknowledge and endorse The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players, parents or guardians should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the CWO, a member of the Club's Committee or, in cases of serious bullying contact the Shropshire FA Welfare Officer on 07918764766 / 01743 362769 or email safeguarding@shropshirefa.com.
8. Respect Codes of Conduct for players, parents or spectators, officials and coaches are endorsed by Dawley Wanderers Football Club and are published on via the Club website. All members will be informed of these codes.
9. 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.
 - a. If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer.
 - b. If the issue is one of poor practice the Club Welfare Officer will either deal with the matter themselves or seek advice from the County FA Welfare Officer.

- c. If the concern is more serious – possible child abuse, where possible, contact the CFA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.
- d. 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 Club Welfare Officer know what action you have taken, they in turn will inform the CFA Welfare Officer.
- e. If at any time you are not able to contact your Club Welfare Officer, or you do not feel it appropriate to talk with them, then contact any of the following:
 - i. contact your CFA Welfare Officer directly 01743 362769 or email safeguarding@shropshirefa.com
 - ii. contact The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863 or Safeguarding@TheFA.com
 - iii. contact the Police or Telford and Wrekin's Safeguarding Team - 01952 385385 / 01952 676500 (out of hours)
 - iv. call the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are available via the following links–

<http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding>

<http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/reporting-concerns>

The policy outlines in detail what to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child and includes a short film. How to make a referral is also covered in the Safeguarding Children workshop. Participants are given the opportunity to discuss how this feels and how best they can prepare themselves to deal with such a situation. For more information on this workshop contact your County Welfare Officer.

10. Further advice on Safeguarding Children matters can be obtained from:

- The County Football Association's Child Protection Officer, details above.
- Online Disclosure Criminal Records Checks on 0845 210 8080
- NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000
- Dawley Wanderers Football Club Welfare Officer – Marie Bell
dawleywandererswelfare@gmail.com or 07814 897932