
The F.A. Child Protection Policy

The Football Association Limited
September 2001

The introduction of this Child Protection Policy should be seen as a clear signal by The Football Association that it is determined to ensure all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those children and young people who participate in football at all levels.

The policy establishes The Football Association's position, role and responsibilities and, together with the Procedures Handbook, clarifies what is expected of other organisations and individuals involved in football.

It very clearly highlights the importance placed by The Football Association on the protection of children and young people.

Acknowledgments

The Football Association would like to thank the NSPCC, the National Coaching Foundation, the Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain, Kidscape, Moorside Rangers and Childcare (N.I.) for their assistance in the development of this document.

I am delighted to present The Football Association's Child Protection Policy. This is the cornerstone of our commitment to developing a culture in which children and young people can participate in football in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Over half a million adults are involved in organising football in the national game. Through this initiative it is our stated aim to ensure every individual is better prepared to play their part in the protection of children.

A successful Child Protection Policy would go a long way to achieving the aim of both The F.A. and our partner, the NSPCC, in ending all cruelty to children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Thompson', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Geoff Thompson
Chairman
The Football Association

Every child and young person who plays football should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in football.

We recognise, however, that child abuse is also a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken.

The Football Association recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

It is determined to meet its obligation to ensure that those clubs and organisations providing football opportunities for children and young people do so, to the highest possible standard of care.

Clear practices and procedures, in addition to a detailed training programme already under way, will ensure that everyone knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to the protection of children and young people within our sport.

It is essential that those children and young people attracted to and participating in football are able to do so in a quality, safe and enjoyable environment.

In striving to attain this, The Football Association has the following objectives:

- A requirement that The F.A. Premier League and The Football League include in their rules a policy statement concerning child protection.
- A requirement that all bodies affiliated to The Football Association as Charter Standard Organisations, affiliated through the County Associations, which provide the opportunity to work with children and young people up to the age of eighteen, include in their rules a policy statement concerning child protection.
- To provide ongoing development and training opportunities to all organisations as mentioned above.
- To provide ongoing development and training opportunities:
 - for members of The F.A. Coaches Association
 - as an integral part of all F.A. Coach and Medical Education courses and courses for Referees
 - in staff development courses for members of The F.A. Premier League and The Football League
 - through the County Football Association structure
 - through the process of attaining and maintaining the Charter Standard Award

The aims of The F.A. Child Protection Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who play football, enabling them to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- To deliver quality assured child protection training and build a network of tutors to facilitate this delivery, in conjunction with, and supported by, the NSPCC.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child protection.
- To promote ethics and high standards throughout football.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The child'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, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Working in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers is essential. Social Services Departments have a statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of children and young people. The Football Association is committed to working together with Social Services Departments and local Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) in accordance with their procedures.

The Football Association's Regulations on child protection are defined in The F.A. Handbook.

1. Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.
2. In these Regulations the expression "Offence" shall mean any one or more of the offences contained in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and any other criminal offence which reasonably causes The Association to believe that the person accused of the offence poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children.
3. Upon receipt by The Association of:
 - 3.1 notification that an individual has been charged with an Offence; or
 - 3.2 notification that an individual is the subject of an investigation by the Police, social services or any other authority relating to an Offence; or
 - 3.3 any other information which causes The Association reasonably to believe that a person poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or childrenthen The Association shall have the power to order that the individual be suspended from all or any specific football activity for such period and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
4. In reaching its determination as to whether an order under Regulation 3 should be made The Association shall give consideration, inter alia, to the following factors:-

- 4.1 whether a child is or children are or may be at risk of harm;
 - 4.2 whether the matters are of a serious nature;
 - 4.3 whether an order is necessary or desirable to allow the conduct of any investigation by The Association or any other authority or body to proceed unimpeded.
5. The period of an order referred to in 3 above shall not be capable of lasting beyond the date upon which any charge under the Rules of The Association or any Offence is decided or brought to an end.
 6. Where an order is imposed on an individual under Regulation 3 above, The Association shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Rules of The Association against the person relating to the matters as soon as reasonably practicable.
 7. Where a person is convicted or is made the subject of a caution in respect of an Offence, that shall constitute a breach of the Rules of The Association and The Association shall have the power to order the suspension of the person from all or any specific football for such period (including indefinitely) and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
 8. For the purposes of these Regulations, The Association shall act through its Council or any committee or sub-committee thereof, including the Board.
 9. Notification in writing of an order referred to above shall be given to the person concerned and/or any club with which he is associated as soon as reasonably practicable.

CONCLUSION

The Football Association, through confirming this Policy Document, has indicated its determination to ensure that children and young people can participate in all forms of football activity and do so with their safety being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document is representative of a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection within football. It is for all adults engaged in football activities to promote good practice and procedures, whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities towards the children and young people in their care.