

Plymouth Argyle Football Club



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & ADULT AT RISK POLICY

Plymouth Argyle Football Club aims to create an atmosphere where all young people and adults feel valued and safe and is a place where their welfare is promoted. This policy sets out the procedures for protecting children and adults at risk working with the Club staff, Apprentices, Board Members or Volunteers. This policy also takes into account of the work the Club & Academy undertakes in relation to providing activities and the welfare of fans.

Safeguarding principles

Part of the philosophy of the Club is the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adult(s) at risk. We expect all staff, volunteers, participants, any partner agencies or any commissioned service providers to share this commitment. The Club's Board insist that this principle is embedded in all we do.

Aims

The aim of the Club's Safeguarding Policy is 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 in line with guidance from the English Football League and Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and in line with The FA requirements for work with children and young people.
- Work with our schools and community groups in supporting their policies both on their premises and when undertaking partnership work at the Stadium or elsewhere.
- Co-operate with partners in delivering projects for adults potentially at risk including older people, people with disabilities, mental health participants and those on the recovery projects.
- 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.

Key principles

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 adults at risk 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 Club is committed to working together with Children's Services Departments, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's), and Plymouth Safeguarding Adults Board in accordance with their procedures and in line with the most recent HM Government guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and relevant adult safeguarding legislation.

Where the Club believes, or is informed that circumstances exist which may harm any child(ren), young person(s), adult(s) at risk or poses or may pose a risk of harm to them, the Club will refer the matter to a statutory agency such as the Police or Social Care Team for further investigation. The F.A. Case Management Unit may also be informed.

Commitment

The Club's arrangements in fulfilling its commitment to safeguarding children and young people as well as adults at risk:

- Michael Dunford (CEO) is the Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM) with responsibility to the board for safeguarding. There are Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) for all parts of the Club. All concerns, allegations or disclosures regarding the welfare of children or adults at risk will be referred to the appropriate DSO who will make a decision as to the seriousness and nature of the information and will refer and report to the appropriate agency.
- The Club have in place a responsible recruitment processes which include:-
 - Statements in job adverts and in job descriptions as to the organisation's commitment to safeguarding
 - Job descriptions
 - Interviews that include key safeguarding questions
 - Enhanced DBSs checks for those working with children and young people and adults at risk as required for the role.
 - The taking up of two written references

The Club also outlines its commitments and requirements for safeguarding to all partner organisations and any commissioned service providers.

- Where a DBS check reveals offences a risk assessment will be undertaken by the SSM in consultation with the relevant DSO. This risk assessment will consider the suitability of the applicant based on the nature and seriousness of the offence(s), when committed and the attitude of the applicant to the

offences(s). The Club will consider applications from ex-offenders where the relevant offences are disclosed.

- The Club accept and adopt The Football Association's and The English Football League's safeguarding policies and procedures whilst further specific and individual Club policies are developed and adopted.
- The Club ensure that, where the role requires, all staff and volunteers complete The FA Safeguarding Children Workshop. In addition all staff and volunteers receive in-house training on identifying and reporting concerns in respect of safeguarding. In addition support is provided for those involved in dealing with reporting incidents.
- The Club is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development, appropriate to the role of the employee and the level of their involvement with children, young people and adults at risk.
- The Club is committed to the sharing of information to protect children, young people, in line with Working Together (2013) and the Data Protection Act 2018 in line with GDPR.
- In addition to this Safeguarding Policy, the Club promote a number of initiatives which seek to address and encourage young people's and families' enjoyment as participants and spectators.
- The Club commits to reducing the likelihood of "sexting" between any individuals involved in the Club as employees, volunteers or apprentices. Appropriate training will be given within the general safeguarding training to bring to everyone's attention the criminal and ethical impact of such communication.
- The Club will take specific steps to protect young people who may become vulnerable during matches, events or training sessions and will ensure parents and guardians are aware of expectations not to leave unaccompanied minors at the ground under any circumstances. This may include explicit permission for young people to make their own way home where appropriate.

Equality

Plymouth Argyle Football Club will ensure that it treats everyone fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities. Every staff member, Board Member, official, spectator, fan and visiting teams are to be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to work and watch football in an environment without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy

Although this policy gives details of how to raise concerns, there is a stand-alone policy. That policy sets out how individuals can raise concerns particularly about the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk involved at Plymouth Argyle Football Club. There may also be issues around equality or discrimination matters that raise concerns that may be raised in a similar manner. Those principles also cover all other aspects of malpractice by individuals, within the Club. It provides a method of raising concerns and how people can receive feedback on any action taken.

Anti-bullying

Plymouth Argyle Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our participants so they can participate in activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all participants, parents and carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the DSO or lead coach of the session or project. Bullying is not just an issue for children and young people Full details are in the Appropriate Behaviour Policy.

Statement on working ethically with Children and Adults at Risk

The Club has a statement on ethical working. Everyone at the Club should have read this and follow its principles.

Legislation

The Care Act 2014 came into force in England on 1 April 2015. The act introduced new duties and responsibilities on local authority adult social services as the lead agencies in protecting adults at risk. This gives public services and government clear responsibility to make sure that people in the most vulnerable situations are safe from abuse or neglect. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 established a single body to make decisions about individuals who should be barred from working with children and to maintain a list of these individuals.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is defined as:

Any person aged 18 years or over who:

- **Is in need of community care services by reason of mental ill health, physical or learning disability, age or illness**
- Or
- **May be unable to take care of him / herself or protect him / herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.**

Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and we will pay attention to what adults 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 in the Club is obliged to make sure that anyone using the services is safe.

They must report concerns without delay.

All those involved with us will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responsible for responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children or adults at risk. Our policy and procedures are important safeguards to stop this happening. They will be understood by good applicants and will put ill intentioned people off.

All volunteers and staff, including temporary personnel will be subject to a careful and rigorous selection and vetting process with the following elements:

- All aspects of recruitment will involve one or more senior manager.
- At least one senior manager and the line manager will sit on interviewing panels.
- Recruitment methods must avoid informal discussions which may discriminate against certain groups.
- All appointments will involve the completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their national insurance number.
- Selection procedures will take account of the value of unpaid community and voluntary work and of experience gained in domestic or family work.
- Throughout the selection procedure the only information about a candidate will be that contained on the application form, together with information obtained during the interview.
- Shortlisting will be carried out by the whole panel on the basis of the essential requirements listed in the person specification.
- Prior to the interview the panel will agree questions to be asked, who is to ask which question and how to record notes.
- All questions asked at interview will relate directly to the person specification. No candidate will be asked about their personal circumstances.
- All efforts possible will be made to facilitate the employment of any candidate with a disability or additional needs.
- The organisation is committed to the principle of flexible working arrangements with regard to how and when hours are worked.
- Training in equal opportunities and recruitment and selection procedures is made available to all trustees, Board members and staff.

References:

- Two references will be used to support or deny the appointment of a candidate, and not to choose between candidates.
- For the recruitment of all individuals, to ensure additional protection for those working with adults at risk, the candidates will be asked to identify reasons for gaps or inconsistencies in employment.

Terms and conditions of employment:

- Conditions of employment will incorporate good practice on equal opportunities issues as well as adhering to employment legislation. This may require operating flexibly and sensitively to take account of any needs of staff members who have domestic or family responsibilities or who have medical or other personal needs.
- Written grievance and disciplinary procedures are not part of the terms and conditions of employment, but staff are consulted before changes are made.

Support and supervision:

All staff will receive support, supervision and line management which will be carried out with due regard to equal opportunities.

Procedures for dealing with breaches of the policy

In the case of all staff and volunteers, a serious breach of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

In the case of volunteers, a serious breach of this policy may result in their removal from voluntary duties.

Safe Working Arrangements

- Although concerns can go through any DSO, the SSM will be the DSO for adult protection responsible for making sure that the adult at risk protection policy is working. They will be trained to know how to respond when adult protection concerns are raised. The SSM has clear guidelines to report safeguarding concerns to the local authority or other relevant agencies.
- All relevant staff will receive training in recognising the signs of abuse. Forms of abuse are physical, sexual, neglect and emotional. They can include bullying, or putting people down because of their race, religion, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.
- The Club will ensure that users of the services, their families and carers are aware of this policy and who to speak to if they have any concerns and the procedures to follow.
- The Club will develop appropriate guidance for staff involved with children and adults at risk, which outline codes of behaviour. These will be developed on a group by group basis taking into account the needs of the particular group.
- Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy rests with the Board.
- All work with adults at risk will be monitored in accordance with the organisation's monitoring and evaluation procedures which are:
- The Board receiving regular reports that include safeguarding along with other management data.
- All staff receiving line management which includes monitoring the equal opportunities aspects of their work.
- The results of any monitoring and evaluation exercises are fed into priorities for work, and where processes need to be reviewed, the senior management will ensure this takes place.

Guidance for Workers / Volunteers / Board members / Trustees on Action to be taken

If you suspect a child or adult at risk is being abused:

- Immediately discuss with the DSO.
- Record the facts as you know them.

If a child or adult at risk discloses abuse by someone else:

- Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.

- Advise that you will offer support where possible, but you must pass the information on.
- Discuss with the DSO.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

- Immediately discuss with the DSO.
- Record the facts as you know them.
- Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

Guidelines for the DSO

You should:

- Know about signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Know about how abusers behave. Ask about training if you don't know these things
- Know about Local Authority Adult Protection / Safeguarding Committee guidelines on dealing with concerns about abuse.
- Know who to contact in Social Services so that you can either:
 - Ask for advice when you are not sure what to do.
 - Refer a case without delay where there are child or adults at risk protection concerns.
- Make sure the adults at risk using the Club's services know:
 - About the adult at risk protection policy and procedures.
 - You are the person to speak to if they have any concerns.
 - Who to speak to if you are not there.
- Make sure staff and volunteers know how to respond if an adult at risk talks to them about abuse.
- Make sure they have access to guidelines
- Provide information about help lines and other sources of help for adults at risk.

Guidelines for all staff members, including matchday staff, responding to a report of abuse from a child or adult at risk

Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child or adult at risk as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the child or adult at risk they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Do tell the child or adult at risk what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your DSO immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done (see notes on recording).

DON'T

- Don't make promises you can't keep.

- Don't interrogate the child or adult at risk– it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the child or adult at risk has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child or adult at risk feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your DSO immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

Fear puts a lot of people off telling about wrongdoing.

Remember, you always have a duty to make sure concerns are reported. Then appropriate action can be taken.

Tell the DSO. They will be able to get further advice and / or refer the situation to social services or the police.

If for any reason you cannot tell the DSO, then you should tell the most senior person on duty.

Keeping a record of concerns

When a child or adult at risk concern arises, it is essential you record what is said or seen and what action was taken.

This record or any other written record should be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer. Access should be limited to only:

- The person who has completed the form.
- The DSO.
- The SSM.
- The Chairman of the Club if the person complained about is a senior officer.

It may be shown to the police or social services and could possibly be used in court, although this is rare. Any adult concerned can be shown this document but discretion should be used, however their permission **MUST** be obtained before showing to the adults family / carer.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical injury or unreasonable physical constraint to an individual where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented, e.g.:

- Assault and battery.
- Hitting, slapping, and scratching.
- Misuse of medication.
- Pushing or rough handling.
- Restraining without justifiable reasons.

Sexual Abuse

The involvement of individuals in sexual activities, to which they may not have given informed consent, may not fully comprehend or with which they do not wish to continue or that violate the social taboos of family roles, e.g.:

- Inappropriate touching.
- Non contact abuse - e.g. pornography.
- Rape or attempted rape.
- Sexual harassment.

Psychological Abuse

Action that is not of a physical nature but severely affects the psychological well being of the individual, e.g.:

- Emotional abuse.
- Humiliation or ridicule.
- Threats of punishment or exclusion.
- Verbal assaults.

Discriminatory Abuse

Psychological abuse that is racist, sexist or linked to a person's age or disability e.g.:

- Racial or sexual harassment.
- Insults or harassment based on disability.
- Deliberate denial of cultural or religious needs.

Financial Abuse

Misappropriation of an individual's funds or any other action that is against the person's best interests, e.g.:

- Theft of money, possessions, property or other material goods.
- Misuse of money.
- Fraud or extortion of material assets.

Neglect

Neglect of individuals to such an extent that their physical and/or mental well-being is Seriously impaired, e.g.:

- Failure to keep the person clean, warm and in good health.
- Failure to provide reasonable care.
- Failure to give prescribed medication.
- Failure to give privacy and dignity.
- Failure to provide supervision for behaviour which could be dangerous.
- Failure to access medical care or technical aids
- Failure to provide nourishment.

Sexting

Sexting is an increasingly common activity among young people where they share inappropriate or explicit images online or through mobile phones. Young people may think sexting is harmless, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age

- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

Sexting may also be called Cybersex, Sending a nudie picture or selfie, Trading nudes, Dirties, Pic for pic.

If you become aware of any Sexting incidents. Refer to the Sexting Policy and inform your DSO.

New additions to the policy

- **Modern slavery**– encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.☒
- **Self-neglect**– this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal Hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.☒
- **Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence.

Criminal Offences

Some instances of abuse will constitute a criminal offence. In these cases reference to the police should be made as a matter of urgency. The responsibility for initiating action rests with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

- Criminal investigation by the police takes priority over all other lines of enquiry.

Who are the Abusers?

Children and Adults at risk may be abused by a wide range of people including:

- Relatives and family members.
- Professional staff.
- Paid care workers.
- Volunteers.
- Other service users.
- Neighbours, friends and associates.
- People who deliberately target vulnerable people.
- Strangers.

Management of the Policy

The Club’s Board will:

- Ensure all Senior Managers and Board Members are effective in the management of safeguarding.
- Ensure all Coaches and Staff. including all other employees and volunteers read and have access to this policy.
- That is overseen to ensure its implementation.
- Review its content on an annual basis and after any significant incidents.

Contacts

Relevant officers within the Club are detailed on the Safeguarding and Equalities Reporting Tree (Appendix A).

External practitioners and advice:

- Matt Hodgson–Devon County FA Welfare Officer- 01626 325919
Mobile 07973 312146
- The FA Safeguarding Team - 0800 169 1863
- safeguarding@thefa.com
- NSPCC Safeguarding Unit 24 hour helpline - 0808 800 5000
- Alexandra Richards, EFL Child Protection Advisor, e-mail - arichards@efl.com
Mobile - 07792 284740
- Local Authority Designated Officer – Simon White
01752 307144
e-mail - simon.white@plymouth.gcsx.gov.uk

SAFEGUARDING & EQUALITIES REPORTING PROCESS



IF YOU ARE MADE AWARE OF A SAFEGUARDING OR EQUALITIES ISSUE THEN YOU SHOULD REPORT IT TO YOUR DEPARTMENT'S DSO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

IF YOU CANNOT REPORT THE ISSUE TO YOUR DSO, YOU SHOULD REPORT IT TO THE SSM

MICHAEL DUNFORD – 01752 562561 ext 152

IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE REPORTING THE ISSUE INTERNALLY THEN CONTACT:

NSPCC HOTLINE – 0800 800 5000

SAFEGUARDING@THEFA.COM