

Onside Soccer Safeguarding Policy



The aim of this Onside Soccer Safeguarding Policy is to:

- ensure that children, young people and adults at risk who are involved with Onside Soccer are safe and protected
- ensure that there is clear guidance particularly for Onside Soccer staff and volunteers involved in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities
- promote good practice within Onside Soccer activities regarding safeguarding.

Onside Soccer is committed to:

- making the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of paramount importance
- ensuring all children, young people and adults at risk, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity are able to participate in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- taking seriously and responding swiftly and well to all incidents of poor practice and reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse to the relevant authorities
- ensuring all staff or volunteers recruited are screened and selected using safe recruitment practice, including taking references, carrying out a criminal records background check (DBS) to the appropriate level where the criteria is met
- ensuring all staff or volunteers are provided with initial and on-going good practice guidance and safeguarding training
- working in partnership with the children, parents/carers or responsible adults making sure they know who to report concerns to and that they know how to make the report

Definitions

- A “child” (collectively referred to as “children”) is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- An “adult at risk” is any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.
- An “activity” means any activity or series of activities arranged for a child or children by Onside Soccer.

The full Onside Soccer Safeguarding Policy is available on the website www.onsidesoccer.com and includes appendices for: Types and signs of abuse; Responding to suspicions and allegations; Recruiting employees and volunteers; Promoting good practice; Contact details of key organisations

Anybody with a concern about the welfare or safety of a child, young person or adult at risk should, in the first instance, contact Onside Soccer’s Welfare Officers - Donal Galligan and Fabrizio Proietti who can be contacted at welfare@onsidesoccer.com

APPENDIX: Types and Signs of Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming them.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood. There are five main forms of abuse identified as follows, should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact the Welfare Officers immediately.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g., hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse. This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened, or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

- **Bullying** May come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It may be physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g., racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g., tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g., unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

- **Neglect** Occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Sexual Abuse** Occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also, the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person.
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g., becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends.
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over-eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance.
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g., on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in Onside Soccer to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

APPENDIX: Promoting Good Practice – Code of Behaviour

Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in football everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in football to make judgements about whether abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as set out in Appendix: Responding to Suspicions and Allegations.

Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment eg avoiding private or unobserved situations, encouraging open communication with no secrets, avoiding being alone with a child or arranging to meet them outside of Onside activities
- all phone, text, social media contact must be to parents/carers not children
- staff and volunteers should not accept gifts, money or alcohol from children, parents or carers
- staff and volunteers must dress appropriately.
- make the experience of football fun and enjoyable
- promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g., it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g., where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups must be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs
- request written parental consent if staff or volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g., overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff or volunteer who has been DBS checked
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- keep a written record of attendance at sessions.

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g., transporting a young person on your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Use of photographic or filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers.

All parents and performers should be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid.

Ratios and supervision of children

Any Activity undertaken by the Onside Soccer will always consider the appropriate number of staff members available depending on the age of the Children involved, the degree of risk the Activity involves and whether there are any additional disability needs. The lower the age of the participants, the greater the need for supervision.

Regardless of these ratios a minimum of 2 members of staff or volunteers will always supervise an Activity. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the Activity (e.g., in the event of a participant requiring the attention of an adult during the Activity following an accident).

For Children under 5 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:6

For Children under 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:8

For Children over 8 the recommend ratio should be no more than 1:10

APPENDIX: Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Onside Soccer in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations or suspicions of abuse occurring within Onside Soccer and to allegations or suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in an earlier, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the child that you must inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information.
- **report** the incident to the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers

If you are not sure what to do, you can gain help from NSPCC 24-hour help line: 0808 800 5000

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age, and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details

Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations must be reported immediately to the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers who are then, in turn, responsible for reporting immediately to Sutton's Children's First Contact Service (CFCS) or the out of hours contact at the Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

If a nominated club Welfare Officer is not available, staff or volunteers should take responsibility and contact Sutton's Children's First Contact Service (CFCS), Emergency Duty Team (EDT) or, if the child is in immediate danger, the police. Contact details can be found at the end of this Policy.

It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Onside Soccer expects its staff to discuss any general welfare concerns about a child immediately with the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers or the person in charge of the session and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

Where there is a complaint against a volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the Sutton's Children's First Contact Service (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Onside Soccer will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document the Onside Soccer are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with the professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Sutton's Children's First Contact Service have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, the incident or concern must be reported: it may be just one in a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer must be reported to the authorities who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Onside Soccer must refer the matter to Sutton's Children's First Contact Service or the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and co-operate with any investigation that may be instigated.
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from Sutton's Children's First Contact Service
- the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- the club Welfare Officer should also notify the relevant sport governing body
- if the Club Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the appropriate manager who will refer the matter to Sutton's Children's First Contact Service

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to Sutton's Children's First Contact Service. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

Concerns outside the immediate Sporting Environment (eg a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers
- If the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers are not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact Sutton's Children's First Contact Service or the police immediately
- Sutton's Children's First Contact Service and the Onside Soccer Welfare Officers will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The Onside Soccer Welfare Officers should also notify the incident to the Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility.
- The Trustees should ascertain whether the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Onside Soccer Welfare Officers
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation.
- Sutton's Children's First Contact Service and Police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek Sutton's Children's First Contact Service advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The Onside Soccer Welfare Officers will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended pending further police and Sutton's Children's First Contact Service inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Sutton's Children's First Contact Service or police inquiries an Onside Soccer Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases an Onside Soccer Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

APPENDIX: Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

Recruitment

As part of the recruitment and selection process, offers of work for positions with Onside Soccer will require the completion of the application form which includes:

- the need for an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) – all Onside Soccer staff and volunteers will undergo an Enhanced DBS every 3 years.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

All offers of work are subject to the outcome of the DBS screening process. Until such time as a satisfactory DBS has been received, the member of staff will not be permitted to work with children or young people.

Onside Soccer is committed to providing equal opportunities to staff and therefore a positive DBS will not necessarily result in a bar from work. Should a blemished DBS be received, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Welfare Officers or Managing Director, to assess the information contained within the DBS. The member of staff may also be asked to attend an interview prior to a recruitment decision being made. The rehabilitation of offender's act and protection of freedoms Act should be considered in all cases before a final decision is made.

A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures. Their qualifications should be substantiated, where applicable. The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified and signed. They should sign the Onside Coach's Code of Conduct

All employees and volunteers should sign to confirm that they have read and understood the Onside Soccer Safeguarding Policy

Induction and Training

All employees and volunteers should receive formal induction and on-going training which includes confirmation that they have read and understood the Onside Soccer Safeguarding Policy especially the Appendices on Types and signs of abuse; Responding to suspicions and allegations; Promoting good practice; Contact details of key organisations.

All coaches are expected to complete the FA's Playmaker qualification – entry level. All coaches should have the opportunity to complete a First Aid qualification or further football coaching qualifications.

APPENDIX: CONTACT DETAILS

If a child is in immediate danger ALWAYS call 999

Onside Soccer Welfare Officers Donal Galligan and Fabrizio Proietti welfare@onsidesoccer.com

The Onside Soccer Welfare Officers undertake regular monitoring and risk assessments of all Onside Soccer activities and ensures that the Safeguarding Policy is implemented. The Welfare Officers should submit a written report to the Board of Trustees each term, highlighting progress, challenges, and areas where changes are required regarding safeguarding and welfare.

Onside Soccer Trustee with Responsibility for Safeguarding

The Board of Trustees have assigned Richard Beales as the nominated Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding who will meet each term with and be the point of contact for the Welfare Officers for example notifying him if they make a referral or to discuss any general, non-specific welfare concerns.

Sutton's Children's First Contact Service (CFCS)

CFCS can be contacted via the following routes:

Referral form: www.sutton.gov.uk/cfcs

Telephone (9:00-17:00): 0208 770 6001

Email: childrensfirstcontactservice@sutton.gov.uk

Address: 1st Floor, Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1EA

For out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT):

Telephone: 0208 770 5000

Email: childrens.edt@sutton.gov.uk

London FA Safeguarding

07720 591755 or 07525 237348 (Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm)

Email: safeguarding@londonfa.com

<https://www.londonfa.com/safeguarding-and-welfare>

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

NSPCC Helpline If you have a concern which needs immediate attention and you cannot get hold of the Welfare Officers and it is outside of the working hours for the London FA safeguarding team, please contact NSPCC Phone: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour helpline) Textphone: 0800 056 0566 SMS: 88858

Childline Free, confidential advice and support whatever your worry Phone: 0800 1111

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>

Approved by Trustees (date)	14 November 2022
Signed by (name and role)	Richard Beales - Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding
Due for Review	annually or when there is a major change in relevant legislation