

Taunton Youth Football Club Community Trust

Nurturing sporting intelligence: better than last week, but not as good as next week

Safeguarding Children

Introduction

Taunton Youth FC Community Trust acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members to promote their well-being and welfare. This commitment to protect from harm extends to all those connected with the activities of the charity.

To do this we have a Safeguarding Policy and procedures that are reviewed annually, when the legislation changes and after any safeguarding incident. The version contained here was last updated in April 2019 and formally reviewed and approved on 12th January 2023.

Who the policy applies to

The policy applies to everyone associated with or benefitting from the activities of our charity, i.e. all players, coaches, trustees, staff and volunteers.

We commit to informing all beneficiaries and parents/carers of the policy and procedures as appropriate. To facilitate this a copy is posted on our public website and referenced in the Welcome Pack we share with all new joiners.

The Policy

1. As a footballing organisation we subscribe to and follow The Football Association's (The FA) Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.
 - In the FA document a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity.
 - It is noted and accepted that The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, club official or medical staff.
 - The FA guidance is based on the statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" and the Sport England/NSPCC National Standards Framework.
2. The key principles of The FA Safeguarding Children 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, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief
 - 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/carers is essential.

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. At Taunton Youth FC Community Trust we recognise this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

3. Taunton Youth FC Community Trust has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

These are defined as follows:

- 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.

Signs to look for include but are not limited to:

- Showing signs of being withdrawn and/or distressed
 - Showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
 - Children who frequently go missing from home
 - Children in a family circumstance that is presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
 - Children misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
4. We endorse and adopt The FA's Responsible Recruitment guidelines for the safe recruitment, selection and vetting of all volunteers, staff and trustees who have direct or indirect contact with children. We do this by:
- specifying what the role is and what tasks it involves
 - requesting identification documents, including evidence of coaching qualifications where applicable
 - meeting and talking with the applicant(s) and where possible interviewing people before appointing them
 - asking for and following up with 2 references before appointing someone
 - where needed or advised, requiring a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

All current Taunton Youth FC Community Trust members working in eligible roles, with children and young people, such as managers, coaches and trustees are required to hold an in-date Enhanced DBS check as part of our responsible recruitment practice.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of our 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 in the best interests of children and young people.

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. Taunton Youth FC Community Trust supports The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy. Whistle-blowing can be used as an early warning system or when it's recognised that appropriate actions have not been taken. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organization. Any adult or young person with concerns about an adult in a position of trust can 'whistle blow' by:
- calling 0800 169 1863 and asking for The FA's safeguarding team

- emailing: Safeguarding@TheFA.com
- going direct to the Police or Somerset's Children's Social Care department (tel: 0300 123 2224)
- contacting the NSPCC Helpline via tel: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Taunton Youth FC Community Trust encourages everyone to know about The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy and to utilise it if necessary.

6. Taunton Youth FC Community Trust has appointed a Club Welfare Officer in line with The FA's role profile and required completion of the Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officers Workshop.

Details of the role of the Welfare Officer can be found at: <http://www.thefa.com/-/media/files/thefaportal/governance-docs/safeguarding/raising-awareness/club-welfare-officer-roles-responsibilities.ashx>

The post holder (currently Neil White) 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.

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 or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the Club Welfare Officer; in cases of serious bullying the Somerset FA Welfare Officer may be contacted.
8. We endorse and have implemented the FA's '**Respect**' codes of conduct for Players, Parents/ Spectators, Officials and Coaches. Collectively these codes of conduct help to create the right environments for our players, both on and off the pitch. They are in place to ensure that everyone involved with our club is playing their part to give players a positive experience.

In order to validate these codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by the County FA in more serious circumstances.

These sanctions can include:

- Warning as to future conduct
- Payment of fines/financial penalties
- Suspending from membership
- Removal from membership

Full copies of these codes of conduct can be found on the [FA website](#) and in our Welcome Pack.

9. We endorse and follow the FA's [recommended guidelines for Celebrating Football Through Photographs and Video](#). A copy can be found online and in our Welcome Pack.
10. 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.** All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.
 - i. If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer.
 - ii. If the issue is one of poor practice the Club Welfare Officer will either:
 - deal with the matter themselves or
 - seek advice from the CFA Welfare Officer
 - iii. If the concern is more serious (e.g. possible child abuse) where possible contact the County FA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.

- iv. 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 County FA Welfare Officer.
 - v. If at any time you are not able to contact your Club Welfare Officer or the matter is clearly serious then you can either:
 - contact your County FA Welfare Officer directly: Shirley Needham. Tel: 07535 664988
 - contact The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863 or Safeguarding@TheFA.com
 - contact the Police or Somerset Children's Social Care department (tel: 0300 123 2224)
 - call the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
11. If an allegation or report of abuse is reported to the Club's Welfare Officer they will respond rapidly and make an assessment based on their training. This assessment could require work to undertake a confidential investigation. The assessment will classify the case as:
- High and immediate-risk
 - Medium-risk
 - Lower-risk or poor practice

If high and immediate-risk – the statutory authorities will be informed and within 24 hours a standard referral form outlining the case will be sent to The FA Safeguarding team.

If medium-risk – a referral form will be sent to The FA Safeguarding team within 24 hours and handled on a case-by-case basis. This means it may be referred to the statutory authorities or handled by The FA and Somerset County FA.

If lower-risk – then it will be handled by the club in conjunction with Somerset County FA.

Thereafter there are various risk management actions which could be taken to safeguard children. These include education, mentoring, supervision and, where appropriate, suspensions.

12. Confidential records will be kept for the purposes of recording incidents, concerns and referrals. It is the responsibility of the Club's Welfare Officer to store these securely in a way that is compliant with the club's data protection policy and the relevant legislation (e.g. General Data Protection Regulation).
13. Further advice on Safeguarding Children matters can be obtained from:

Neil White, Taunton Youth FC Community Trust's designated Welfare Officer.
Tel: 07977 915956
Email: neil.white@tauntontown.com

Shirley Needham - Somerset County Football Association's Welfare Officer
Tel: 07535 664988
Email: Shirley.Needham@SomersetFA.com

How we raise awareness to the policy

We are totally committed to raising awareness of safeguarding, dealing with inappropriate behaviours and promoting best practice. We do this in a number of ways including:

- Ensuring that across all Managers, coaches, trustees and volunteers
 - their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding are well understood
 - they know what abuse is and how to spot it
 - they know how to raise a concern should they have one
- Organising our staffing of coaching sessions to avoid situations where a single adult is left in sole charge of a child or group of children.

- Holding all of our training sessions, workshops and matches in places where parents/carers are able to stay and watch.
- Following all the policies and practices we have put in place, e.g. safer recruitment practices, anti-bullying policy, appropriate use of photography.
- Requiring all coaches and trustees to have Enhanced DBS checks.
- Talking with our players, their families, our coaches and volunteers about the Respect codes of conduct they are expected to follow, and following up swiftly where there are reports of behaviour that are not consistent with the expected standards.
- Including details of all of these policies in our Welcome Pack for new joiners and on our Website.
- Monitoring and amending where necessary the content and application of our policies on an annual basis, or when there are changes to the legislation or following a serious incident.

The version contained here was formally reviewed and approved in April 2019 and was last updated in January 2023

Alison Prettejohn removed.