



# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

## Summary

This document outlines the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Mytchett Athletic FC.

It is imperative that all coaches, volunteers, officials, parents/guardians/carers read and fully understand the club's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to ensure that all young people at the club are protected from harm and safe to enjoy sport. Adults at all times in the vicinity of young people at the club must be conscious and aware of these procedures and abide by them fully.

It is important that all individuals working with young people behave in an appropriate manner, operating within an accepted ethical framework. This will protect both the young people and the adults within the club.

The following section provides guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when working with young people. The guidelines are relevant to all adults and young people (coaches, officials, team managers, volunteers and parents/guardians/carers) working with children and young people at Mytchett Athletic FC.

## Principles of Good Practice

- Ensure that sport is fun, enjoyable and fair play is promoted.
- Treat all young people equally, with respect and dignity.
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Always put the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment, e.g. no secrets).
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that the club adopts Home Office guidelines which recommend the principle that people in positions of trust and authority do not have sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18, or adults in their care
- Ensure the activity is appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of participants.

- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism. Never ridicule or shout at a participant for making a mistake or losing.
- Ask each participant to complete a membership/player profile form providing details on:
  - Name, address and date of birth.
  - Experience of playing the sport.
  - Any special needs or requirements.
  - Medical information.
  - Existing injuries.
  - Emergency contact details of a parent/carer.
- Ensure the information on the membership/player profile form is always available, in case of emergency.
- Keep a written record of any accident/incident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and only when necessary. Always follow the guidelines of The FA.
- Keep up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in the sport.
- If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure you work in pairs of the same sex.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female volunteer.
- Ensure that at tournaments or away/overnight fixtures, adults do not enter young people's rooms without following appropriate guidelines, or invite young people into their rooms.
- Ensure that there is regular communication with parents/guardians/carers, gaining written consent:
  - to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
  - to take young people away to a tournament.
- Take responsibility for children and young people in your care until they have safely left the club activity.

## **Principles of Poor Practice**

The following practice would place young people and those working with them in a vulnerable position and is deemed to be poor practice. If poor practice is identified through a complaint or referral, this may result in an investigation and disciplinary action in terms of various relevant authorities (as listed at the end of this procedure).

All individuals working with young people should avoid the following practice.

### **You should never:**

- Spend time alone with young people away from others.
- Take young people to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Transport young people in your car alone.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.

- Share a room with a young person.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching or physical abuse.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.
- Show favouritism or personally reward a child or young person.
- Reduce a young person to tears as a form of control or use humiliating punishments.
- Allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves.

If any of the above, or the following incidents occur or are observed, you must report them to the Child Welfare Officer and make a written note, which is signed and dated and inform parents wherever possible if:

- You accidentally hurt a young person.
- A young person seems distressed in any manner.
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **Codes of Conduct**

The Codes of Conduct adopted by Mytchett Athletic FC are based on the principles of good practice and Home Office guidance in "Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? - Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust", 1999, which protects those working with young people or vulnerable adults against sexual activity within relationships of trust.

Adults and young leaders working with children and young people in the club, in particular coaches and team managers, are in a relationship of trust. This can be described in broad terms as one party (the adult or young leader) having responsibility for another party (the young person) in a way which gives the adult/young leader power or influence over a child/young person. It is not acceptable for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with anyone in his/her care. ("Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? - Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust", Home Office, 1999).

If coaches, volunteers or officials at the club breach this code of conduct, the individual may face disciplinary action.

## **Guidance for the Appointment of Coaches, Volunteers & Officials**

When appointing a coach, volunteer or official to support or run a young person's team, it is essential for the person to undertake the following:

- Screening the individual to check his/her suitability to work with young people. An FA Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check must be completed and sent to the CRB as soon as possible. References are also recommended.
- The individual should be screened at least every three years.
- To complete a form to indicate that they have read and understood the: Codes of Conduct, Role Description, the Club Constitution, The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and the Equity Statement.

It would be desirable if the person is appropriately qualified with relevant current insurance in place. If they do not have the appropriate qualifications and insurance, the club will provide support with their development.

## **Guidelines on Photography and Use of Video**

Mytchett Athletic FC recognises that photographs and video footage of children and young people can pose direct or indirect risks to their subjects. For example, an individual may use images accompanied by personal information to learn more about a child or young person prior to 'grooming' them for abuse. Or the content of a photograph featured on a website could be used or adapted for inappropriate use. This kind of adapted material has appeared on child pornography sites.

There is also evidence that certain individuals will visit sporting events to take photographs or video footage of young and disabled sports participants for inappropriate use.

The club is keen to promote positive images of children and young people playing sport at the club and is not banning the use of photographic or videoing equipment. The club has established the following guidelines therefore to regulate the taking of and publication of photographs and video footage:

The club will:

- Always ask parents/guardians/carers to give their permission for photographs and/or video footage of their child(ren) to be taken and used to ensure that they are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the club or sport.
- Avoid using a photograph of a young person named in accompanying text.
- Avoid using a young person's name in a photograph caption or accompanying text if his/her photograph is being used.
- Only use images of young people in appropriate dress, to reduce the risk of inappropriate use, and to provide positive images of the young person at the club.
- Encourage the reporting of inappropriate use of images of young people. If you are concerned, report your concerns to the Child Welfare Officer.
- Only use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. Ensure that players and their parents/guardians/carers are aware that this is part of the coaching programme and take care in the storing of such films.

Parents/guardians/carers must provide written consent for the use of photography and video analysis.

## **Guidelines on Changing**

Players aged 10 and under must be supervised at all times in changing rooms by two members of staff of the same gender as the players.

Adults working with young teams, including volunteers, coaches, officials or staff, should not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as young players (under 16).

Mixed gender teams must have access to separate male and female changing rooms.

If young people are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so.

The club will ensure that disabled participants and their carers will be involved in deciding how, if applicable, they wish to be assisted to change and ensure they provide full consent to any support or assistance required.

## **Guidelines on Transportation**

Parents/guardians/carers will be informed by the club of the transport policy regarding the dropping off and collecting of young people at the club venues.

The definition of "club venues" shall be taken to mean any venue used for club activities, which include but are not limited to home matches, away matches, training sessions, tournaments, meetings, events and functions.

The following principles will help underpin the policy:

- Coaches and club volunteers/staff will be responsible for young people in their care when at the club venues.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers to transport their child(ren) to and from the club venue.
- It is not the coach's or volunteer's responsibility to transport the young people to and from the club venue.
- The club must receive permission from parents/guardians/carers for young people to participate in all competitions and away fixtures/events.
- The club will provide a timetable of activities at the beginning of a season and notify parents/guardians/carers in writing (where practically possible) of any changes to this timetable.
- The club will require contact numbers for parents/guardians/carers and any alternative numbers if they are not contactable on the numbers provided.
- The club will provide the parents/guardians/carers with a contact number which may be used if the parents/guardians/carers are late in collecting their child/children.

If a parent/carer is late the club will:

- Attempt to contact the parent/carer.
- Contact the alternative contact name/number.
- Wait with the young person at the club venue with other volunteers or parents/guardians/carers.
- Remind parents/ guardians/carers of the policy relating to late collection.
- If parents/ guardians/carers remain out of contact, staff will need to report the situation to Social Services or the Police.

Any applicable individuals at the club should avoid:

- Taking the child home or to any other location.
- Asking the child to wait in a vehicle or the club venue with them alone.
- Sending the child home with another person without permission.

## **Use of Alcohol and Illegal Substances**

Whilst actively working with children and young people ALL adults and young leaders must adhere to the code of conduct. If an adult/young leader is reported to have breached the code of conduct, with regard to the use of alcohol, cigarettes or illegal substances, he/she will be investigated under the club's complaints and discipline procedures.

Within the club setting or on away fixtures or tours, it is inappropriate and it is illegal for adults, coaches, volunteers, or officials to allow young people to consume alcohol, smoke (under the age of 16), or take illegal or banned substances. If a report is received with allegations of this taking place, the individuals will be seen to have breached the code of conduct and will be investigated under the club's disciplinary procedures.

## **Use of Electronic Communication**

Contacting children and young people by telephone, text or email should never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent. Ideally contact by coaches would be primarily on a face-to-face basis.

However, if it is necessary to make contact with young people by text messaging or emailing: for children under 11 all mobile phone communication and emails should be made with parents or guardians or carers. For children and young people of 11 and over, it is acceptable to send text messages or emails but the messages should also be sent to parents. Messages should also be copied to a responsible person within the club.

The club will keep any details of phone numbers and email addresses securely.

## **Types 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 breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child, young person or vulnerable adult regardless of their age, disability, gender or race. Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other young people and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family.

There are four main forms of child abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in residential care or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child/young person.

## **Bullying and Harassment**

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Although bullying often takes place in schools, it can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision - on the way to and from school, at a sporting event, in the playground and in changing rooms.

The competitive nature of sport can create or support an environment for the bully. The bully in sport can be:

- A parent who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a "win at all costs" philosophy.
- A young player who intimidates inappropriately.
- An older player who intimidates inappropriately.
- An official who places unfair pressure on a young person.

Bullying can be defined in the following ways:

- Physical: e.g. hitting, kicking and theft.
- Verbal: e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures.
- Written: e.g. graffiti, letter or mobile text messaging.
- Emotional: e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.
- Sexual: e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a young person is being bullied:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn.
- Being clingy, depressed, tearful, and emotionally up and down.
- Showing reluctance to go to school, training or sports club.
- A drop off in performance at school or standard of play.
- Physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.
- Drop out of a newer member.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that bullying or harassment is actually taking place.

***It is not the responsibility of those working in the club to decide that bullying or harassment is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.***

## **Indicators of Abuse**

Not all situations that give cause for concern may be a breach of code of conduct or poor practice. Some incidents may be suspected child abuse, either within or outside the sport or club.

Indications that a young person may be being abused include 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 the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other young people.
- Displays variations in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Some changes in behaviour can be caused by changes at home, for example bereavement. Parents/ guardians/carers must inform the coach, club or volunteer of any significant changes which may affect the behaviour of their child.

***It is not the responsibility of those working in the club to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.***

## **Reporting Procedures – Action To Take If You Suspect a Child/Young Person is Being Harmed**

It is your responsibility to act upon any concerns you may have about poor practice or potential abuse arising from complaints, concerns, observations, allegations and/or disclosures. The reporting of such concerns should never be delayed and allegations made by children or young people must never be dismissed.

If you have cause for concern for whatever reason (may be simply a 'gut feeling'), it is vital that an accurate written record of what you have heard or observed is recorded as soon as possible. It is imperative that a note be kept of all complaints, injuries or behaviours that cause concern. This information should be recorded on an Incident/Accident Report Form, in accordance with the Emergency Incident Procedures.

Information must be as detailed as possible as it may be used in any subsequent legal action. The incident report should contain the following information:

- The child/young person's name, age, date of birth, full address and telephone number.



- The child/young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and who was involved.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- Details of any witnesses.
- Any observations that have been made by you or to you.
- Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Information and details of the alleged abuser, where possible.
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child/young person.
- The date the incident was reported and to whom.

Remember, this information should remain strictly confidential.

***If you have serious concerns about the immediate safety of a child or young person, contact Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) on 0300 200 1006 or your local police by dialling 101. If it's an emergency always dial 999.***

When responding to a disclosure you need to always:

- Stay calm.
- Keep an open mind.
- Listen carefully to what is said and take the young person seriously.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not keep secrets.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the young person's own words as soon as possible.
- Report the incident to the Child Welfare Officer or the Surrey FA Welfare Officer.

You must report your concerns or any information received immediately to the Child Welfare Officer who will refer the matter to the Surrey FA Welfare Officer or to an appropriate statutory agency, such as the Police or SSCB or to the NSPCC at the earliest opportunity.

If you are unable to contact the Child Welfare Officer, you should refer your concerns to SSCB or Surrey Police – see contact details above.

You should give or send the completed Incident Report Form to the Child Welfare Officer as soon as possible in a sealed envelope marked 'Private and Confidential'. No copies of this form should be kept.

Reporting the matter to The County FA, SSCB or the Police should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the SSCB must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

A record must also be made of the name and designation of the SSCB member of staff or Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. A copy of this information should be sent to the Surrey FA Welfare Officer.

The Child Welfare Officer, Surrey FA Welfare Officer or Statutory Services (e.g. Surrey Police, SSCB etc.) are then responsible for deciding the next course of action to be taken to ensure the safety of the child/young person in question and any other child/young person who may be at risk.

On referring the matter to SSCB or the Police, the Child Welfare Officer will seek guidance on their next course of action to ensure that they do not take any steps that will adversely affect a resulting investigation.

For further information and guidance on what action to take, please see the 'Responding to Child Protection Concerns' flowchart on the club website.

## **Dealing with Alleged Abuse**

It is not the club's responsibility to decide if a referral is child abuse. If there is any cause for concern or doubt, the information received will be shared with SSCB, the Police or other appropriate child protection agency.

SSCB is legally bound to make enquiries with regard to referrals. They will always work in partnership with the Police, as necessary. Their primary duty is to safeguard and ensure the welfare of the young person and to work within SSCB procedures.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Disciplinary or misconduct – the club and possibly The FA is involved.
- Criminal - the Police are involved.
- Child protection – SSCB are involved (possible involvement by the Police).

Information passed to The FA, SSCB or the Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern.

## **Confidentiality & Information Sharing**

If you have a concern with regard to the behaviour of an adult or young leader towards a child/young person, it is important that you share your concerns with the Child Welfare Officer, Surrey FA Welfare Officer or appropriate statutory agency such as SSCB or the Police, as outlined above.

The legal principle that the 'welfare of the child is paramount' means that the considerations which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of young people to be protected from harm.

However, every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

The club is aware that the Government has published guidance on information sharing as part of the "Every Child Matters" initiative, which explicitly highlights the importance of sharing information to protect the welfare of all children and will seek guidance from SSCB.

The club recognises that in all cases, the safety and welfare of a child or young person must always be the overriding consideration.

All concerns will be taken seriously and managed accordingly within the club's policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in sport.

## **If an Allegation is Made Against You**

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of an adult/young leader towards a child or young person will be taken seriously and investigated.

If you are the person who is the centre of an allegation, the situation will be explained to you and you may be asked to stop working with young people in the club. This may result in suspension from activity within the club and the sport whilst a full investigation is carried out. This is not an assumption of guilt but is to protect all parties involved.

On completion of the investigation, depending on the outcome, the club and other appropriate agencies will assess the appropriateness of you returning to work with young people in the club and how, if applicable, this will be managed.

## **Important Contact Details**

### **Tony Hutt**

Club Welfare Officer (CWO)

Mobile Number: 07785 282 666

E-mail: [cwo@mytchettathletic.com](mailto:cwo@mytchettathletic.com)

### **Frank Thompson**

Surrey FA Welfare Officer

Phone Number: 01372 384 745

Email: [frank.thompson@surreyfa.com](mailto:frank.thompson@surreyfa.com)

### **Surrey Safeguarding Children Board**

Contact Centre

Phone Number: 0300 200 1006

### **Police**

Local Police: 101

Emergency: 999

### **NSPCC**

Phone Number: 0800 800 5000

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Childline**

Phone Number: 0800 1111

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)