

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Introduction**

Every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18 years, who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in football.

The aim of this Policy is to develop a positive and proactive position to, as far as is reasonably possible, protect all the children and young people who play for the Club.

### **Key Principles**

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

### **Definition of Child Abuse**

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children or young persons are harmed, either by adults or their peers. It can result in damage to physical, mental or emotional health.

There are five main forms of abuse:

- Physical abuse. This includes situations whereby children or young people are hurt, injured, or given drugs.
- Neglect. This includes where basic needs are not met, children are left consistently alone or unsupervised, or a failure to ensure they are not exposed to risk of injury through unsafe equipment or practices.
- Sexual abuse. This includes inappropriate physical contact.
- Emotional abuse. This can include constant criticism or taunting.
- Bullying. This includes physical, verbal or emotional hostility.

Vigilance and common sense are the best weapons to protect all children and young persons from child abuse.

The club has designated trainers with responsibility for child protection matters. Their responsibilities are to ensure that the Football Association's child protection procedures are followed within the club; that trainers are aware of these procedures; that relevant training and support is provided within the club; and to decide on appropriate action when concerns or allegations are made.

### **Recognition of Abuse**

Any adult could be approached by a child or young person needing help or guidance. Likewise, any trainer may be in a position to notice or be concerned about signs of abuse or neglect.

Indications of abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries untypical of those normally associated with children's activities.
- Regular occurrences of unexplained injuries.
- Inconsistent or confused explanations of how injuries were sustained.
- Significant changes in behaviour or attitude.
- Sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit or inappropriate to the age of the child.
- The child or young person recounting what appears to be an abusive act suffered by him or her.
- Someone else, either another child or adult, expressing concern about the welfare of another child or young person.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

The above list is not and cannot be exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof of actual abuse. All children and young people occasionally suffer cuts, grazes and bruises and their behaviour may at times be erratic.

There may well be reasons for these factors other than abuse. However, the stance adopted by Panshanger football club is: **IF IN DOUBT, ACT.**

### **Dealing with a disclosure**

The following points give guidance on how trainers should deal with a child or young person making an allegation of abuse:

- React calmly and reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame and are right to tell.
- Take what they say seriously.
- Allow the child to speak freely, keeping questions to a minimum. Avoid leading questions.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome that may not be subsequently feasible.
- Ensure the safety of the child or young person. If they need immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or call an ambulance.
- Inform medical staff of concerns and that this is a child protection issue.

### **Required Actions**

- Make a full written record as soon as possible that day of what has been said, heard and seen, including noticeable non verbal communication.
- Be especially careful to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- The record must be a clear, precise and factual account of the observations and must be signed and dated. It should contain the child's details, the nature of the allegation, a description of any visible injuries, the child or young person's account in their own words if possible and any times, dates and locations.
- Immediately report the concerns to the club's designated trainer for child protection issues and provide him with the written record, unless the concern is about that designated trainer, in which case the report must be made to the club secretary or chairman.
- The designated trainer is responsible for ensuring that when necessary, appropriate agencies are informed. This may include Social Services and/or the Police. Necessary advice may be sought from the Football Association.
- Confidentiality will be maintained on a strictly need to know basis and relevant documentation will be stored securely.

## **Recruitment and Selection of Coaches and Volunteers**

Panshanger football club takes reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people. When any adult seeks to join the club in any capacity which allows them access to children or young people, they must complete a Personal Disclosure Form and submit it in person to a member of the Club Committee together with documentation proving their identity, for example a passport or photo driving licence.

All forms will be forwarded to the designated trainer with responsibility for child protection matters, who reserves the right to interview the volunteer.

Any trainer who is charged with a criminal offence must notify the designated trainer for child protection issues in confidence, who will consider the appropriateness of them continuing to work with children and young persons.

### **Guidelines and Associated Matters.**

The Appendix to this Policy specifies guidelines which should be followed by all adults involved with the Club. Panshanger football club has an associated Anti-Bullying Policy.

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION / NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE: 0808 800 5000.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy. It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help to protect all adults, children and young persons associated with the club by promoting good practice.

1. No adult should spend time alone with a child or young person that is not their own unless in truly exceptional circumstances. This includes car journeys. If cases arise when these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a club committee member and/or the child's parent or guardians.
2. Under no circumstances should any trainer use any physical force to discipline a player. Any misbehaviour should be brought to the attention of the player's parent or guardian.
3. Only minimal force should be used to separate players who are fighting. This should only be exercised to prevent injury to the players and once this objective has been achieved all force should cease. Whenever force is used in this way the trainer must inform the parents or guardians of the players concerned and provide a written report to the Club Secretary.
4. Adults must refrain from using bad language or shouting at players in a manner likely to cause distress.
5. Trainers will not tolerate bullying in any form. Such behaviour will be brought to the attention of the parents or guardians of the players involved.
6. Trainers should ensure there is a first aid kit readily available at all matches and training sessions.
7. Trainers should ensure that substitutes are adequately clothed in cold weather if they are standing on the touchlines.
8. Trainers should ensure that players warm up and stretch before engaging in exercise.

9. Trainers should establish where the nearest telephone is situated (or mobile phone) to avoid delay if medical assistance is required.
10. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms, trainers should ensure they work in pairs.
11. Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves. It will sometimes be necessary to assist the very young or those with disabilities; in such cases these tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and prior consent of the child or young person and their parent or guardian.
12. If an adult accidentally hurts or distresses a child or young person, or it appears that an action has been misunderstood or misinterpreted, the adult should report the incident to another colleague, make a brief written record of the incident and inform the parent or guardian of the child or young person.
13. During training sessions and matches, all adults should be aware of child welfare. If a child, particularly younger ones, are seen to wander off, ascertain where they are going and who is supervising them.
14. During training sessions and matches, be aware of other adults acting suspiciously. If concerned, draw them to the attention of a trainer. Whilst a challenge, however diplomatically done, may be embarrassing, it is better than a child's safety being jeopardised.
15. The F.A. publishes guidelines on the use of images of children and young persons for publicity or coaching purposes. Any trainer considering photographing or videoing players in any context should comply with the recommendations. Further information is available from the designated trainer with responsibility for child protection matters.