

NWCFL SAFEGUARDING POLICY



The North West Counties Football League Limited (Company number 11407266) is registered in England and Wales, with its registered office at 24 The Pastures Crossens, Southport, Merseyside, United Kingdom, PR9 8RH

Child Wellbeing & Protection

Introduction

The North West Counties League Limited have always led from the front with regards to promoting safe and trustworthy policies and safety for players of all ages.

Part of this on-going strategy is to make the League as safe and welcoming an environment as possible. Accordingly, I would like to introduce you to our Child Wellbeing & Protection Policies, which in accordance with relevant national and international guidance and legislation, outline our service levels for ensuring that the interests and wellbeing of children are at the forefront of the League's mindset whenever children are under our member clubs care.

Ultimately we want every child who plays for a team, Volunteers at or who visit any of our member clubs or who directly volunteers or is employed by the North West Counties League Limited, whether on a League meeting or function, matchday, training night or social event to have a positive experience. It is therefore paramount that the League AND its member clubs have in place correctly trained, competent personnel and robust procedures in order to deliver this strategy.

The following procedures will, with the cooperation of parents and guardians, ensure that we deliver the required approach to children and young people.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Lawler
NWCFL Chairman

John Deal
NWCFL Secretary

Gary Langley
NWCFL Safeguarding & Welfare Officer

CONTACTS & REFERENCE

Listed below are the contact details for our League Safeguarding and Welfare Officer and our policy around Child Wellbeing and Protection.

CHILD WELLBEING & PROTECTION OFFICER

Gary Langley
07516 311480 | safeguarding@nwcfl.com

Further advice on Child Protection matters can be obtained from:

- Your Local County FA Safeguarding Officer, who's details are available on each County's respective website.
- The FA/NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000
- The FA Goal Website www.TheFA.com/Goal
- The FA Child Protection Team 020 7745 4649

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING

The following pages in this document contain our Child Wellbeing and Protection policies or for further information please feel free to contact the above email contact. Our Welfare policies are contained in a separate document.

The following Policy is based on the FA child protection policy statement and shall be fully adhered to by The North West Counties Football League Ltd and all members of the League shall comply with this Policy.

1. The League 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 of its members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any League football activity. This activity includes Club volunteers such as Ball boys/girls, Media Team members, catering/Ground staff. Our obligations for Safeguarding to not start and end at the football pitch.
2. We subscribe to The Football Association's Child Protection and Best Practice Policy and Procedures, Safeguarding Children and Young People in football (revised edition 2006) and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.
3. The key principles of The FA Child Protection 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.
 - We will work in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers and work with all NWCFL member clubs to ensure that this is continued on at local and regional level for the area covered by that club.

3a: 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. The League recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our League.

3b: Following the publication In March 2021 of the Sheldon Report into the non-recent abuse in football we commit to our League Safeguarding and Welfare Officer undertaking and maintaining the FA's "Safeguarding for Children" course to ensure that our safeguarding education remains regularly refreshed and updated so that as legislation and practice changes, up-to-date information is at the forefront of the minds of those working directly with U18s. We also commit to supporting and implementing the FA's Play Safe campaign, increasing awareness of Safeguarding and are planning activity across the weekend of 1-2 October 2022. We encourage all of our member clubs to support this as well as the Safeguarding Awareness for Parents and Carers course. We are committed to promoting safety in football and will continue to develop resources to support clubs and individuals with their role in safeguarding.

4. The League 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. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association Regulations applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on League tours, coach, League official or medical staff. We endorse and adopt The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice Guidelines for recruiting volunteers and will:

- Develop a role profile for appropriate members and Officers
- Request identification documents
- As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible conduct interviews before appointing and liaise with respective County FA's to request any local information that might be known about any applicants by way of previous incidents or behaviour
- Request and follow up with two references before appointing
- Require an FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with FA guidelines.

All current North West Counties League members who have staff/volunteers with direct access to children and young people will be required to complete a CRB Enhanced Disclosure via The FA CRB Unit. If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part the League, 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 FA CRB Unit and that all decisions will be made 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 or young people and to minimise the risk of 'grooming' within football.

4a, All clubs are duty bound to inform the North West Counties League Ltd by way of the League's Safeguarding Officer the name and contact details of the clubs Safeguarding and Welfare Officers to ensure full communication can be implemented. Clubs failing to register and maintain up to date details of their Safeguarding/Welfare Officer will, subject to board approval be prevented from signing individuals under 18 years of age and from recruiting volunteers under the same age.

5. The North West Counties League supports The FA's Whistle-blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can whistle-blow by contacting The FA Child Protection Team on 0207 745 4771 or by writing to The FA Case Manager, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, Wembley, London HA9 0WS or by going direct to the Police, Social Services, or the NSPCC. The League encourages everyone to know about it and utilise it if necessary.

6. The League has appointed a League Welfare Officer who is qualified via The FA's Club Welfare Officer (CWO) Course in line with The FA's role profile and completion of the Child

Protection and Best Practice Workshop. The post holder will be involved with designated persons training provided by The FA.

The respective Club's CWO is the first point of contact for all League members and parents/carers regarding concerns for the welfare of any child or young person. They liaise directly with the League and County FA's Safeguarding/Welfare Officer in the event of any issues or concerns raised. They will also play a proactive role in increasing an awareness of poor practice and abuse amongst League 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 League. 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 CWO or member of the committee or alternatively in cases of serious bullying contact the CFA Child Protection Officer (CPO).

8. Codes of conduct for coaches, players, officials and parents/carers, officials and coaches have been implemented by The North West Counties Football League. In order to validate these codes of conduct the League has clear sanctions to deal with any misconduct at League level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by leagues or the CFA in more serious circumstances. All prospective members will be informed of these codes.

Last Issued and Updated: July 2022