

AC OXGANGS

Community Football Club
Colinton Mains Park Edinburgh



*Child Wellbeing and
Protection Policy*
version 6.4

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overarching Aim:

- 1.1.1.** Our Vision - Children flourish because we put their safety, wellbeing, rights and enjoyment at the heart of every level of our Club.
- 1.1.2.** Our Mission - Children are the priority. We lead with confidence taking responsibility to create a culture of safety and wellbeing. We empower children through the active promotion of their rights.

1.2. Definitions:

- 1.2.1.** Definition of a Child - *Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that everyone under 18 years old has their rights set out in the Convention. Within the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*, a child is defined as anyone who has not reached the age of 18.
- 1.2.2.** For the purpose of this Policy “children”, “child”, “young person” and “young people” refer to any persons under the age of 18 years old.
- 1.2.3.** This Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy applies to all children and young people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, nationality, socio-economic status or family circumstance.
- 1.2.4.** Definition of an Adult - For the purpose of this policy, an “adult” is any individual aged 18 years and over or any individual under the age of 18 years but who is in a ‘position of trust’.
- 1.2.5.** Definition of Child Abuse - Child abuse is the act or omission that harms a child or young person. An individual may abuse a child or young person directly or may indirectly be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person from harming that child or young person, or their inaction leads to harm or the risk of harm. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect. Abuse can take place in person or online. Although typically thought of as when an adult is mistreating a child or young person, children and young people can also be perpetrators of abuse against other children or young people.
- 1.2.6.** Definition of Safeguarding - Safeguarding is taking action to ensure that all children and young people are safe from harm when involved in football. It means proactively doing everything possible to minimise risk and prevent abuse of children and young people.

1.2.7. Definition of Child Protection - Child protection refers to the actions in response to a specific concern for a child or young person who is at risk or suffering from abuse. Child protection is an essential part of safeguarding if there is a concern that a child or young person is being abused or their safety is compromised.

1.3. Children's Wellbeing in Scotland:

1.3.1. The Scottish Government's *Getting It Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) policy is based on children's rights, and its principles reflect the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). The GIRFEC approach is child-focused, based on an understanding of the wellbeing of a child or young person in their current situation, and based on tackling needs early in a collective way. As part of the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*, the concept of wellbeing and the GIRFEC approach is now enshrined in law in Scotland.

1.3.2. The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected, and can realise their full potential. Children and young people should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These are the eight wellbeing factors and are commonly known as SHANARRI Indicators.



- 1.3.3.** A child or young person's wellbeing is influenced, both positively and negatively, by everything around them and the different experiences and needs they have at different times in their lives. There is no set level of wellbeing that a child or young person should achieve, but each child should be helped to reach their full potential as an individual. The wellbeing indicators make it easier for everyone to be consistent in how they consider the quality of a child or young person's life at a particular point in time.
- 1.3.4.** By having a universal language and understanding for everyone who works with children and young people, collectively we can contribute to promoting, supporting and safeguarding a child's wellbeing whether they are in an educational, health, community or sport setting. It is essential that in Scottish football the wellbeing indicators are understood and if worried that something is impacting a child or young person's wellbeing, staff and volunteers know how to respond and with whom to share that information.
- 1.3.5.** A *Wellbeing Concern* is if a child's wellbeing (measured using the 8 SHANARRI indicators) is, or is at risk of being, adversely affected.

A range of experiences can have a negative impact on children and young people. These can range from harmful or abusive behaviour to a family bereavement or social economic factors, such as poverty. The nature of a *Wellbeing Concern* will influence how to support the child or young person.

Behaviour which is abusive or neglectful and is, or is likely to cause harm, will often be referred to as a 'Child Protection Concern'. Regardless of whether a concern is a wellbeing or child protection concern, it must be responded to in line with the Responding to Concerns Procedure.

1.4. Risks to Children's Wellbeing in Scottish Football:

- 1.4.1.** The protection and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in Scottish football must be a priority for everyone working, volunteering or participating in the game, including spectators. For children and young people involved in football, there may be risks associated with their involvement whether it be an injury, the despair of their team losing, or exposure to poor practice or abusive behaviour. It is essential that those working or volunteering with children and young people are alert to the associated risks and take steps to prevent, minimise or respond to the risks.

1.4.2. In addition to recognising risks to all children and young people, it is important to understand that some children and young people may be more vulnerable to particular risks associated with taking part in football.

- **Increased Vulnerability** - The Club is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and young people in football across all levels of the game. Children and young people who have additional care needs or who come from a minority ethnic group may face a range of additional challenges. Club and Team Officials will be encouraged and supported to challenge and address any behaviour or attitudes which compromise a child or young person's wellbeing or acts as a deterrent to the participation of some children and young people.
- **Children and Young People who are Deaf and Disabled** - In line with *Article 23* of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC), a child with a disability "should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community".

Children and young people who have a disability have the same needs as other children and young people but may also have additional needs associated with their disability. For example, additional steps may be needed to promote their wellbeing, or they may be at an increased risk of abuse due to their vulnerability. Research has shown that children with mental or physical disabilities are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children.

Children and young people who are deaf, disabled or have a learning disability can be additionally vulnerable because they may:

- Depend on several people for care and handling, some of which can be intimate care
- Depend on the abuser for their involvement in sport
- Fear disclosing abuse
- Fear the signs of abuse can be misinterpreted as a symptom of the disability
- Have a reduced capacity to resist either verbally or physically

- Have significant communication differences – this may include very limited verbal communication, the use of sign language or other forms of non-verbal communication
 - Lack a wide network of friends who support and protect them
 - Lack access to peers to discover what is acceptable behaviour or to understand the inappropriateness of actions
 - Not be believed due to negative attitudes towards children and young people with disabilities or possible failure to recognise the impact of abuse on children and young people with disabilities.
- **Children and young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities** - The UNCRC sets out the general principle of non-discrimination and that children should be protected from all forms of discrimination. It also states that children have the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of people in the country where they live. Unfortunately, within wider society, and football, discriminatory behaviour still exists therefore children and young people from black and ethnic communities are additionally vulnerable because they may:
 - Experience racism and racist attitudes
 - Experience people in authority ignoring or not responding to racist abuse or comments
 - Experience no action being taken by others for fear of upsetting cultural norms
 - Be afraid of further abuse if they challenge others
 - Want to fit in and not make a fuss
 - Be using or learning English as a second language.
 - **Children in Elite Football** - For many children and young people, it is their dream to play football professionally. When they have the talent, skill and dedication to realise this dream they will pursue it. Unfortunately, this can lead to a number of increased risks for children and young people involved in football at an elite level. For example, rivalry among their peers, inappropriate or detrimental relationships with their peers, pressure from their family, friends and the wider public, or, in some cases, exploitation by a trusted adult who can, or whom they perceive can help them 'achieve' this dream.

- Research has highlighted the following about the risk to children and young people at an elite level:
 - The greatest risk of emotional and sexual abuse occurs among the highest-ranked athletes
 - Poor practice, emotional abuse and bullying are probably more prevalent in sports than sexual abuse
 - Athletes perpetrate more sexual harassment of their peers than coaches
 - Athlete-athlete bullying is widespread
 - Coach perpetrators are often very highly qualified and very highly respected which acts as a mask for their poor practice and abuse.

1.5. Anti-Bullying Promise:

These guidelines have been informed and developed with support from *respectme*, their publication *Bullying in Scotland 2014* and the *Respect for All: National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, Scottish Government 2017*. Copyright remains with *respectme* and we acknowledge all and any material taken from www.respectme.org.uk

1.5.1. Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a child better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up.

1.5.2. Children's wellbeing can be seriously impacted by bullying behaviour. Bullying can take some children's rights away from them. Bullying is both behaviour and impact, the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what is termed as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face-to-face and online.

- **What is Bullying** - Bullying behaviour can harm people both physically and emotionally. Something only has to happen once to make a child feel worried, scared, threatened, left out and hurt. The actual behaviour may not be repeated but the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these. Bullying behaviour is not always deliberate, but that does not mean that the bullying behaviour does not need to be appropriately challenged.

- The Club appreciates that bullying behaviour can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and young people may be reluctant to tell adults for fear of repercussions or an 'over-reaction' by adults. This Practice Note provides guidance for members of staff and volunteers to recognise 'signs' of bullying behaviour and understand the impact that it can have on the child or young person who is being bullied. It sets out how members of our Club should respond should they have any concerns about bullying behaviour.
- Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual's actual or perceived identity and can be based on characteristics unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance e.g., their ethnicity or religion or sexuality. When bullying behaviour is a result of prejudice, there is a need to address the root cause of the prejudice as well as effectively responding to incidents as they arise.
- **The Club Will:**
 - Seek to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour, through the implementation of this Policy and by ensuring that children and young people know what to do and whom they can speak to if they are worried
 - Highlight bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues
 - Seek to understand the experiences and address the needs of children and young people who are bullied, as well as those who bully, within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support
 - Create an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated and is responded to in the best interests of the children and/or young people involved. Environments that promote respect, celebrate differences and encourage positive relationships and behaviour are less likely to see bullying as acceptable behaviour. Creating the right environment can discourage bullying behaviour and encourage children and young people to share any concerns.

1.6. Everyone's Responsibility

- 1.6.1. The responsibility to safeguard, promote, support and protect a child or young person's wellbeing does not rest on one person. *We are all responsible.*
- 1.6.2. Football can contribute in many ways to a child or young person's positive wellbeing including the health benefits of being active, the achievements they can make in gaining new skills and their experiences of being included and respected as part of a team. Supporting and promoting a child or young person's wellbeing at all times includes forming positive relationships, understanding their circumstances and responding appropriately to any concerns about their wellbeing. To ensure we can respond when a child or young person needs help or support, we must first understand their rights and the meaning of wellbeing. Secondly, we must recognise and acknowledge the risks that exist for children and young people in football and put in place a range of safeguards that minimise these risks. Leadership is essential to ensure that these safeguards are managed and promoted, and this will be done by our Officials within particular roles at the Club who receive specific training for their level of responsibility. However, everyone must understand the risks associated for children and young people, and the appropriate processes which are in place should a child or young person's wellbeing be at risk or they are in need of protection.
- 1.6.3. Everyone has the responsibility to recognise the concern, to ensure the child or young person is safe if they are at risk of immediate harm, and to report the concern to the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. Thereafter the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will respond appropriately in line with the Responding to Concerns Procedure.
- 1.6.4. The Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy combined with relevant training, mentoring and support will give us the confidence and support needed to fulfil our role and responsibility to keep children and young people safe in football. In addition to this, advice can be sought at any point from our Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer.
- 1.6.5. No matter what role or involvement in Scottish football, individuals have a responsibility to safeguard, promote, support and protect the wellbeing of all children and young people involved in Scottish football.
- 1.6.6. **If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child or young person or about the conduct of any adult then you must report the matter to our *Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer*. Contact details can be found in Appendix 1 of this Policy.**

1.7. Review

Our Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy will be regularly reviewed and will include children and young people's participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review.

1.7.1. This policy will be reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on children's wellbeing, protection or rights
- Following the review of an issue or concern raised about the wellbeing or protection of children within the club, when the case review suggests that this policy should be reviewed
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. Our Club is committed to ensuring that every child who takes part in football, in any capacity, is able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment, which promotes inclusion and protects them from harm, poor practice, exploitation, bullying or abuse. The Club values a rights-based approach within our sport, and our Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy is based on the fundamental rights of children as set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC).

This Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy is based on the following principles:

2.1.1. We will act in the best interests of children and young people.

2.1.2. The protection and wellbeing of all children in our care is everyone's responsibility.

2.1.3. A child or young person's rights, wishes and feelings should be respected and promoted. For example:

- A child or young person, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity has the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation
- We see the child or young person before the player, coach, volunteer, spectator or referee
- Children and young people have the right to express views on matters that affect them, should they wish to do so, and to have those views taken into account
- Children and young people have the right to relax, play, and join in a wide range of sporting activities.

2.1.4. The best way to promote the wellbeing, health and development of a child or young person is to work in partnership with each other, the child or young person, their parents/carers and other relevant organisations.

2.1.5. All staff and volunteers, when working or volunteering with children and young people involved in Club activities, will be:

- **Inclusive** - football is for everyone, irrespective of background. We celebrate what makes us unique and embrace our differences. We create a culture where rights are respected and everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect
- **Approachable** - we are visible, accessible, open and caring. We build respectful and supportive relationships, listening to children's voices, and championing their views in everything we do
- **Empowering** - we are forward-facing and strive to be the best for children and young people. We are brave, challenging ourselves and others to continually strive for the best outcomes for children and young people. We encourage and support children and young people to express their views
- **Accountable** - We accept responsibility and take ownership of the wellbeing and protection of children in our game. Our collective leadership calls upon integrity, consistency and confidence in our everyday behaviours.

3. Set the Standards - Behaviours, Expectations and Requirements

Every Official at our Club will be asked to sign up to the following standards, outlining the behaviour, expectations and requirements for working and volunteering with children and young people. By creating an environment where children and young people are respected, their rights are promoted, and they are supported to have fun, learn and develop in a safe environment, the Club shall inspire them to love the game.

To achieve this goal the Club expects its Officials to embody the Wellbeing and Protection Values – Inclusive, Empowering, Approachable and Accountable - to create a positive football environment, and by displaying exemplary behaviour and implementing practices that make football a safe, fun, and positive experience for all children and young people involved.

3.1. Behaviours - football should be an enjoyable activity which allows everyone to take part in a fun and safe manner. At times this will involve managing behaviours in an appropriate way and responding to challenging behaviour in a safe and thought-out manner.

3.1.1. Our Club aims to promote best practices that can help support children and young people manage their own behaviour. It also identifies unacceptable actions or interventions which must never be used by members of staff or volunteers.

3.1.2. These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The wellbeing of the child or young person is the paramount consideration
- A risk assessment, by means of planning and preparing for each session, should be completed for all activities taking into consideration the needs of all children or young people involved in the activity
- Children and young people must never be subjected to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading and should always be able to maintain their dignity and respect
- No Club or Team Official should attempt to respond to behaviour by using techniques for which they have not been trained.

3.2. Managing Behaviour - it is important to create the right environment and model the behaviour that you expect from children and young people involved in football.

Creating the right environment involves but is not limited to:

- **Strong leadership** - promoting positive relationships at all levels and a culture and ethos of positive and respectful relationships. All Club and Team Officials should embody the behaviour expected from the children and young people
- **Constructive communication** – communication between adults and children or young people includes listening to the child or young person without interruption, trying to solve the problem, and recognising how the child or young person is feeling

- **Behavioural reinforcement** - rewards for good behaviour and consequences for negative behaviour
- All those delivering activities to children and/or young people will receive appropriate training and will be supported by the CWPO and relevant club officials.

3.3. Physical Contact - there is a range of situations where Team Officials may come into physical contact with the children and/or young people. For example, to prevent or treat an injury, a child who is upset reaches out for comfort, congratulating a player who has done well, positioning the player for a drill etc.

The general guidance is as follows:

- All forms of physical contact should be respectful and sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child or young person and take place in a culture of dignity and respect
- Children and young people should be encouraged to express their views on physical contact
- Physical contact should be in a reasonable and appropriate manner in an open environment with other adults present, where possible
- Be mindful that to comfort a child or young person who is upset, it is not always necessary or appropriate to place an arm around them. Sitting down and listening to them and maybe holding their hand can show concern for their situation
- Sometimes children or young people will initiate a hug or other forms of excited/happy contact with coaches and other adults, this is a normal form of human expression. It is important that adults respond to this in an appropriate manner, where they engage with the child or young person in a positive way while not prolonging the contact or imitating it. Respond and then re-direct them into a more suitable coach/player form of positive expression such as a high 5 or dropping to one knee to speak to them at eye level.

- **Team Officials must never:**
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with their players
- Engage in sexually provocative games e.g., horseplay or touching a child or young person in a sexually suggestive manner
- Engage in 'rough' physical contact

3.4. Further Guidance

3.4.1. Supporting a Child with Personal Care Needs

- Some members of staff and/or volunteers may be working with younger children or young people with particular needs
- It is recommended that the child's parents/carer undertake any personal care, where possible
- If it is necessary to help a child or young person with personal tasks e.g., toileting or changing, the child or young person and their parents/carer must be encouraged to express a preference regarding the support and work together with Team Official to develop practiced routines for personal care so that the child or young person and their parents/carers know what to expect. It is also important to establish what the child or young person can do themselves and any support should be limited to what the child or young person cannot do.
- The child or young person and their parents/carer should also be encouraged to speak out about methods of support with which they are uncomfortable

Team Officials must not take on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained e.g., manual assistance for a child or young person with a physical disability.

3.4.2. Physical Contact for Drills

Team Officials who are training on particular techniques should demonstrate the move themselves or ask another player who can display the technique being taught. In exceptional circumstances, despite a demonstration or verbal description, it may be necessary to move the child or young person into a particular position

- In these circumstances, the child or young person must be asked if they are comfortable being moved into the correct position and a description given to the child or young person as to what it will involve e.g., “Is it ok if I put my hands on your shoulders and move you into the correct position?”

Manual support should be provided openly and must always be proportionate to the circumstances and must never involve contact with the child or young person’s buttocks, genitals or breasts.

3.4.3. Physical Interventions

- The use of physical interventions should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child or young person from injuring themselves, injuring others or causing serious damage to property
- All forms of physical intervention shall form part of a broader approach to the management of behaviour
- Physical contact to prevent something from happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction
- Before physically intervening, the Team Official should ask themselves, ‘Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?’
- Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the Team Official and reported to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer as soon as possible. Contact details are in Appendix 1 of the Policy
- A timely debrief by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, Team Officials and the child or young person and their parents/carers should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used

This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional wellbeing of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Team Officials, the child or young person and their parents/carers should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment

There should also be a discussion with the child or young person and their parents/carers about the child/young person's needs and continued safe participation in the team or activity.

4. Use of Social Media and Code of Conduct for the Use of Photographs and Images

4.1. Information and communication technology (ICT) and social media have evolved extremely quickly, meaning the way in which we communicate, receive and absorb information is changing all the time. These advancements provide significant benefits for our Club, including opportunities to promote activities and communicate easily with our Officials and parents/carers and the wider community through various channels e.g., text, email and social media.

In addition to the benefits, there is also potential for misuse and it is the misuse of communication technology and social media which can put children and young people at considerable risk. Therefore, safeguards around its use must be put in place.

Risks associated with ICT and Social Media for children and young people:

- Access to inappropriate websites or inappropriate content
- Inappropriate access to, use or sharing of personal details e.g., names, email addresses, school
- Unwanted contact from adults or other children or young people with wrongful or questionable intent
- Receiving, sending or sharing inappropriate or offensive images, material and/or comments
- Online bullying
- Grooming for sexual abuse
- Direct contact and abuse
- A distorted view between the "real world" and the "online world".

Risks associated with ICT and Social Media for adults:

- Their communication with children and young people being misinterpreted
- Bullying
- Young People/Adults attempting to contact them or access personal information

4.2. The Club may contact children and young people and their parents/carers via text or email, or possibly through social networking sites, depending on the football activity that each child or young person is involved in with the Club.

Advice for staff and volunteers who use any of these methods to communicate with children and young people.

General Principles:

Do:

- Communicate in an open and transparent manner
- Only send communication via text, email or social media if it is necessary and relates to the activity the child or young person is involved in
- Get signed consent from parents/carers before using any of these methods of communication with children or young people. Explain to the parents/carers the purpose of the communication and the method by which communication will be sent to the children and/or young people.
- Get signed consent from the young person, if they are aged 13 or over, about the agreed methods of communication, depending on the young person's maturity and ability to consent.
- Club and Team Officials should communicate information regarding programmes, events, training and matches through the agreed method of communication with all the proper consent in place.

For additional safety:

- copy in with another designated Club or Team Official to the communication
- copy in the child and young person's parents/carer

- only use group texts or emails, if possible
- For 'private' group chats on social media, make sure that there is more than one Club or Team Official as part of the group chat
- Remove and report any offensive comments or messages immediately to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (Appendix 1) and to the social media site, if appropriate
- Keep all phone numbers and/or email addresses of children and young people in a secure and confidential place
- Keep access to personal mobile numbers and email addresses of the children and young people to a practical minimum with only relevant Club and Team Officials having access to this information and only when necessary to enable them to fulfil their role
- Report to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (Appendix 1) any instances where you receive any inappropriate communications from a child and/or a young person. Do not reply. The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will agree on what action the Club will take e.g., notifying parents and any other appropriate individuals or agencies.

Do Not:

- Contact or correspond privately with a child or young person on a one-to-one basis unless in exceptional circumstances. If it is necessary to communicate directly this should only be in connection with the football activity and must never be sent from a personal account, always use club accounts to protect all concerned
- Send any messages which contain inappropriate, abusive or offensive material or that are open to misinterpretation
- Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone
- Use text or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature
- Respond to emails from children and/or young people other than those directly related to club matters

- Add players from the Club to personnel social media, the wrong post/word could have serious consequences for the Club, only use official club sources.

4.3. Governing Body Social Media Guidelines

- 4.3.1.** Our Club will comply with and apply the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA) guidelines: *Use of Social Media Policy for SYFA Players, Parents/Carers, Officials, Clubs, Leagues and Regions.*
- 4.3.2.** The document will be made available to all Team Officials and Parents/Carers.

4.4. Governing Body Code of Good Conduct for the Use of Photographs and Images

- 4.4.1.** Our Club will comply with and enforce the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA) Code of Good Conduct for the Use of Photographs and Images.
- 4.4.2.** The document will be made available to all Team Officials and Parents/Carers.

5. Procedures

5.1. Appointment and Selection Procedure

- 5.1.1.** The Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that its Officials who are working with children and/or young people in football have been recruited appropriately and that the individuals work in a way that reflects our Wellbeing and Protection Values – Inclusive, Approachable, Empowering and Accountable.
- 5.1.2.** As part of this process, we aim to select the best possible candidate for the role. For those working in a role which is regulated work with children and young people, the Club will fulfil its legal duty under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 to ensure that individuals who are barred from regulated work with children are not engaged in regulated work with children and young people within the Club.

5.1.3. The following procedure will be completed for all volunteers who will be working in a role which requires them to be in contact with children and young people.

- Required roles are usually advertised via our website and social media pages
- Applicants will be requested to complete our online enquiry form to begin the process
- References are requested
- Brief interview usually by our Club Coach Co-ordinator and Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer
- Self-declaration form
- PVG application
- Completion of all mandatory Scottish FA courses.

5.1.4. The applicant's appointment will only be confirmed when:

- Two references have been received, checked and accepted
- Self-declaration form has been returned and approved
- PVG Scheme Record/Scheme Record Update has been received and accepted by the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA).

5.2. Candidate Suitability

5.2.1. Should the Club receive any information via the self-declaration form and/or PVG scheme record that needs risk assessed, this will be carried out by the Club's Safeguarding Panel (Appendix 1).

5.2.2. The Safeguarding Panel will consist of at least three members from the Club, including the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. This risk assessment considers any criminal conviction(s) or other information that would be considered relevant to the role. The decision of the Safeguarding Panel is by a majority. The outcome of the decision with the Safeguarding Panel then contributes to the final decision of the applicant's appointment as mentioned above.

6. Maintaining Suitability

- 6.1.** The Club takes child safety very seriously. Therefore, all individuals in regulated roles within the Club will require to complete a self-declaration form on an annual basis and renew qualifications as needed. This ensures we are continually risk-assessing Club and Team Officials to keep children safe.
- 6.2.** If new vetting information becomes available through a self-declaration form or PVG scheme record update (s), this will be considered through a risk assessment by the Club's Safeguarding Panel.
- 6.3.** Should any risk be identified, it will then be necessary to follow Responding to Concerns Procedure (Clause 10).
- 6.4.** If Disclosure Scotland notifies the Club that a volunteer is being considered for listing, that individual will be suspended as a precaution until the outcome of the case is determined. Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action and does not involve pre-judgment. In all cases of suspension, the best interests of the child will be the primary consideration.
- 6.5.** If Disclosure Scotland informs the club that an individual is barred, that volunteer will be removed from regulated work with children and/or young people immediately in line with the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 section 5 duties for organisations*.

7. Responding to Concerns

- 7.1.** In all cases where there are concerns about a child or young person and/or the conduct of an adult which affects, or may affect, a child or young person, the best interests and wellbeing of the child or young person will be the paramount consideration.
- 7.2.** The purpose of this Procedure is to safeguard and protect children and young people involved in Scottish football and to respond appropriately to any concerns ensuring they are dealt with in a timely, appropriate and proportionate manner.

The following set of procedures when dealing with concerns will help to:

- Avoid those receiving information from engaging in subjective judgments
- Reassure those who report concerns that an appropriate course of action will be taken
- Support those charged with managing concerns by providing them with a step-by-step process to follow

- Safeguard the rights of those against whom complaints or allegations have been made

7.3. No Club or Team Official in receipt of information that causes concern about a child or young person, or the conduct of an adult, shall keep that information to themselves or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

7.4. In all cases the following procedure must be followed regardless of whether the concerns arise through the adult or child or young person's involvement in football or from outside of football.

7.5. REMEMBER - If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child or young person you must:

- Take whatever action is required to ensure the child's or young person's immediate safety
- Pass the information immediately to the police and seek their advice
- Report the concern to the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, advising that the matter has been reported to the police.

At any time if you have a concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person, or think you may have a concern, you can contact Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer for advice and support (see Appendix 1).

7.6. A concern may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse and occur either through football or outside of it, for example in the child's home. All concerns will be responded to by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. If a Club or Team Official has a concern it is NOT their responsibility to investigate BUT it is their responsibility to:

- Reassure the person making the report that they have done the right thing in raising the concern
- Listen openly and without judgement
- Record anything that is said
- Report the concern to the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer
- If there is a concern about the immediate safety of the child or young person, take the necessary steps to ensure their safety and contact the police

- Everyone has a responsibility to recognise a concern, to record the concern either on the Concern Recording Form (Appendix 3) or in email format, and report the concern to the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer.

7.6.2. Club or Team Officials may become aware of a concern in different ways. For example:

- Direct disclosure by the child or young person
- Observation of the concern, such as a change in the behaviour, appearance or nature of the child or young person or the conduct of an adult
- Information that is shared from another individual or organisation e.g., an incident observed by another child or young person or adult and reported to them.

All concerns must be reported to the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer on the day the concern arises or as soon as practically possible thereafter.

8. Further Guidance

What to do if a child or young person discloses abuse:

DO

- Stay calm – ensure that the child or young person is safe and feels safe
- Listen to the child or young person and take what they say seriously. DO NOT SHOW disbelief. Show and tell them that you are taking what they are saying seriously
- Avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or young person
- Avoid asking any questions, although if necessary, only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the possibility that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. What? When? Where? Who?
- Reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame and were right to tell someone

- Be aware of interpreting what a child or young person says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate, or English is not their first language
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable e.g., the child or young person may think that they are in a consenting relationship with the adult
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children

DO NOT

- Panic
- Show shock or distaste
- Probe for more information than is offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made
- Approach the individual against whom the allegation has been made
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets and give a guarantee of confidentiality.

9. Recording Concerns

9.1. Record keeping is of critical importance and all information should be recorded in line with the following:

DO

- Make a written record of the information as soon as possible
- Make the record factual, accurate and legible
- If the concern arises from a disclosure from a child or young person record the concern using the child or young person's exact words, where possible

- Include dates, times, locations and contexts, if available, in which the concern occurred together with any other relevant information.

DO NOT

- Give your personal opinion, unless it is backed up by substantial evidence
- Use judgemental language
- Write the record in a way that protects the reputation of the individual to whom the concern relates – you must remain unbiased.

9.2. Where the child or young person has made a direct disclosure, and when appropriate, it is important that the child or young person understands why we are recording their details. If a child/young person recognises that people can help and support them and that this is the purpose of their details being shared, they will be more included and informed of the processes.

10. Reporting Concerns

10.1. Contact details for the Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer can be found in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

10.2. In the first instance to raise a concern phone contact is the best way, this starts the process.

10.3. Never under any circumstances delay reporting any concerns.

10.4. If the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer is not available and an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be contacted. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children, and they may already hold other information about the child or young person. If the information is shared with the police or other agencies, record what information is shared, any advice given, and actions taken. At the earliest opportunity thereafter the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer must be informed

10.5. Confidentiality

To maintain confidentiality do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of the information you have provided. The Concern Recording Form should be deleted or destroyed (by means of shredding) as soon as the information has been passed on. The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will maintain a copy of the information in a secure and confidential manner.

10.6. Support

The Club recognises that voicing concerns, suspicions or allegations of poor practice, misconduct or abuse can cause great concern and stress – particularly if it relates to a colleague, volunteer or child/parent who is known to you. However, sharing information about the wellbeing of a child or young person is paramount in order to prevent the child or young person from suffering harm or further harm. Any Club or Team Official who, in good faith, discloses information related to a concern will receive full support from the Club.

10.7. The Views of the Child/Young Person

Children and young people have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously (*Article 12, UNCRC*). This must be at the forefront of any concerns that are raised. The nature of the concern will impact the decision as to whether it is appropriate to discuss the concern directly with the child or young person. The views of the child or young person must be considered based on age and maturity.

An initial assessment of basic facts may require the need to ask a child or young person some open-ended, non-leading questions solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other children and young people, or other appropriate individuals who may have information.

It will not always be appropriate to speak directly with the child or young person about the concern. Advice should be sought from the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

If the information indicates that a criminal offence has been committed against the child or young person it would not be appropriate to ask the child or young person questions about the incident or speak to them directly about the incident(s), unless it is a disclosure directly from the child. Interviewing children and young people about possible abuse or criminal offences is the sole remit of specially trained police officers and social workers.

Where the concern about a child's wellbeing suggests they are in need of protection, the information must be passed on with or without their consent for the purposes of their protection. Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. No member of the Club shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused. False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with this procedure.

11. Concerns Regarding Adults

- They will be given an opportunity to put forward their case
- The Club will act in good faith, ensuring the matter is dealt with impartially and as quickly as possible in the circumstances.

11.2. A concern about the conduct of an adult. If there is a concern raised regarding the conduct of an adult, the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will share the findings of the initial assessment with the Chairperson of the Club, who has responsibility for the coaching staff and volunteers.

The Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer will carry out any further investigation, as necessary and take appropriate action depending on the nature and seriousness of the conduct.

11.3. Information from Disclosure Scotland. If Disclosure Scotland notifies the club that a member of staff or volunteer is being considered for listing that individual will be suspended as a precaution until the outcome of the case is determined.

Precautionary suspension is not a form of disciplinary action and does not involve pre-judgment. In all cases of suspension, the best interests and wellbeing of children and young people will be the paramount consideration.

If Disclosure Scotland informs the Club that an individual is barred, that Club or Team Official will be removed permanently from regulated work with children immediately in line with the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007*.

11.4. Criminal Proceedings. An ongoing criminal investigation does not necessarily rule out disciplinary action by the Club or investigation by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. However, any action taken must not jeopardise the criminal investigation. Advice must be taken from the police on this. Sufficient information should be available to enable the Club to make a decision whether to go ahead with disciplinary action/response under this concerns procedure.

11.5. False or Malicious Allegations. In exceptional circumstances where an investigation establishes an allegation or concern raised is false, unfounded or malicious:

- The Club or Team Official involved will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. They may wish to seek legal advice
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation shall be kept confidentially by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer

- The Club will take all reasonable steps to support the individual in this situation
- In these circumstances the Club will review the participation or continued involvement in Club activities of the individual who made the false or malicious allegation. If a false or malicious allegation has been made by a child or young person, it will only be appropriate to have a discussion with the child or young person to determine their views and opinions with parental/carer permission
- Data collected for the investigation will be destroyed in accordance with the requirements of the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

11.6. Allegations of Non-Recent Abuse. The Club recognises that sharing personal experiences of abuse can be difficult, challenging and sensitive. Therefore, allegations of abuse may be made sometime after the event e.g., an adult who was abused as a child by someone who is still currently working with children. These procedures will be followed in the event of an allegation of non-recent abuse, including the Club's responsibility to refer to Disclosure Scotland.

11.7. Media Enquiries. All media enquiries relating to concerns under this procedure must be referred to the Club Chairperson whose contact details are in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Panel and Contact Details



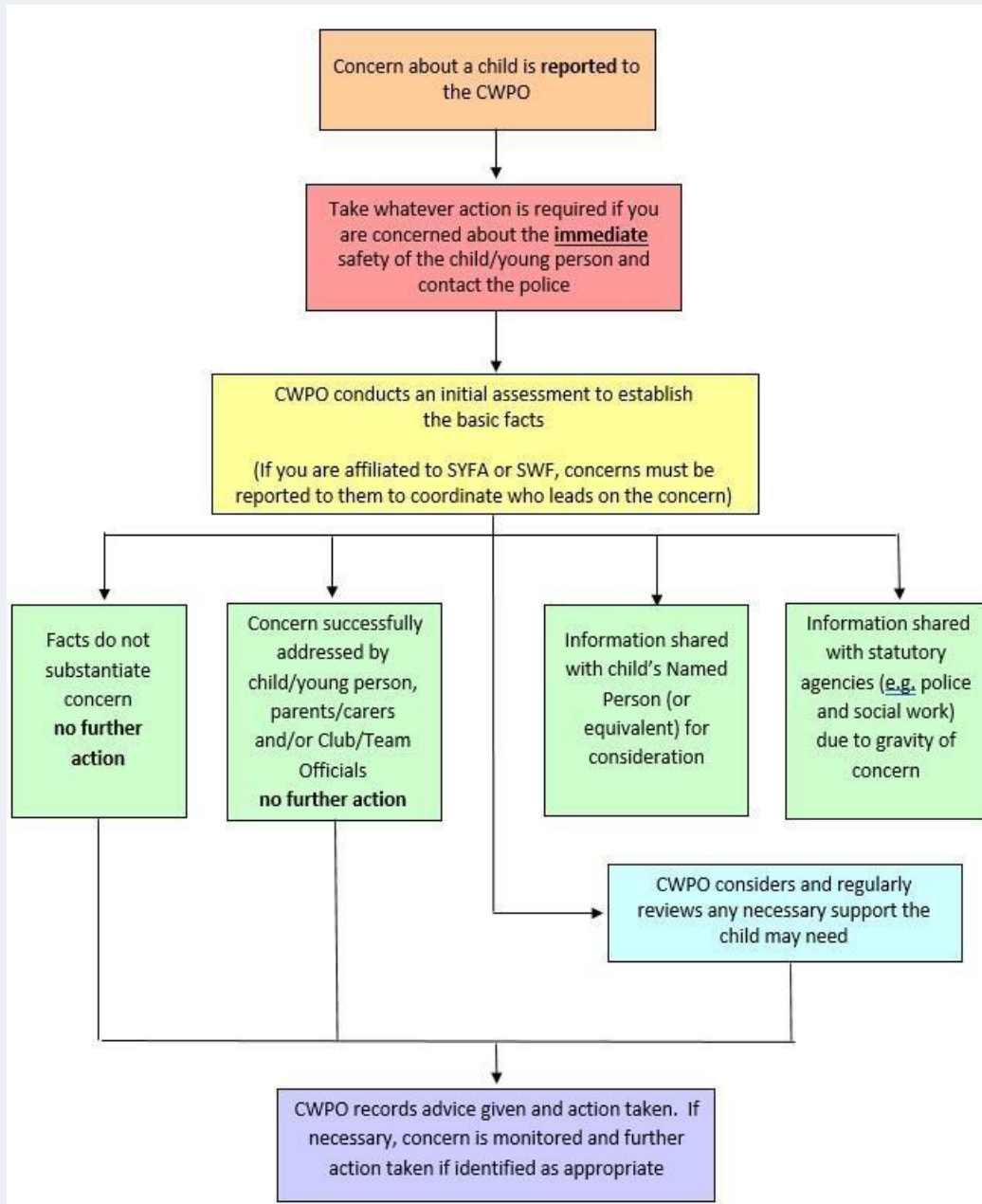
Fiona Forrester-Cain	fiona.forrester-cain@acoxgangs.com	07572742611
Stephen Millar	stephen.millar@acoxgangs.com	07549249695
Duncan Mackay	duncan.mackay@acoxgangs.com	07846510333

Appendix 2

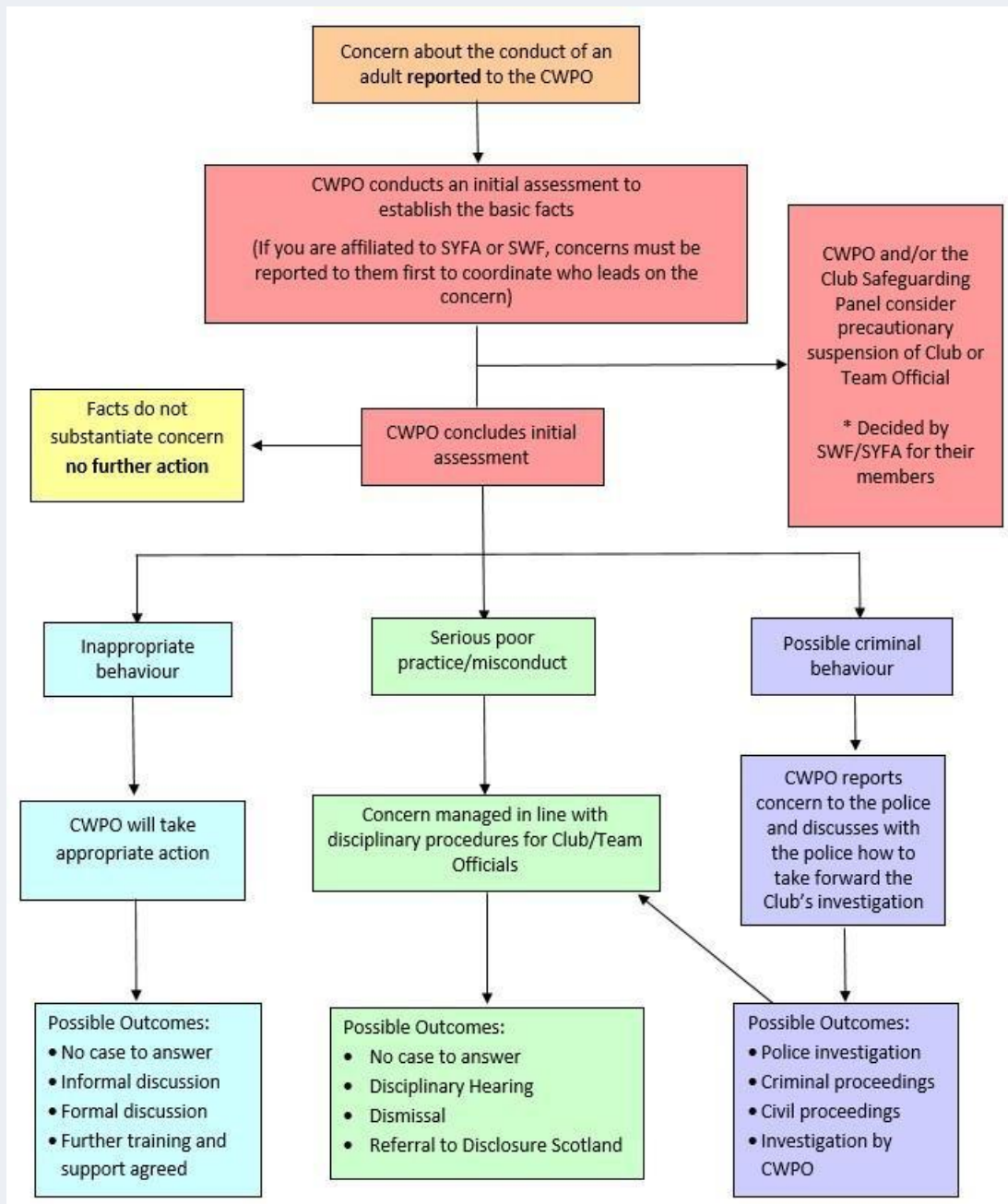
Procedural Flow Charts

(Courtesy of the Scottish FA)

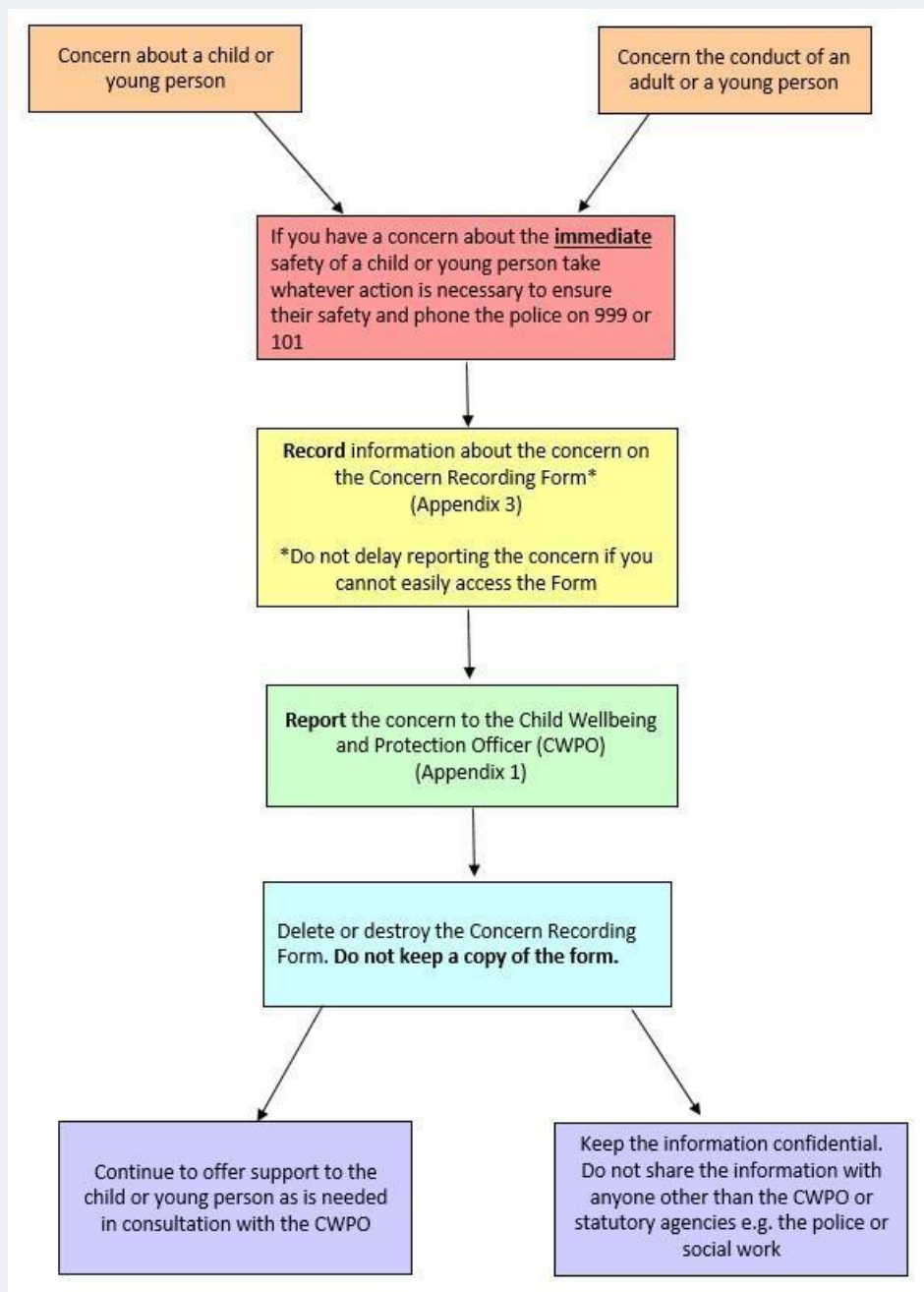
Responding to Concerns About a Child



Responding to Concerns About the Conduct of an Adult



Reporting a Concern



Appendix 3

Reporting and Recording Forms

(Courtesy of the Scottish FA)

CONCERN RECORDING FORM

This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving information that causes a concern. Contact the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (see Appendix 1) to report the concern then email the completed form to the CWPO as soon as possible after completion; do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections.

ADVICE FOR COMPLETING THE FORM

Part A – Contact Information

Please complete Part A to include all relevant contact information. Where the concern is about a child and the conduct of an adult relating to that child then both parties information must be completed. You must also include your contact information.

Part B – Details of the Concern

Please complete this section to include as much information as possible. Where possible please include information about dates, times and location. If the concern has been reported to you by the child, please use their own words and also record anything that you said to the child.

Part C – Information Sharing

Please complete this part of the form if you have shared the information with any third party including the child's parents/carers, Named Person or with other services including the police, social services, school or any other relevant organisation.

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis – do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

Part D – For use by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer

This section is for use by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer and should not be completed by the person reporting the concern.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Please do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of this form. It is important to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on. This information will be retained by the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer in a secure and confidential manner.

PART A - CONTACT INFORMATION

CHILD'S DETAILS (if applicable – details of the child who has been harmed or is at risk of harm)

Name:	Date of Birth:
Address:	Tel No:
Post Code:	
Child's Named Person/school teacher:	Named Person/school teacher Tel No:
Preferred Language	Is an interpreter required? YES / NO
Any Additional Needs?	

ADULT'S DETAILS (if applicable – adult whose conduct you are concerned about)

Name:	Tel No:
Address:	Relationship to Child:
Post Code:	

CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE PERSON REPORTING THE CONCERN

Name:	Tel No:
Position/Role:	
Signature:	
Date:	

PART B – DETAILS OF THE CONCERN

If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet. If doing so please number and date each sheet.

Details of concern:
Child's views on situation (if expressed). Where possible, please use the child's own words
Details of any other witnesses/other people involved
Details of any injuries (where applicable) Please include all injuries sustained, location of injury and any treatment

Action taken so far and when:
Other relevant information:

PART C – INFORMATION SHARING (if applicable)

PLEASE NOTE – it will usually not be necessary to share information before seeking advice from the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, except in an emergency. Only share information on a need to know basis. If you are unsure as to who you should inform, please contact the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer for further advice.

Who has been informed?	
Child's parents/carers	If yes, record details:
Yes/No	If no, please state why?
Child's Named Person/school teacher	If yes, record details:
Yes/No	If no, please state why?
External agencies contacted (date and time)	
Police	Name, role and contact number:
Yes / No	Incident number (if applicable):
Date:	What information was shared and why:
Time:	Details of advice received:

Local authority (inc. social services and education)	Name, role and contact number:
Yes / No	What information was shared and why:
Date:	Details of advice received:
Time:	
Other	Name and contact number:
Yes / No	What information was shared and why:
Date:	Details of advice received:
Time:	

PART D – FOR CHILD WELLBEING AND PROTECTION OFFICER

Action taken:

Information Shared with any third party

e.g. Scottish FA, Affiliated National Association etc.

CONCERN CLOSED:
Reason for closing concern:

Signed _____

Date: _____

Case Review Planning Template

Name of case reviewer:	
Reporting to:	<i>Safeguarding Panel</i>
Case reference:	<i>If this record is going to be shared with others, the details of the case should be anonymised using a unique reference number or identifier.</i>
Outstanding investigations and proceedings:	<p><i>If relevant to this case, have the following been concluded:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Police and social work child protection investigation? Y/N</i> <i>2. A criminal investigation by the police? Y/N</i> <i>3. Any related legal proceedings? Y/N</i> <p><i>If the answer to any of these questions is no, the review cannot proceed.</i></p>
Remit of review:	<p><i>List here in bullet point form the reasons for the review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Timescales for completion:	<i>This should be the dates when the review will begin and end with the reported findings.</i>
How will the review be conducted?	<p><i>List here the methods to be used to conduct the review; for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• a review of all paper records</i> <i>• telephone/face-to-face interviews with relevant individuals</i> <i>• contact with other organisations involved as necessary.</i>

Are there any special considerations or features in this case?	<i>For example, this case was reported in the press, the child involved has a learning disability.</i>
How will the findings and recommendations be reported?	
Who will the outcomes of the review be shared with?	<i>List here all internal and external parties with whom information will be shared.</i>

Player and Parent/Carer Consent Form

At the start of each playing season (in accordance with the player's age-group), the Club shall distribute the Consent Form to the parent or carer of every registered player aged 16 years or younger. Players aged over 16 may complete the form independently, with parental or carer assistance to ensure all sections are fully understood and accurately completed.

The Consent Form is provided online. Once completed and digitally signed, it is submitted to the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer.

The Club shall retain copies of all signed forms in a secure, central register for the duration of the playing season. Copies will be made available to all Team Managers.

All information included in this form will be treated with sensitivity and respect by AC Oxfords (ACO) and the Scottish Youth FA (SYFA) and only shared with those who require the information to perform their role.

Players/parents/carers are requested to advise the Club if any information contained within their form changes during the course of the season.

Team Officials - Declarations

1.1. On and off the pitch, I will:

- Make football a fun and enjoyable experience where everyone is involved
- Always show respect to everyone involved in the game
- Encourage children and young people to be respectful to everyone involved in the game
- Appreciate the importance of everyone involved in the game
- Be proud of being part of the same 'team' and encourage others to be proud of their team
- Be a positive role model by leading with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive behaviour whether in person or online
- Be gracious in victory and defeat
- Challenge and report behaviour that does not meet the standards expected by the Club.

1.2. When working with children and young people, I will:

- Treat all children and young people equally with respect, dignity, honesty, sensitivity and fairness
- Promote the best interests of the young person and put their wellbeing before winning or achieving performance goals
- Never have favourites but praise children and young people that demonstrate commitment, positive attitude and good behaviour
- Consult with children and young people allowing them the chance to be heard by having a 'door open' approach
- Promote and protect the rights of all children and ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights

- Allow young people the right of being involved in decisions affecting them
- Always listen to and act upon any concerns raised by a child or young person.

I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy including the Policy Statement, Procedures and all associated Practice Notes.

I agree to abide by and demonstrate the Club's Wellbeing and Protection Values.

I understand that a breach of the Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with the *Responding to Concerns Procedure* and, where applicable, the Club's *Disciplinary Procedure*.

Name -

Signed -

Date -

Witness -

Signed

AC Oxfangs CFC

<https://www.acoxgangs.com>



Facebook



X



Instagram