



# Newry City AFC

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## **CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

DRAFT

June 2021

ADOPTED BY COMMITTEE

(\_\_\_\_\_)

LAST REVIEWED

(\_\_\_\_\_)

DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW

(\_\_\_\_\_)



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## **SECTION 1:**

### **CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

#### **1.1 POLICY STATEMENT**

Newry City AFC acknowledges its “duty to care” and responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child, young person and vulnerable adult who has been entrusted to its care. It is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members.

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.

We will endeavour do this by:

- recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm
- having appropriate recruitment procedures to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- appointing a named Child Protection Officer who takes specific responsibility for children’s and young people’s protection, safety and well-being
- having appropriate procedures for responding quickly and appropriately to all concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse
- working in partnership with external agencies, (i.e. Social Services, PSNI,) to ensure, as far as is possible, that children and young people are protected
- providing a written code of conduct and behaviour for staff/volunteers which outlines good practice when working with children and young people
- providing parents/carers, children and young people with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have
- adopting disciplinary measures and sanctions which are non-violent and do not impose humiliation
- providing training for staff/volunteers to ensure best practice
- regularly reviewing the Club’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- not tolerating bullying.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored

#### **1.2 PRINCIPLES**

The key principles of Newry City AFC’s Safeguarding Children Policy are that:

- the child’s welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- all children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief



- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.
- safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

### **1.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Newry City AFC recognises that safeguarding children/vulnerable adults is the responsibility of all its staff/volunteer helpers regardless of what role they may hold in the Club. Specific roles and responsibilities are clarified as:

The Management Committee:

- ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and guidelines are developed implemented and regularly reviewed as necessary.

The Child Protection Officer

- supporting staff/volunteers deal with concerns
- liase with statutory agencies and make referrals were necessary
- ensure staff/volunteers receive appropriate induction and training
- securely maintain confidential information

Deputy Child Protection Officer

- deal with all concerns should the Child protection officer be unavailable or if the allegation / concern relates to the Child protection officer

Staff / Volunteers

- provide a safe environment for members
- liase with the Child Protection Officer on all concerns regarding the welfare of a child
- take appropriate action in line with the Clubs procedures to ensure the welfare of the child
- NOT to investigate if abuse has occurred but to share significant information with those who need to know in the best interest of the child

Statutory Authorities (Social Services / PSNI)

- investigation if abuse has occurred following referrals by Newry City AFC

### **1.4 SHARING INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Newry City AFC accepts the need to ensure all information with regard to child protection is treated with the strictest confidentiality.



However the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult is paramount and confidential information will be shared on a “need to know” basis with appropriate authorities where it is the best interest of the child to do so.

Newry City AFC believe that the primary responsibility for a child lies with their parents/legal guardians and will therefore in general endeavour to inform parents of any concerns about, or actions taken, with regard to their children unless it is in the best interest of the child not to do so.

Newry City AFC accept that children have a right to be involved in decisions about their welfare and will endeavour to take into consideration a child’s opinion appropriate to their age , maturity and level of understanding.

## **1.5 DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity organised by the Club.

Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care that may result in significant harm. It includes neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse

## **1.6 MONITORING & REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Board
- as a result of any other significant change or event.



## **SECTION 2:**

### **CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING - PROCEDURES**

#### **2.1 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

Newry City AFC may identify persons to act as coaches through public advertisement, through recommendations by current coaches or by self-presentation to act as a volunteer. To ensure only suitable persons are engaged to work with children and/or vulnerable adults Newry City AFC will implement the following recruitment procedures:

- all persons interested in any paid or voluntary post will complete an application form.
- written references from at least 2 referees will be obtained by the Management Committee
- members of the Management Committee will interview/meet applicants
- applicants will be requested to complete “self declaration” form
- confirmation of identity and Enhanced Criminal Records check through AccessNI in accordance with current legal requirements and guidance.

Subject to satisfactory checks the Management Committee will be responsible for approving and confirming all appointments.

Those appointed will be:

- Subject to a trial/probationary period of 3 months at the end of which Newry City AFC Management Committee may confirm appointment, extend the probationary period or terminate employment.
- issued with clear definition of their role and responsibilities
- subject to the Clubs code of behaviour for staff/volunteers
- required to complete appropriate induction and child protection training



## **2.2 GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD**

You may have concerns that a child may be suffering abuse as a result of a number of reasons:

- something you have seen about the child
- information you heard
- behaviour of the child
- behaviour of others to the child

### **ACTION**

Remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and takes precedence over all other concerns.

Check out your concerns with others if appropriate, remembering that it is not your role to investigate and respect any issues of confidentiality

Record as soon as possible in writing your concerns recording facts, dates, times and actions you took.

Discuss your concerns with the Clubs Child Protection Officer as soon as possible to agree what further action is required. This may include:

- noting/no immediate action
- discussing concerns with child
- discussing concerns with parents
- referral to statutory agencies

If you fear that the child is at imminent risk of significant harm and you can not immediately contact the Clubs Designated Child Protection Officer or their deputy contact the appropriate statutory agencies (Social Services, PSNI or NSPCC) immediately for guidance and if necessary to make a referral.



## **2.3 GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE BY A CHILD**

A child may wish to speak to you and during the course of the conversation make a disclosure of abuse. The following actions are to be taken:

During the conversation/disclosure

- react calmly so as not to frighten or deter the child/young person
- listen carefully to what the child/young person tells you without interrupting and take it seriously
- ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer i.e. “leading “ questions
- do not stop a child/young person who is freely recalling significant events. Allow them to continue at their own pace.
- acknowledge how difficult it might have been for them to share this with you
- reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- tell the child/young person that they are not to blame
- never promise a child/young person that what they told you can be kept a secret. Explain to the child/young person that you have a responsibility for his or her safety and therefore have to tell somebody in authority. Let them know that there are others who can help them and that they are not alone
- tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

After the conversation/disclosure:

- remember it is not your responsibility to decide if a child has been abused and that the welfare of the child is paramount taking precedence over all other concerns.
- if the child is at immediate risk ensure their safety
- any disclosure of abuse must be raised immediately with the Child Protection Officer or their deputy to agree immediate action and to make a referral to the appropriate statutory agency (Social Services, PSNI or NSPCC)
- if you cannot immediately contact the Clubs Designated Child Protection Officer or their deputy contact the appropriate statutory agencies (Social Services, PSNI or NSPCC) immediately for guidance and to make a referral.
- as soon as possible record in writing what was said using the child’s own words. It is important to record who is subject of the abuse (i.e. their full name and if possible address, date of birth), the date, time and setting of the disclosure, any names mentioned, the child’s behaviour, to whom the information was given and other people present. Sign and date the record. Record any subsequent events and actions.
- ensure confidentiality is maintained and discuss the disclosure only with appropriate persons who need to know.
- be available for any follow up by statutory agencies

The Child Protection Officer will:

- agree what action should be taken next
- liaise with and make formal referral to statutory agencies





- inform parents ( unless they are the alleged abuser)
- receive and maintain all written records of the disclosure and follow up actions
- advise the Chairman that a referral has been made

If you fear that the child is at imminent risk of significant harm and you can not immediately contact the Clubs Designated Child Protection Officer or their deputy contact the appropriate statutory agencies (Social Services, PSNI or NSPCC) immediately for guidance and if necessary to make a referral.



## **2.4 GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATION AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER**

You may receive an allegation or have concerns with regard to the behaviour of a Volunteer/member of staff of Newry City AFC suggesting that they:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

### **ACTION**

Any concern or allegation of abuse must be passed on to the Child Protection Person (or their deputy if they are the subject of the allegation)

Allegations of abuse should not be discussed with the alleged perpetrator.

If you fear that the child is at imminent risk of significant harm and you can not immediately contact the Clubs Designated Child Protection Officer or their deputy contact the appropriate statutory agencies (Social Services, PSNI or NSPCC) immediately for guidance and if necessary to make a referral.

The Child Protection Officer will:

- liaise with statutory agencies to decide appropriate course of action
- inform the Chairman that a case has arisen.
- The club will decide whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police, Social Services or internal inquiries/investigations

Management of an allegation of abuse may involve one or all of:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual. irrespective of the findings of Social Services or Police inquiries, the management Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff, a coach or a volunteer should be reinstated and if so how this can be sensitively handled.
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Newry City AFC has a legal duty under The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order (SGVO) 2007 to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service in cases when an employer has dismissed or removed a person from working with children or vulnerable adults (or would or may have if the person had not left or resigned) because of concerns over their behaviour towards children.



## **2.5 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF / VOLUNTEERS**

Coaches / leaders with Newry City AFC should

- be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results
- encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- plan and prepare appropriately
- involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- be a positive role model for young people

Where possible Coaches / leaders with Newry City AFC should avoid

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- taking sessions alone
- taking children to their home
- taking children on journeys alone in their car

Coaches / leaders with Newry City AFC must not

- use any form of physical punishment or physical force on a child
- exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.
- communicate with children through social media networks, child's mobile phone, text or email except for club business in line with the Clubs policy
- consume alcohol whilst responsible for the supervision of children or supervise whilst under the effect of alcohol



## **2.6 GUIDELINES ON PHYSICAL CONTACT**

There is growing concern being expressed about what is and what is not permissible in the area of physical contact with children and young people in football.

Staff / Volunteers with Newry City AFC are advised of a number of principles that should be followed when the activity involves physical contact.

Physical contact during football should always be intended to meet the child's/young person's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- Develop skills or techniques
- To treat an injury
- To prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- To meet specific coaching requirements.

The adult should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child/young person reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child/young person for permission.

Children/young people should be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child/young person distress or embarrassment.

Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

In the case of a child/young person with a disability, specific support or assistance may be required. When children/young people with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, the individual child/young person should be treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the child/young person and those assisting.

### **SPECIFIC SITUATIONS**

#### **1. Physical punishment**

Any form of physical punishment of children/young people is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint.

#### **2. Contact as part of coaching**



Some physical activities are more likely to require coaches/volunteers to come into physical contact with children and young people from time to time in the course of their duties. An example includes demonstrating a move during a coaching session in order to reduce the risk of injury when playing. Adults should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place, and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

Football may require physical contact between children/young people and those coaching them, for reasons of both teaching and the participant's safety. Even where there is a need to support or touch a child/young person, over – handling should be avoided.

It should be recognised that physical contact between a coach/volunteer and a child/young person that may occur during legitimate coaching may be misconstrued or misunderstood by a child/young person, parent/guardian or spectator. Touching children/young people, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised. As a general principle, adults in positions of responsibility should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. It is particularly unwise to attribute frequent touching to their coaching style or as a way of relating to children/young people.

### 3. Responding to distress and success

There may be occasions where a distressed child/young person needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent/guardian, would give. Physical contact may also be required to prevent an accident or injury and this would be wholly appropriate. A child/young person or coach/volunteer may also want to mark a success or achievement with a hug or other gesture. Adults should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is (and what is seen by others present) normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child/young person over a period of time. It should also be considered that what, as an adult may, be felt appropriate may not be shared by a child/young person.

(This guidance is based of advice from the Child Protection in Sport Unit)



## **2.7 GUIDANCE ON TEXTS, SOCIAL NETWORKING, EMAIL AND MOBILE PHONE COMMUNICATION**

Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we have to recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed. Coaches must ensure they communicate responsibly with team members.

Do:

- get signed consent from parents/carers before using either of these methods of communication with children or young people
- use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent/carer or the designated member of the club to all communications with young people
- make sure texts or emails are only in relation to specific club related activities e.g. informing young people about changes in travel arrangements, training times or venue changes etc
- report to the clubs Child Protection Officer any instance(s) where you have received any inappropriate communications from a young person. The Child Protection Officer will then agree what action the club will take, notifying parents/carers and any other appropriate individuals or agencies.
- inform the Child protection Officer if you have received inappropriate communications online
- keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material received from members as this may be needed as evidence.

Don't (Unless a child/young person is a direct relation)

- use text or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature
- respond to emails from young people other than those directly related to club matters.
- use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone
- accept members aged under 18 as a friend on social networking sites you are member of
- share your own personal social networking sites with team members aged under 18
- make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites
- use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of a non football nature to a child or young person
- engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.



## **2.8 USEFUL NUMBERS & CONTACTS**

### **Southern Health and Social Care Trust**

The Gateway Service is the first point of contact for people who wish to share a concern about a young person who is not already known to social services. **Telephone 028 3741 5285**. In addition, there is also a freephone number **0800 783 7745** (free from landlines only).

Out of office hours and if unable to contact the gateway team contact Daisy Hill Hospital, **Telephone 028 3083 5000** and ask for the duty social worker for child protection.

### **PSNI**

Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Unit 028 9065 0222  
Ask for your local CARE Unit

### **NSPCC**

Helpline 0808 800 5000

### **Other useful contacts & websites for information**

Childline Freephone 0800 1111

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre  
(CEOP) 020 7238 2391      [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

Sport NI 028 9038 1222      [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit 028 9035 1135      [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

Access NI 028 9025 910      [www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk)

[www.there4me.com](http://www.there4me.com) – a confidential advice website for teenagers

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

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

