

# Desire Football Academy Safeguarding Children

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## 1. Introduction

Desire Football Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our football programs. This Safeguarding Policy outlines our approach to keeping participants safe from harm and ensuring they have a positive experience within the academy.

We acknowledge our duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of all players, staff, volunteers, and any other individuals involved with Desire Football Academy. We aim to create an environment where participants can thrive, feel safe, and develop both personally and athletically. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, coaches, players, and parents of Desire Football Academy.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

1. Protect children from harm, abuse, and neglect.
2. Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the signs of abuse and how to report concerns.
3. Outline procedures for reporting concerns and handling allegations.
4. Promote good practices to prevent abuse and ensure the safety of children in all activities conducted by the Academy.

## 3. Core Values and Principles

1. The welfare of children is always the primary concern.
2. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, or disability, should have the right to enjoy and participate in football and related activities in a safe and supportive environment.
3. We are committed to ensuring that all individuals working with children are appropriately vetted, trained, and supported.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Club Welfare Officer:** The primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns. Responsible for managing concerns, liaising with relevant authorities, and ensuring policy implementation.
2. **Coaches, Volunteers, and Staff:** All staff must comply with this policy, attend safeguarding training, and report any concerns regarding child welfare.
3. **Management Committee:** Responsible for ensuring this policy is enforced and that safeguarding practices are followed.

## 5. Types of Abuse:

1. **Physical abuse:** Hitting, slapping, or any other physical harm.
2. **Sexual abuse:** Inappropriate sexual behavior or contact.
3. **Emotional abuse:** Bullying, threats, or actions that harm a child's emotional well-being.
4. **Neglect:** Failing to provide basic needs such as food, shelter, or medical care.
5. **Verbal abuse:** Abusive language or threats.
6. **Discriminatory abuse:** Treating someone unfairly based on his or her background, race, gender, etc.

## 6. Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognize a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child may be suffering abuse could include one or more of the following:

### Physical Indicators:

1. Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts, or burns, particularly on areas of the body that are not commonly injured.
2. An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
3. A young person describing what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
4. Unexplained changes in a young person's behavior, such as becoming very upset, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.

### Behavioral Indicators:

1. Inappropriate sexual awareness or engaging in sexually explicit behavior.
2. Distrust of adults, particularly those who would typically have a close relationship with them.
3. Difficulty making friends or being prevented from socialising with peers.
4. Changes in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite, or unexplained weight loss.

### Signs of Bullying:

1. Behavioral changes such as reduced concentration, becoming withdrawn, emotionally distressed, or reluctant to attend training or events.
2. Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, bed-wetting, scratching, bruising, damaged clothes, or excessive eating (food, alcohol, cigarettes).
3. A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.
4. The above list is not exhaustive, and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that abuse is occurring. However, if you have any concerns, it is your responsibility to act.

### Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events:

1. There is evidence that some individuals use sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs should be vigilant and report any concerns to the Club Welfare Officer. Parents and performers should be made aware when video equipment is used for coaching purposes.

## 7. Online Safety

With the increasing use of digital platforms, Desire Football Academy is committed to ensuring that all online interactions are safe. We will provide guidelines to ensure that children and young people are safe when participating in online activities related to the academy, including virtual training sessions, communication via social media, and online competitions.

## 8. Training and Development

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

1. Analyse their practice against what is deemed good practice and ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
2. Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.
3. Respond to concerns expressed by a child.
4. Work safely and effectively with children.

### Desire Football Academy requires:

1. All staff and volunteers who work with our children to undergo an enhanced DBS check.
2. All employees, volunteers, coaches, welfare officers, and team managers to undertake relevant child protection training or home study to ensure exemplary practice and develop a positive culture around child protection.
3. All staff and volunteers will receive advisory information outlining good/bad practices and informing them what to do if they have concerns about an adult's behaviour towards a young person.
4. All coaches, trainee coaches, and leaders should have an up-to-date first aid qualification.

## 9. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children

All reasonable steps must be taken to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers. The following steps should be taken during recruitment:

1. Application Form: All staff and volunteers must complete an application form, disclosing any criminal history.
2. Criminal Records Check: The applicant should obtain consent for an enhanced DBS check.
3. References: Obtain two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be verified through telephone contact.
4. Identity Verification: Evidence of identity (e.g., passport, driving license) must be provided.

## 10. Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview and formal or informal induction, which includes:

1. Completing the application form fully, including sections on criminal records.
2. Substantiating qualifications.
3. Clarifying job requirements and responsibilities.
4. Signing the Code of Ethics and Conduct.
5. Reviewing child protection procedures and identifying training needs (e.g., basic child protection awareness).
6. Internal Inquiries and Suspension
7. The Club Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
8. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the Management Committee will assess each individual case to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. The welfare of the child remains of paramount importance throughout.

## 11. Reporting the Concern at Desire Football Academy

- At Desire Football Academy, we take all concerns regarding child protection and safeguarding seriously. All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. We understand that strong emotions can arise, especially in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or when misplaced loyalty towards a colleague may interfere with judgment. However, these feelings should never prevent you from acting in the best interests of the child.
- Desire Football Academy expects all members, staff, and volunteers to report any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately to the Club Welfare Officer, NAME OF DFO, and to follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- If the nominated Club Welfare Officer is unavailable, you are responsible for seeking advice and reporting concerns. You can contact the NSPCC Helpline at 0808 800 5000, the duty officer at your local social services department, or the police. These contact details can be found in your local directory.

## 12. Summary of Reporting Procedures:

1. Worried about a child? Report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer, Tamia Padotan.
2. Concerns about poor practice? The Club Welfare Officer will either address the matter directly or seek advice from the County FA or any other NGB Welfare Officer.
3. Serious concerns about possible child abuse? Contact the County FA or NGB first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.
4. Immediate medical treatment required? If the child needs urgent medical care, take them to a hospital or call an ambulance, making it clear this is a child protection concern. Inform the Club Welfare Officer about the action you have taken, and they will notify the County FA or other NGB Welfare Officer.
5. Unable to contact the Club Welfare Officer or if the matter is clearly serious? You can either contact the County FA or other NGB Welfare Officer directly, reach out to The FA Safeguarding Team at 0800 169 1863 or email [Safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com), contact the Police or Children's Social Care, or call the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice at 0808 800 5000, or text 88858 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 13. Types of Investigations in Case of Allegations

1. If there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigations:
2. Criminal Investigation: The police are immediately involved.
3. Child Protection Investigation: Social services (and possibly the police) will be involved.
4. Disciplinary or Misconduct Investigation: Desire Football Academy will be involved.
5. Desire Football Academy is not a child protection expert and is not responsible for determining whether abuse has occurred. All suspicions and allegations must be reported to the relevant professional agencies responsible for child protection.
6. Social services have a legal duty under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by interviewing the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from others who know the child, and collaborating with the police.
7. If there is any doubt about whether to report a concern, it must be reported. It could be part of a pattern of incidents that, when considered together, cause concern.

## 14. If Abuse is Suspected Involving an Employee or Volunteer:

If a child is suspected to have been abused by a staff member or volunteer, you must report it immediately to Desire Football Academy. The following steps will be taken:

1. Referral to Social Services: Desire Football Academy will refer the matter to the relevant social services department.
2. Contacting Parents/Carers: The parent or carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible, following advice from social services.
3. Notification to the Governing Body: The Club Welfare Officer will notify the relevant sport governing body to inform them of the situation.
4. If the Club Welfare Officer Tamia Padotan is the subject of the suspicion or allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate manager, who will refer the matter to social services.

## 15. Allegations of Abuse Made After an Incident:

Allegations of abuse may sometimes arise after some time has passed. In such cases, the same reporting procedures should be followed. This is important as other children, whether inside or outside the academy, may be at risk from the alleged abuser.

Any individual who has a previous conviction for offenses related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children at Desire Football Academy.

## 16. Concerns Outside the Immediate Sporting Environment (e.g., Parent or Carer Concerns):

1. Report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer Tamia Padotan.
2. If the Club Welfare Officer is unavailable, the person receiving the information or discovering the abuse should immediately contact their local social services department or the police.
3. Social Services and the Club Welfare Officer will decide how to inform the parents/carers about the situation.
4. The Club Welfare Officer will also report the incident to the Governing Body. The governing body will determine if the person involved in the incident plays a role within the academy and act accordingly.
5. Confidentiality should be maintained on a need-to-know basis.

## 17. Confidentiality:

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained throughout the safeguarding process. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis, ensuring that all parties involved are protected and respected.

1. The Club Welfare Officer.
2. The parents of the child involved.
3. The person making the allegation.
4. Social services/police.
5. The Senior Management Team at Desire Football Academy and relevant governing bodies.
6. The alleged abuser (and their parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
7. All information should be stored securely and in compliance with data protection laws, with access restricted to designated individuals only.

## 17. Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or concern. When recording, ensure that you stick to the facts and avoid including personal opinions.

The record should include:

1. **Child's Name, Age, and Date of Birth.**
2. **Child's Home Address and Contact Details.**
3. **Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or someone else's.**
4. **Details of the Allegation**, including dates, times, and any other relevant information.
5. **Description of Visible Injuries** (e.g., bruises), including location, size, and any other physical signs.
6. **Details of Witnesses** to the incident.
7. **The Child's Account** of what has happened, if they can provide it.
8. **Details of the Parent's Contacted** and what was said.
9. **Consultation with Others**, such as social services, and their advice.
10. **Details of the Alleged Abuser**, if identified.

## 18. Safeguarding Procedures

The following procedures must be followed by all members of Desire Football Academy:

1. **Reporting Concerns:** Any concerns regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. In cases of immediate danger or risk, the appropriate authorities (e.g., local police or child protection services) must be contacted.
2. **Confidentiality:** All safeguarding concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared with relevant professionals and agencies in accordance with safeguarding protocols.
3. **Training:** All staff, volunteers, and coaches must undergo safeguarding training to recognize the signs of abuse and learn the procedures for reporting concerns.
4. **Recruitment and Vetting:** All staff and volunteers will undergo appropriate background checks, including a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or equivalent, to ensure they are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.
5. **Responding to Allegations:** If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the allegation will be investigated promptly and in accordance with academy procedures. The individual will be suspended or removed from their role during the investigation if necessary.

## 19. Code of Conduct

Desire Football Academy has a Code of Conduct that all staff, volunteers, and participants must follow. The code ensures that all interactions within the academy are respectful and professional. It prohibits any form of abuse, bullying, harassment, or exploitation.

## 20. Equality and Diversity

We promote and support an inclusive environment where all players, coaches, and staff are treated equally. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, including racism, sexism, ableism, or homophobia.

## 21. Monitoring and Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually or when there are significant changes in legislation or best practice. Staff, volunteers, and other key stakeholders will be consulted during the review process to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.

## 22. Contact Information

For any concerns, the following individuals can be contacted:

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** Tamia Padotan, 07379 910592

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### **End of Policy**

#### ***Acknowledgment***

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to adhere and uphold the Desire Football Academy Safeguarding Policy throughout the Academy.

#### **Reviewed by**

**Name:** Noah Khsay (CEO)

**Signature:** N.Khsay

**Reviewed Date:** 20/01/2025

**Name:** Tamia Padotan (Welfare Officer and Safeguarding Lead)

**Signature:** T.Padotan

**Reviewed Date:** 20/01/2025

