

# **Safeguarding Policy**

## **Unaccompanied Children**

The age limit for unaccompanied minors is 12 years old.

## **Searching of U18's**

The decision to conduct searches of U18's will be made by the Safety Officer. Where a child is identified Control should be informed and a Safeguarding Officer will attend the area of the search to observe the search taking place. An incident card should be completed for any search on any U18 even if the outcome is negative. Name and contact details should be collected and card should be given to the Safety Officer at the end of the match. Protocols and the process of searching children should promote mutual respect to and from all parties. Someone is deemed a child up to their 18th birthday. Stewards should always identify themselves and provide proof that they are an authorised event steward with the Club. Good practice is to have two stewards present for the search, who should both give their name and job title.

## **Good Practice**

1. Explain the reason for the search;
2. Ask the child for permission to undertake the search, explain that the person has a right to refuse, but doing so can lead to non-admittance; if an adult is present with the child, obtain their permission to conduct the search.
3. Ask the child if they are carrying anything which may be dangerous, prohibited or that they plan to use to celebrate during the match;
4. Ask if anyone else has asked them to carry anything into the ground for them;
5. Explain what they think they may find in the search;
6. Only search people of the same gender as themselves;
7. Follow the correct Stadium procedure when finding unauthorised items and explain these procedures to the people involved;
8. Keep people only for as long as necessary

## **Searching**

Stewards should not need to touch the child during the search, as the procedure is to guide the child or young person to demonstrate that they are not carrying/hiding any dangerous or prohibited items.

1. Ask the child to empty and turn out their pockets;
2. Ask the child to take off any outer jacket(s) and pass them over to the other steward for searching;
3. Ask the child to roll up their trousers to the knees and roll down their socks;
4. If wearing trousers, ask them to pull out the shirt at the waist and visually ensure there is nothing in the trouser belt area; and
5. Request that they replace all clothing before moving on.

### **Lost/Missing children**

Lost and/or missing children will be managed by stewards as per Club standard operating procedure. The DSO should be notified and requested to attend if the adult in charge of the child is not found immediately. If the circumstances of the child being lost and/or missing raise a potential safeguarding concern the DSO should escalate their concerns through Control and take further advice from either the Police or where necessary Social Services. Some examples of this might be:

- if the parent/carer is intoxicated and the child has been lost due to the actions of the parent/carer,
- if a child is lost, U12 and no contact details for parents, and
- if a child is lost and in need of urgent medical attention.

### **Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse or Poor Practice**

All Stewards should immediately report any observations, allegation or suspicions of abuse or poor practice by another professional to Control or the Safeguarding Lead, who will ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report. Any statement made by the child should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts. Any opinion, interpretation or judgement should be clearly stated as this, keeping any questions to a minimum and they should be of an open format. No suggestion of who the perpetrator was or how any concern or incident happened should be suggested. Poor practice represents unsafe working practice and is a cause for concern and staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Where poor practice is considered to have occurred, in the first instance, staff should discuss with their Control or the Safeguarding Lead. An incident report will then be required to be completed on CPOMs. An internal investigation will be followed, and all relevant information will be assessed and reviewed by the Safeguarding Lead and additional agencies, in order to make a decision about any poor practice that is alleged to have happened. If you have concerns regarding the Safeguarding Lead, the Senior Safeguarding Manager should be contacted as appropriate. If the concerns are also with the Senior Safeguarding Manager or the individual considers all routes taken have been ineffective whistleblowing procedures are in place for such concerns to be raised. Please see HTAFC Whistleblowing Policy.

Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. In these cases, the Safeguarding Lead will first seek the advice of the Football Association Safeguarding Children Team, Children's

Social Care, a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Police before setting up an internal inquiry and take their advice on informing the child's parents.

In any case of suspected abuse, as soon as the Local Authority or the Police have been informed, the Club must provide a report to the Football Association, the Football League Head of Safeguarding and inform the Club's Managing Director. Any external local authority provision will naturally take the lead on any case.

Providing it is appropriate to do so the Safeguarding Lead will maintain constant dialogue with all parties involved with the allegation until such time as the matter has reached a reasonable outcome, taking the lead from the external agency. Escalation to inform board level will take place at the Safeguarding Lead earliest opportunity.

Staff should not assume that someone else will pass on information that they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

Feedback should be given by local authority children's social care to the referrer on the decisions taken. Where appropriate, this feedback should include the reasons why a case may not meet the statutory threshold and offer suggestions for other sources of more suitable support. Staff should always follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the local authority children's social care response and should escalate their concerns if they remain dissatisfied.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 and email

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Match Day Contacts**

#### **Operations Director & Matchday Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Dave Riley

daveriley@harrogatetownafc.com

07712787505

#### **Matchday Safety Officer**

Brian Beswick

brianbeswick@aol.com

07831331102

#### **North Yorkshire Police Football Officer**

Andy Pearson

07776148005

Emergency Services 999

Non Emergency Police 101

North Yorkshire County Council Social Services 020 8748 8588.

NSPCC 0808 800 5000