WALSALL FC FOUNDATION

Safeguarding Children Policy

Date:
Endorsed by: WFCF Board of Trustees

Signed:
Chair of Trustees

1. Introduction

Walsall FC Foundation ('**Charity**') recognises its fundamental duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children and adults at risk. Every Child has the right to grow up and the right to live free from harm, abuse, and exploitation within a safe and supportive environment. The Charity is fully committed to embedding Safeguarding at the core of its operations, ensuring that the protection and well-being of vulnerable groups remain a central priority.

We are committed to providing our Colleagues with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to implement and maintain the highest standards of Safeguarding practice. This policy outlines our approach to creating a safe environment, promoting a culture of vigilance, and responding appropriately to any concerns or incidents that may arise.

2. Policy Statement

The Foundation's Safeguarding Children Policy forms the foundation of all Activities involving the safe and inclusive participation of Children. The policy is reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or organisational structure that necessitate an update, to ensure it continues to reflect best practice. The Charity recognises that Safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

We are committed to the prevention of abuse and neglect by promoting the welfare and protection of all individuals, including children and adults at risk, who engage with the Charity's programmes and Activities. All actions taken by or on behalf of the Foundation will be guided by the principles of Child Safeguarding. We ensure that any response to concerns is prompt, proportionate, and respectful of the rights, views, and experiences of the Child involved.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Colleagues, regardless of their role, contract type, or seniority. For clarity, this includes casual workers, volunteers and those on short term work placements. In the case of contractors, we would require all Safeguarding procedures to be followed and applied i.e. relevant DBS Checks and adherence to the relevant Safeguarding practices.

The welfare of Children is of the highest importance, and all adults working at Walsall FC Foundation have a clear duty of care to safeguard and promote the well-being of Children. This includes creating and maintaining a safe environment, as well as taking appropriate measures to protect them from harm. This policy may be supported by in-service training and additional guidance, as necessary, to ensure best practice is upheld across all areas of the Charity's work.

4. Aims & Key Principles

At our Charity, the safety and well-being of all Children who take part in our Activities is our top priority. This policy aims to make sure every Child feels safe, supported, and able to enjoy their time with us.

We are committed to:

- Following best practices when it comes to keeping Children safe.

- Creating a positive and pro-active welfare programme that helps Children enjoy their Activities in a fun, caring, and secure environment.
- Encouraging Parents, carers, and family members to be involved and build positive relationships with the Foundation.
- Promoting high standards of behaviour by making sure all adults working with Children act responsibly and are good role models.

5. Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

The following Safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy –

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004 and Children and Families Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- EFL Guide to Safer Working Practices
- The Equality Act 2010
- FA Safeguarding Children Rules
- FA Respect Codes of Conduct
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Police Act 1997
- Premier League Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- Premier League Rules
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sex Offenders Act 1997
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Youth Evidence & Crime Evidence Act 1999
- Working Together 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- UKCCIS Guidance 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People'

5.1 Associated Policies

This policy should be read as part of Colleague onboarding and alongside other Walsall FC Foundation related Safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Staff & Volunteers Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Low Level Concern Policy

6 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are used throughout. Please refer to the definitions below to support clarity and understanding of their meaning within the Safeguarding context.

Safeguarding	Safeguarding is the practice of ensuring the safety and well-being of Children by protecting them from maltreatment. It involves creating and maintaining environments where Children feel secure and supported, promoting their physical and emotional health, and preventing any actions or conditions that could impair their development. Safeguarding also includes taking timely and appropriate action to address risks and ensure that every Child has the opportunity to grow up safely and thrive.
Child Protection	Child Protection refers to the process of responding to Children who are identified as suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. It involves recognising the need for and taking appropriate action to protect the Child. The Children Act 1989 defines 'Significant Harm' as the legal threshold for compulsory intervention in family life, prioritizing the best interests of the Child. Categories of significant harm include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.
Child/Children	A Child is defined anyone under the age of 18. The term 'Children' is used to describe more than one Child.
Parent/Parents	The term 'Parent' refers to birth Parents and other adults who are in a parenting role for example stepparents, foster carers and legal guardians.
Colleagues	This term refers to all those working for on behalf of the Charity, full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.
Activity/Activities	In regards to this policy, the term 'Activity' means any Activity or series of Activities arranged for a Child or Children by or in the name of the Charity. These are deemed to be regulated and therefore activate the required levels of Criminal Record Checks that are associated.
Senior Safeguarding Lead 'SSL'	The SSL is the Board Member responsible for overseeing Safeguarding policies and procedures across the Charity.
Designated Safeguarding Officer 'DSL'	The DSL is responsible for managing day-to-day Safeguarding matters, promoting a safe environment, and serving as the first point of contact for Colleagues, Parents, Children, and relevant agencies. They ensure all concerns, incidents, and practices are recorded and referred confidentially in accordance with Safeguarding procedures.

7. Safeguarding Governance & Leadership

The Charity is part of the Club's Safeguarding Working Group (**SWG**) that provides clear direction and addresses all aspects of Safeguarding at a strategic and operational level. The Charity has a Designated Safeguarding Trustee ('**DST'**) at Board level who oversees the delivery of the Safeguarding strategic plan.

The operational delivery of safeguarding is led and overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**). The DSL is supported in this role by the Designated Safeguarding Officers (**DSO**), who assist in the implementation of safeguarding practices at an operational level.

The DSL is the main point of contact for Safeguarding Children and is responsible for regularly monitoring and assessing risks in Activities involving Children. Any concerns about a Child's welfare should be reported to the DSL or another DSO, whose contact details are listed at the end of this policy.

We will seek to keep Children safe by following good practice guideline which include –

- Valuing, listening and respecting everyone
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Maintaining a Child focus and involving Children in decisions that affect them
- Adopting Child Protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for our Colleagues
- Ensuring we have effective Safeguarding and related policies and procedures which are approved through the governance framework.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are recruited safely by conducting the appropriate background checks and adhering strictly to our Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Remaining vigilant to changes in a Child's behaviour and being aware of potential signs of harm, including abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other negative impacts. Recognising that challenging or disruptive behaviour may be a sign that a Child is experiencing abuse.
- Understanding and adhering to the Charity's Safeguarding Policies, Staff Code of Conduct, and all relevant guidance relating to wider Safeguarding matters.
- Recording, storing, and using information must be done professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and applicable guidance.
- Recognising that certain personal or family circumstances, including aspects of diversity such as disability or communication and learning differences, can increase a Child's vulnerability to abuse.
- Share any concerns about a Child's safety and welfare to the DSL without delay or if necessary, directly to the Police or Children's social care.

8. Signs and Indicators of Abuse

In order to protect Children from harm, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the behaviours that constitute abuse and neglect, which are recognised forms of maltreatment. Maltreatment may involve the deliberate infliction of harm, or the failure to take appropriate action to prevent harm. Such behaviours may be carried out by adults or by other Children, and can manifest in various forms including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect.
Concerns about a Child may be triggered by one or more indicators, such as a sudden change in behaviour, a disclosure made by the Child, or visible physical signs of abuse, with such signs potentially varying depending on the Child's age and level of understanding.

Type of Abuse	**Definition**	**Physical Signs**	**Behavioural Signs**
Physical	Physical abuse is the deliberate use of force against a Child that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury, harm, or suffering. Physical abuse can be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.	Unexplained and unusual bruising, finger and strap marks, injuries, cigarette burns, bite marks, fractures, scalds, missing teeth.	Aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, bullying or abuse of others.

Sexual	Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a Child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the Child is aware of what is happening, and can include both physical contact and non-contact activities	Genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections or STDs, thrush.	Fear of someone, nightmares, running away, sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, masturbation, bed-wetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts, acting out with toys, self-harm.
Neglect	Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a Child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, which can significantly impair their health or development, and may include inadequate care, supervision, protection, or access to essential services.	Constant hunger, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothes, weight change, untreated conditions, continual minor infections, failure to supply hearing aids, glasses and or inhalers.	Always being tired, early or late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, stealing, no money, Parent or person responsible not attending or supportive.
Emotional	Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a Child that causes significant harm to their emotional development, often through rejection, humiliation, inappropriate expectations, or preventing normal social interaction and expression.	Weight change, lack of growth or development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm, clothing inappropriate for Child's age, gender or culture.	Fear of mistakes, fear of telling Parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech and language difficulties, few friends.
Bullying	Bullying is a repeated and intentional behaviour that causes harm or distress to a Child, and can be physical, verbal, emotional, or take place online through cyberbullying using digital platforms or social media.	Weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and headaches, bed-wetting, disturbed sleep, hair pulled out.	Difficulty making friends, anxiety, truancy, withdrawn, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money and possessions reported as lost, stealing from within the family and distress.
Radicalisation	Radicalisation is the process by which a Child is influenced to adopt extreme views or ideologies that may lead to harmful, violent, or unlawful behaviour, often through coercion, manipulation, or exposure to extremist content.	Viewing or sharing extremist Propaganda, change in appearance, their health may suffer (including mental health) and they may become isolated from family, friends, peers or social groups.	Withdrawn and focused on one ideology. They express a desire to take part in or support extremist activity.

9. Peer on Peer Abuse

Children may be harmed by other Children. Colleagues are aware of the harm that can be caused by bullying and will use the Charity's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a Child's behaviour warrants a response under Child Protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Child-on-Child abuse can happen in different ways, such as bullying, relationship abuse, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, or gender-based violence. It involves one Child causing harm to another, whether that harm is physical, sexual, emotional, or financial. This type of behaviour can affect both the Child causing the harm and the Child being harmed. It may happen in close (intimate) relationships or not.

The Foundation will take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse:

- We will seek to promote an open and honest environment where Children feel safe to share information that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Ensure our induction processes are used to provide moral framework outlining codes of conduct, acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- We will endeavour to always create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease at Foundation activities.
- We will ensure that Foundation Activities are well supervised by appropriate and qualified Colleagues.

If an incident of peer-on-peer abuse is reported, staff will gather all relevant information to understand what has happened. The DSL will assess the situation and decide on the appropriate next steps. This may include involving the Police or other external agencies, depending on the severity of the concern. Parents or carers of all Children involved will be informed as soon as possible. Support will be provided to both the Child who has been harmed and the Child displaying harmful behaviour, ensuring that everyone involved is kept safe and receives the help they need.

10. Sexting

Sexting, also known as youth-produced sexual imagery, refers to Children creating or sharing sexual photos or videos of themselves or others of the same age. This does not include adults sharing images of Children, which is a serious crime and must be reported to the Police. If a sexting incident comes to the attention of any Colleague, it must be reported immediately to the DSL. Colleagues should never view, share, download, or ask to see the images. If the image has already been seen accidentally, this must be reported to the DSL. Colleagues must not delete the image or ask the Child to do so, question the Child about the image, or share information with others. It is important not to blame or shame the Child. Instead, reassure them that they will be supported and that the DSL/DSO will handle the situation according to Safeguarding procedures.

11. Honour-Based Violence

Honour-based violence (HBV) includes harmful practices carried out to protect or defend the "honour" of a family or community. These are all forms of abuse and include:

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

  FGM involves the partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in England, Wales and Northern Ireland under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

It can cause severe pain, emotional trauma, and long-term health problems, especially around childbirth.

FGM can happen at any age, and often occurs during overseas trips. Colleagues should be alert if a girl expresses concern about going abroad, especially over the summer.

- **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not freely agree to the marriage and are pressured or threatened into it.

This is different from an arranged marriage, where both people freely consent.

Forced marriage is a crime in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Pressure can include physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse.

Any concerns regarding the above must be reported immediately, as this is a legal requirement. Colleagues should be particularly alert if a Child is due to travel abroad and shows signs of fear, reluctance to go, or expresses worry about not being allowed to return to the UK. To support this, all relevant Colleagues will receive appropriate training to help them recognise and respond to potential warning signs effectively.

12. Radicalisation & Extremism

Radicalisation is the process where someone is influenced to support extreme beliefs, including terrorism. This can happen through personal relationships or online, especially on social media. The aim is to persuade people, often vulnerable individuals, to adopt these views and sometimes even take part in extremist or terrorist activities.

The government defines extremism as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs” (HM Government Prevent Strategy).

Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form however staff should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

“Prevent” is a cross-Government policy that forms one of the four strands of the UK’s strategy for counter terrorism which includes the prevention of radicalisation of vulnerable adults and children. Those who are targeted with a view to radicalise them are often the most vulnerable in society including those with poor networks of support of who are experiencing socially isolated, mental health issues and/or learning and communication issues.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks.

If the behaviour of anybody involved in our activities indicates that they or those around them are at risk of harm, staff should report these concerns immediately to the DSL. If there appears to be an immediate risk or danger call 999.

13. Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of Child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a Child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually

exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Parents or carers might not always see what is happening either. Even if a Child or their family don't want help at first, Colleagues must report any worries straight away to the DSL.

14. Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is when Children are pressured or forced to do crimes. This can include selling drugs, stealing, or working on illegal farms. Even if the Child seems to agree, they might still be a victim. This can happen in person or online.

A common example is county lines, where gangs use Children or vulnerable adults to sell drugs in towns outside the city. Gangs use threats, violence, or tricks to control people. Sometimes they take over a person's home to use as a base; this is called cuckooing.

15. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Certain Children may be at an increased risk of harm or abuse due to a range of factors, including but not limited to prejudice, discrimination, social isolation, communication barriers, and the reluctance of some adults to recognise or accept signs of abuse. To ensure equitable Safeguarding for all Children engaged in Walsall FC Foundation Activities, particular consideration will be given to those who are:

- Vulnerable to discrimination or maltreatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- At risk of sexual exploitation
- Non-native English speakers
- At risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- At risk of radicalisation or involvement in extremist activities
- Living with disabilities or communication and learning difficulties
- Young carers
- Affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, or parental mental health issues
- Asylum seekers or living apart from their family
- Vulnerable to bullying or involved in bullying behaviour
- Residing in temporary, unstable, or chaotic living conditions
- Experiencing transient lifestyles or unsupportive home environments

The Charity is committed to recognising and responding appropriately to these heightened vulnerabilities to provide effective protection and support.

16. Responding to Allegations, Disclosures or Concerns

Where possible, the Charity's DSL or DSO should be contacted as soon as possible when concerns arise. However, it is acknowledged that immediate action may be required before this contact can be made.

All Colleagues have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people and to take appropriate steps to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately. It is not the responsibility of anyone within the Charity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place.

The following guidelines are provided to support individuals responding to suspected or disclosed abuse:

Do:

- Treat all allegations with the utmost seriousness and respond to the Child as if you believe what they are saying, without explicitly saying "I believe you."
- Reassure the Child that they did the right thing by telling you.
- Assure the Child that they are not to blame.
- Be honest about your role and explain who you need to inform and why.
- Keep the Child informed about what you are doing and what will happen next.
- Take appropriate action promptly, as you may be the only person able to prevent further harm.
- Record everything the Child says and any actions taken, preferably in handwritten notes, remembering to sign and date your notes
- Report the concern promptly using MyConcern and alert the DSL.
- Seek medical advice or assistance if necessary.

Don't:

- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Question the Child in detail or carry out an investigation (this is the responsibility of the Police and Children's Social Care).
- Doubt or dismiss what the Child tells you, or interrupt/change the subject.
- Say anything that may make the Child feel responsible for the abuse.
- Inform Parents or carers - this decision will be made by the DSL, especially if there is a concern about their involvement.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION; IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT.

Investigations into allegations of abuse must be managed with great care. In such instances, the SSL will first seek guidance from the Safeguarding Children Team, Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer ('**LADO**'), or the Police before commencing any internal investigation. The SSL will also follow advice on how and when to inform the Child and any other relevant parties involved in the allegation, maintaining this communication until the matter is resolved to a reasonable conclusion.

Additionally, the Charity's SSL will notify The FA Safeguarding Management Team and the EFL in writing, as required under the Affiliated Football Policy and Procedures, using the appropriate notification forms.

16.1 Raising Concerns about a Colleague

All Colleagues must be aware that any inappropriate behaviour towards Children is unacceptable. Their conduct must always reflect the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.

In accordance with the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for any individual aged 18 or over, who is in a position of trust, to engage in a sexual or intimate relationship with a person under the age of 18, even if the relationship appears consensual. Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious Safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the LADO.

If a report or allegation involves a Colleague who is believed to have behaved in a way that has harmed a Child, may have harmed a Child, possibly committed a criminal offence related to a Child, or acted in a manner indicating they may pose a risk of harm to Children or be unsuitable to work with them, the SSL or Board must immediately inform the LADO in the borough where the Colleague is employed. The LADO will then consult with the Police and Children's Social Care as appropriate.

If the SSL or DSL are unsure whether the concern meets these criteria, they must still seek advice from the LADO.

The SSL will also notify The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team and the EFL in writing, in accordance with the Affiliated Football Policy and Procedures, using the appropriate notification forms.

The Colleague involved may be asked to provide a brief written statement, as may any other individual with relevant involvement. This will only occur after advice has been obtained from the LADO, Police, Children's Social Care, and The FA Case Management Team, and in consultation with the SSL or Board.

Where it does not conflict with guidance from the LADO or The FA, any internal investigation will be conducted following the Foundation's Disciplinary Policy and applicable grievance procedures.

The SSL will continue to liaise with The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team and the EFL throughout the process as required under the Affiliated Football Policy and Procedures.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by Colleagues should be reported to a member of the safeguarding team. Complaints about the DSL or Designated Safeguarding Officers should be reported to the Foundation Director.

16.2 Historic Allegations against Colleagues

All concerns will be taken seriously by the Charity and responded to positively irrespective of when they arose. Evidence demonstrates that historic concerns may indicate current risks and therefore the Foundation encourages anybody with concerns to report them directly to the DSL and police where an immediate risk of harm is present.

Allegations concerning Colleagues who no longer work at the Charity or historical allegations will be reported to the police and/or LADO.

17. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a sensitive and important matter, and there is often a natural tension between respecting privacy and ensuring safety. Colleagues are advised that they cannot guarantee complete confidentiality to a Child when Safeguarding concerns arise. The key priority must always be the protection and welfare of the Child.

Colleagues may need to share information with the right people to ensure the Child is protected, even if this means not telling the Child's Parents or carers straight away. It is important to be honest with the Child about what will happen and to act quickly to keep them safe

Colleagues should only discuss concerns with a member of the safeguarding team. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis. Any Colleague can contact the police where appropriate, if they are concerned about the risk of immediate harm to a child or young person. Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the UK GDPR.

18. Referral to Children's Social Care

The DSL will make a referral to Children's social care if it is believed that a Child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. The Child (subject to their age and understanding) and the Parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the Child. Any Colleague can make a direct referral to Children's social care, if they believe that independent advice and action is necessary to protect a Child.

Colleagues should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy, but they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- The situation is an emergency and members of Safeguarding team are unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure a young child's safety
- For any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child or young person.

19. Safer Recruitment

Safer Recruitment is a vital part of our Safeguarding approach and refers to the process of recruiting staff and volunteers in a way that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all individuals involved in the Charity. This includes ensuring that all Colleagues are properly vetted, suitably qualified, and supported in their roles. The aim is to create an environment where unsafe or inappropriate behaviour is actively deterred, and safe working practices are promoted and maintained. For further details, please refer to our Safer Recruitment Policy.

All new permanent staff will attend an introductory meeting with the DSL, who will provide an overview of the Charity's Safeguarding procedures. In addition, any new Foundation Managers will be trained on the Charity's Safer Recruitment Policy and procedures.

Colleagues who directly work with Children must complete the FA Safeguarding Children course and complete a refresher course at least every three years, as advised by The FA. Our DSL will keep records of all Safeguarding training and ensures annual refresher training is provided. Throughout the year, all staff will receive regular Safeguarding updates via emails, newsletters, staff meetings, and other internal communications.

Raising awareness is a key part of our Safeguarding commitment, and the Foundation will continue to promote Safeguarding information to Children, Parents, and Colleagues.

20. Ratios and Supervision of Children

The Charity will always ensure that appropriate staffing levels are in place for all activities involving children. Staffing ratios will be carefully considered based on the age of the participants, the level of risk involved in the activity, and any additional needs within the group. Younger children and higher-risk activities will require increased supervision.

As a minimum, at least two members of staff or delivery partners will be present at all times during any activity. This ensures adequate supervision and allows for continuity in the event that one staff member becomes unavailable.

21. Off-site Arrangements, Trips and Visits

All of the Charity's extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where activities are provided by and managed by Walsall FC Foundation, our own child protection policy and procedures apply.

When children are involved in off-site activities facilitated or organised by the Charity, including school delivery, holiday courses and work-related activities, we will check that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements area in place.

22. Transport

On occasion, the Charity will transport children and young people to external events or activities. Children shall be accompanied and always supervised by the Activity leader, and only Vehicles and Drivers approved by the SSL/DSL under Foundation policies will be used to transport children.

For clarity, all drivers – whether volunteer or paid – should be subject to Safeguarding training and DBS checks if they will be transporting participants on behalf of the Charity.

Under no circumstances should a member of staff use a private vehicle to convey children engaged on an Activity being delivered by Walsall FC Foundation.

23. Medical

There may be occasions where medical treatment is necessary during an Activity or event. The Charity will ensure a level of medical cover is available during all of its activities including at least one suitably trained Emergency Aider. All relevant and necessary medical information of participants will be treated in confidence but provided to the Event Lead if necessary, e.g. asthmatic participants.

Specialist medical advice and further information must be sought when working with children who have special needs or disability.

24. Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement is when a Child is cared for by someone who is not their Parent or a close relative for 28 days or more, with the permission of the Child's Parents. This applies to Children under 16, or under 18 if the Child has a disability. Legally, the Child's Parents, the carer, or anyone involved in setting up the arrangement must inform Children's services as soon as possible. If a Colleague believes a Child may be in a private fostering situation, they must inform the DSL. The Charity will then contact the local authority, who will assess whether the arrangement is safe and appropriate for the Child.

25. Online Safety and Electronic Communication

The Charity provides advice to staff and volunteers regarding their personal online activity and electronic communication. Walsall FC Foundation has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with participants and service users. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action and/or internal/external investigation.

Walsall FC Foundation are registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to carry out Criminal Record Checks on individuals who work for the Charity. Enhanced CRCs, plus barred list check where appropriate, enable the Foundation to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions involving work with Children.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that takes place online or through digital communication, such as emails, text messages, or social media. It involves repeatedly targeting someone to cause harm, distress, or humiliation. This may include offensive messages, threats, or sharing personal information or images without consent. Cyberbullying can be linked to other forms of Abuse, such as bullying based on race, disability, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics. It is often done anonymously and can make the victim feel isolated or unsafe.

To mitigate the risk of cyberbullying, or other online abuse that cannot be witnessed or easily proven, the Charity does not take part in any online e-sports activities. Any official Foundation activities, such as online video game tournaments, take place at a central venue with participants in attendance. In this case, the Activity Lead is responsible for monitoring those in attendance and reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL/DSO's through the usual procedures.

26. Consent for taking and use of images

The Charity takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the FA:

- Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought in writing at the start of the financial year or prior to the event or session. Parents/Carers/Guardians are responsible for informing the Charity of any change of circumstances which may affect consent.
- Parents/Carers/Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. The Foundation will not allow images to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed.
- All Children featured in Charity publications will be appropriately dressed.
- Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific Child.
- Where appropriate, images represent the range of people participating safely in the event.
- Designated Foundation photographers will, where applicable, undertake a DBS check and attend a Safeguarding Children workshop and in any case will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest guidelines on the Use of Images policies from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Charity Identification will be worn at all times.
- Children who are under a court order will not have their images published.
- No images of Children featured in Charity publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address.
- Recordings of Children for the purposes of legitimate coaching aids are only filmed by Foundation officials and are stored safely and securely at the Charity's premises.
- Any instances of inappropriate images should be reported to the DSL.
- The Charity does not put young peoples' profiles with images and information on its website.

27. Service Level Agreements / Partnership Agreements

Walsall FC Foundation's commitment to Safeguarding is outlined in any partnership agreements, service level agreements or any other agreements that are in place with any facility or service provider or for commissioned services insofar as those services relate to Children.

Agreements will clearly define roles, responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding Children before, during and after the delivery of those services.

28. Development of New Activities

When establishing, developing or improving a project or activity, Walsall FC Foundation will refer to Safeguarding as a key part of the planning brief: The programme will also:

- Seek input from children and parents/guardians of children at risk who might be participants.
- Ensure delivery partners have the appropriate safeguarding measures in place and are subject to contractual commitment to live up to these standards.

29. Listening Culture

Whether for new or existing activities, the Charity is committed to fostering a listening culture to continuously improve our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

All members of staff will welcome feedback from participants, parents, carers, partners, and other stakeholders and this should be reported to the SSL and DSL to help improve any future Safeguarding arrangements and policy.

Colleagues are also encouraged to share any thoughts or experiences that may improve the Charity's safeguarding procedures, helping Walsall FC Foundation become a more effective organisation.

30. Contingency Plans

As the MyConcern reporting system is online, with access from anywhere, staff from the Charity will always have access to upload safeguarding concerns and support external agencies such as schools, local authority etc. Should any technical issues arise with MyConcern, colleague should contact the DSL or failing that the DSO's directly.

In major events, such as a pandemic, where a safeguarding concern is ongoing, this should be reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH – see contact details below), using the Multi-Agency Referral Form, as the responsible body for welfare of children and adults in their area.

This ensures that should the Foundation's delivery, and therefore contact with the vulnerable individuals, cease safeguarding concerns can continue to be monitored.

31. Sharing Concerns & Reporting

All concerns regarding a Child's welfare must be recorded at the earliest opportunity, whether they arise during Walsall FC Foundation activities or outside of them. When it is safe to do so and there is no immediate risk of harm to the Child, concerns should be reported by scanning the QR code below or by logging into the MyConcern portal. Records must include the date, time, and detailed description of the concern. Wherever possible, include relevant information such as the Child's full name, date of birth, address, and the names of Parents or siblings. It is vital that concerns are shared and advice sought without delay. However, a lack of complete information should never be a barrier to reporting and any concern must still be logged promptly. **Please see the flowchart in Appendix 1**.

WALSALL F.C.
FOUNDATION

Walsall FC Foundation Contact Details

Senior Safeguarding Lead: Adam Davy, Foundation Director

Phone: 01922 644 742
Email: adam.davy@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Paul Larvin, Senior Operations Manager

Phone: 01922 644 742
Email: paul.larvin@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Trustee

Phone: 01922 644 742
Email: sue.lane@walsallfc.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Officers (Foundation Managers):

Marc Wilkes: marc.wilkes@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk
Chris Springthorpe: chris.springthorpe@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk
Joe Roberts: joe.roberts@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk
Martin Manley: martin.manley@walsallfcfoundation.co.uk

EXTERNAL LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS

Walsall Safeguarding Partnership - https://go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-safeguarding-partnership/

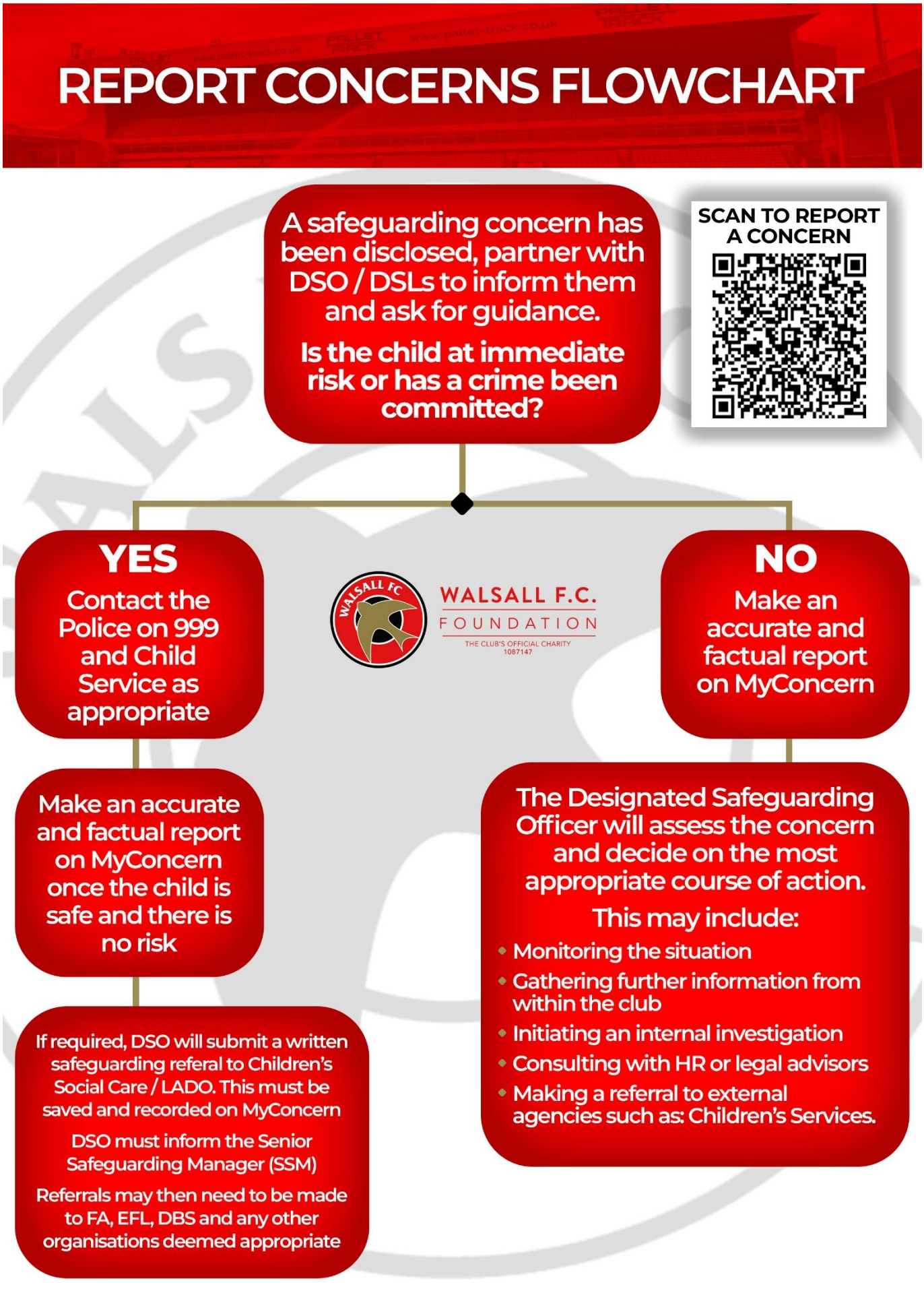
If you suspect that a Child is being, or is at risk of being significantly harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must report this immediately: To report a concern about a Child call Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub during office hours (Monday to Thursday 8.45am – 5.15pm and Friday 8.45am – 4.45pm) call **0300 555 2866.** Out of office hours (evenings, weekends and bank holidays) call the Emergency Response Team on **0300 555 2922**. To make a Child Protection referral, please send all information to the MASH using the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). This can be downloaded using the link – https://forms.walsall.gov.uk/Electronic-Multi-Agency-Referral-Form

Completed forms must be sent to MASH@walsall.gov.uk

If you believe a Child is in immediate danger call the Police on **999**. To follow up a concern with the LADO with Walsall Safeguarding Partnership contact **07432 422205** or **01922 654040** or **lado@walsall.gov.uk**

WALSALL F.C. FOUNDATION

Appendix 1 – Reporting Concerns Flowchart



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Appendix 2 – Walsall FC Foundation Safeguarding Team

WALSALL F.C.
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THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY
1087147

SCAN TO REPORT A CONCERN

YOUR WALSALL FC FOUNDATION SAFEGUARDING TEAM



SUE LANE
Designated Safeguarding Trustee
sue.lane@walsallfc.co.uk



ADAM DAVY
Senior Safeguarding Lead
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PAUL LARVIN
Designated Safeguarding Lead
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MARC WILKES
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