

**Rochdale Association Football Club**

**Safeguarding Policy**

**Introduction**

Rochdale Football Club will appoint a Senior Safeguarding Officer who will be a member of the Board, together with a Designated Safeguarding Officer to support having in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. (See App B)

All Rochdale AFC Departments which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

* The welfare of the child is paramount. The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children
* have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport at Rochdale AFC in a safe and child centred environment
* are protected from abuse whilst participating in the activity provided by Rochdale AFC or outside of the activity.
* All children, whatever their age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background have the right to protection from abuse;
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
* All staff (paid/unpaid) working at Rochdale Association Football Club have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse nor decide if abuse has occurred.

**Policy Statement**

Rochdale Association Football Club has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Rochdale Association Football Club will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved through adherence to the following Child Protection guidelines.

A child is defined as under 18 – The Children’s Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004.

**(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people)**

**Anti-Radicalisation Policy Statement**

Rochdale AFC is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. As a school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. At Rochdale Development Centre all staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

**Policy Aims**

The aim of Rochdale Association Football Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

* Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Rochdale Association Football Club;
* Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

**Promoting Good Practice with Young People**

**Introduction**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a child enters the club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving a child’s self esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

**Good Practice Guidelines**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within Rochdale Association Football Club:

Good practice means:

* Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
* Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
* Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
* Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
* Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
* Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
* Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
* Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
* Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
* Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. (NB however, same gender abuse can also occur).
* Ensuring that at tournament or residential events, adults should not enter children’s rooms or invite children into their rooms.
* Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
* Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
* Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
* Securing parental consent in writing to *act in loco parentis,* if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
* Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
* Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

**Practice to be avoided**

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child’s parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

* Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
* Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.
* **Desisting from any Social Media contact with children. (See Social Media Policy)**

**Practice never to be sanctioned**

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

* Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
* Share a room with a child;
* Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
* Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
* **Allow verbal bullying or derisory comments from one child to another.**
* Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
* Reduce a child to tears as a form of *control;*
* Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
* Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves;
* Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**NB.** It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person’s reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed.

* If you accidentally hurt a player.
* If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
* If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
* If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

**Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Sporting Events**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all clubs be vigilant with any concerns to be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films. **(See Images and Filming Policy)**

**Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers**

The club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking pre-selection checks the following should be included:

* All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elect information about an applicants past and self disclosure about any criminal record.
* **Consent should be obtained from an applicant to conduct a DBS search**
* Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
* Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
* Should **RAFC** buy in services it will ensure that the organisation and/or individual has the appropriate clearances in place prior to working with the children and young people in the group.

**Responding to suspicions or allegations**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Rochdale Association Football Club, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

The club will assure that all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleagues is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

* A criminal investigation,
* A child protection investigation,
* A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation well may influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

**Action if there are concerns**

The following action should be taken if there are concerns (See Appendix A):

**Poor Practice**

* If following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Designated Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
* If the allegation is about poor practice by the, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

**Suspected Abuse**

* Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Children Services Officer **Alistair Linden on 07951159782**, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

If the club CPO is unavailable you should contact **Russ Green the Club CEO 07885555831.**

* The Designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if *out-of-hours.*
* The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
* The Designated Safeguarding Officer should also notify the relevant officer who in turn will inform the Football Association Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
* If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Football Association Children Services Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

**Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis* only. This includes the following people:

* The Club Children Services Officer;
* The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
* The person making the allegation;
* Social services/police;
* The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)\*

\* Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

**Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

* The Rochdale Association Football Designated Safeguarding Officer in consultation with the CEO, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
* Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries Rochdale Association Football Club Board will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handles. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Rochdale Association Football Club Board must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that in a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

**Support to Deal with the *Aftermath***

* Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of Helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource. (Available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bac.co.uk, Internet: [www.bac.co.uk](http://www.bac.co.uk)). **Additional numbers are in Appendix B**
* Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

**Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside Rochdale Association Football Club, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999 and subsequent updates.

**Action if Bullying is Suspected**

**All forms of bullying are not to be tolerated and must be addressed immediately when observed, suspected or notification is received**. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

**Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying in Sport:**

* Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
* Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (it is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
* Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully/bullies separately.
* Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
* Keep records of that is said (what happened, by whom, when).
* Report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officeror the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

**Action towards the Bully/Bullies:**

* Talk with the bully/bullies, explain the situation, and try to get the bully/Bullies to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
* Inform the bully’s parents.
* Insist on the return of the *borrowed* items and that the bully/bullies compensate the victim.
* Provide support for the leader of the victim.
* Impose sanctions as necessary.
* Encourage and support the bully/bullies to change behaviour.
* Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
* Inform all organisation members of action taken.
* Keep a written record of action taken.

**Monitoring**

The policy will be reviewed a year annually or in the following circumstances:

* changes in legislation and/or government guidance
* as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and/or The FA or EFL.
* as a result of any other significant change or event.

**APPENDIX A**

**What to do if there are concerns**

Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the same time of the disclosure/concern. Information should try to include the following, but not every question needs an answer:

* Name of child
* Age of child and date of birth
* Home address and telephone number
* Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
* What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
* Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
* A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Behavioural signs indirect signs?
* Witnesses to the incidents.
* The child’s account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
* Have the parents been contacted?
* If so what has been said?
* Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
* If it is not the child making the report has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
* Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

**(This must be completed at time of observation)**

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| Name of Player: |  | Date of Birth: |  |
| Name of Staff: |  | Job title: |  |
| Date and time of observation: |  |

 

**App B**

**Designated Persons for Safeguarding**

Rochdale Football Club will appoint a Senior Safeguarding Officer who will be a member of the Board, together with a Designated Safeguarding Officer to support having in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Designated Person Specification and Suitability Checklist

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|  When appointing a designated person, ensure that you have considered their appropriateness for this role by checking them against the following criteria. **PERSON SPECIFICATION**  |
| **Skills, Qualifications and Experience relevant to the Role**  |
| **Essential**  | Working regularly with children and young people in a lead or supervisory role where the incumbent has had sole responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people.  Completion of an Enhanced DBS clearance which is deemed suitable.  Attendance at appropriate and authorised Safeguarding children training. Willingness to update skills and knowledge Know what to do if concerned that a child may be abused or a person may pose a risk to a child.  Be familiar with The Club’s policies and procedures and reporting lines. Knowledge of and positive attitudes to equal opportunities Make considered judgements about how to act to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare. Commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern  |
| **Personable**  | Always puts the child’s welfare FIRST! Is a good communicator. Has a common sense approach. Is enthusiastic and professional. Is willing to learn and seek advice. Is a good team member. Has attention to detail.  |
| **Desirable**  | Previous experience of working with children. Knowledge of safeguarding issues. Knowledge of safeguarding legislation.  |

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|  **Designated Persons Responsibilities**   |
| To support in promoting the moral and legal responsibilities in implementing procedures to provide a duty of care for children, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse and poor practice.   Ensuring that all issues of Safeguarding Children are dealt with in compliance with Football Club Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidelines and with the requirements of Rochdale MBC Safeguarding Procedures.  Ensuring that all staff appointed have been checked by the DBS and are considered to be suitable and safe adults to work with children. Ensure that all staff receive initial Safeguarding Training.   To record and refer on to CSO all incidents, concerns, allegations, evidence of poor practice and evidence of best practice, in confidence, and in line with Data Protection legislation.  To handle sensitively, in confidence, any Safeguarding concerns raised within the department and support staff where necessary.  To attend regular Company Designated Persons meetings with CWO, and undertake any actions raised at meetings/CPD events in order to keep up to date with current Safeguarding guidelines and legislation for compliance.  To take responsibility for the day to day management of Safeguarding issues and pro-active promotion of Safeguarding awareness and implementation within the specified department.  To be available, at all reasonable times, as a first contact for staff, parents, children, and if appropriate, external agencies in regards to information or referral of Safeguarding matters within the Club.   |

**Children’s Services Officer**

Football Club will appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), in accordance with Ruling O.

Children’s Services Officer Specification and Suitability Checklist

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|  When appointing a Children’s Services Officer, ensure that you have considered their appropriateness for this role by checking them against the following criteria. **PERSON SPECIFICATION**  |
| **Skills, Qualifications and Experience relevant to the Role**   |
| **Essential**  |  Knowledge of safeguarding children and/or vulnerable group’s legislation. Ability to deal constructively with people’s emotions (e.g. upset, distress, conflict, animosity). Capacity to handle confidential data sensitively. Ability to work unsupervised and on own initiative Experience of managing meetings/projects/events Evidence of influencing skills/negotiating skills/presenting to management/staff/parents/players.  |
| **Personable**  |  Always puts the child’s welfare FIRST! Good leadership skills. Good resource management skills Is enthusiastic and professional.  Is willing to learn and seek advice.  Is a good team member.  |
| **Desirable**  | Experience of implementing policies, protocols and guidance. Experience of writing reports and compiling case file information. Knowledge and understanding of the culture and structure of football.  |

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| Children’s Service’s Officer Responsibilities |
|   Ensuring that the Rochdale Football Club Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are updated and in line with current legislation and regulations;  Promote the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse and poor practice – across all areas of The Club.  Promote and deliver Safeguarding Training at Rochdale Football Club;  Supervise and support Rochdale Football Club’s Designated Persons for Safeguarding;    Ensure Club has full compliance with Premier League Rules and EFL Sections N & O.  To provide leadership in Safeguarding of Children across the Club, maintaining key relationships with Club Senior Management, Premier League Safeguarding Team, Club Safeguarding Officers, NSPCC and The FA  Representing The Club as Lead Case Manager when co-operating with/reporting directly to external statutory agencies; the Police, Children’s Services, Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Authority Designated Officer for the Management of allegations against professionals (LADO)   |

Internal & External Contacts:

(The initial internal contact is the Children Services Officer within the group)

Alistair Linden

Tel: 07951 159 782

Russ Green

Tel:07885555831

External Contacts:

(This would be the agency to which referrals would be made i.e. Social Services)

Child Protection Officer

Lancashire County FA

**01772 624000**

CountyWO@LancashireFA.com

NSPCC Helpline

08088005000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline

08001111

Rochdale Social Services

0300 303 0440

Rochdale MBC LADO

Tel: 01706 647474