

# ST. ALBANS CITY YOUTH F.C.

*Affiliated to:*

Hertfordshire County F.A.  
Watford Friendly League, West Herts Youth League, Mid Herts Rural Minors League,  
Hertfordshire Girls League

All members of St Albans City Youth FC have a responsibility to ensure that:

The welfare of the child is paramount;

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity 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 in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Policy statement

Football as a sport and pastime has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Football 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.

St Albans City Youth FC will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our club through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by the Football Association.

A child is defined as under 18 The Children Act 1989.

## **Policy aims**

The aim of the Clubs Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of St Albans City Youth FC.

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. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that 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 to the Child Protection Officer 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 the 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 Football :

### **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, e.g. before winning.

maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (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.

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 at tournaments 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 parents, 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.

Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;

allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;

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, e.g. if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players. 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/assisting 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 told.

if you accidentally hurt a player.

if he/she seems distressed in any manner.

if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

### **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 Club will undertake the following :

All volunteers will complete an application form. The application form will elect information about an applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau and the appropriate check will be carried out – usually enhanced disclosure.

Evidence of identity (Passport or driving licence with Photo).

Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Football, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or 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.

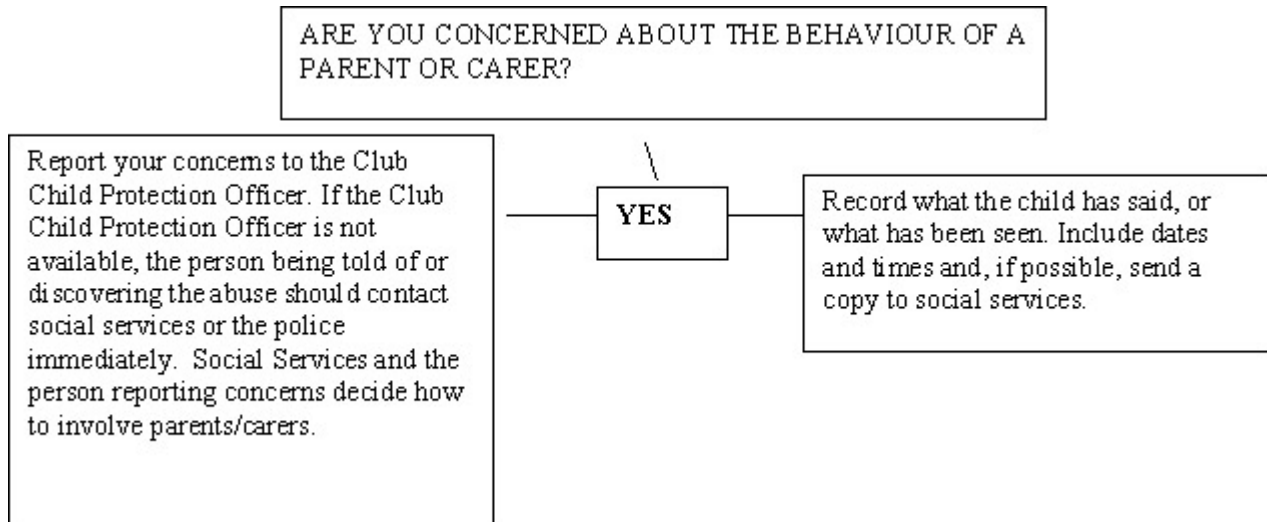
The Club assures all volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of the club 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 may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **Action if there are concerns**

The following action should be taken if there are concerns



The Child Protection Officer should always inform the Club on the appropriate form provided.

### **Poor Practice**

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Club Development 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 a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, 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.

The Child Protection 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 Child Protection Officer will also notify the relevant the FA Child Protection Officer who will advise or and deal with any procedural issues and media enquiries.

If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made direct to the FA Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Confidentiality

Every effort will 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:

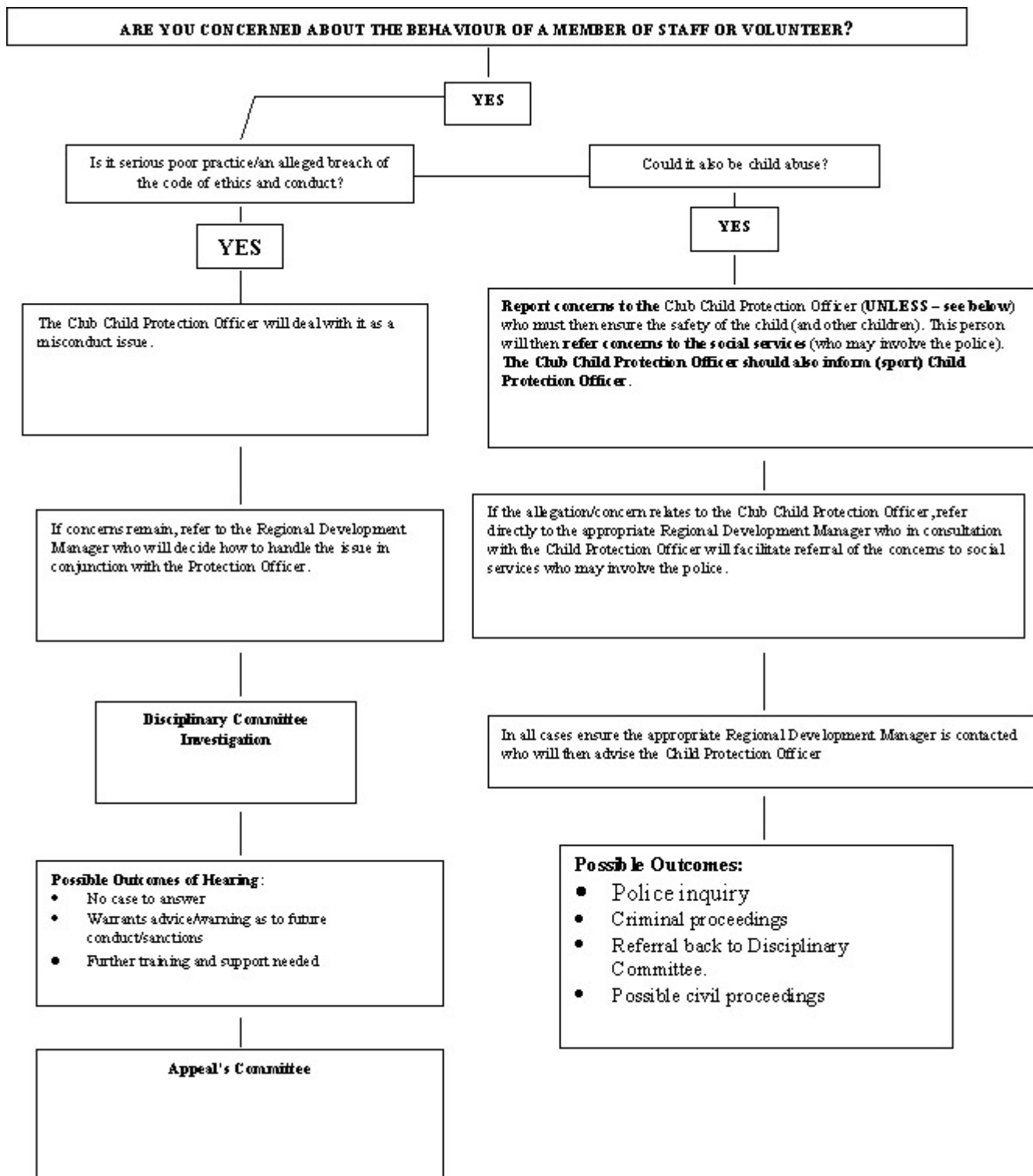
- The Club Child Protection Officer;
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation;
- Social services/police;
- The FA Child Protection Officer;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). \*

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

Information will 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).

If you do not know who to turn for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the social services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111)

### 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 time of the disclosure/concern. 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 time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following;

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.

Date:

Your name:

Your position:

Please complete the following if you have received a concern or have received an allegation that relates to behaviour/actions towards a Child or Young Person

Name of Child or Young Person:
Address:
Date of Birth:

Actions taken on receipt of Allegation/Concern

Date of receipt of allegation/concern:
Action/Response:

External agencies contacted

Social services YES/NO	If yes – where:  Date:                      Time: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Police YES/NO	If yes – where:  Date:                      Time: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:
Local Authority YES/NO	If yes – where:  Date:                      Time: Name and contact number: Details of advice received:

Signature: Print Name Date:
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**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 sport, 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.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The Club Child Protection Officer 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 the Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Clubs Disciplinary Committee will reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

Action if Bullying is Suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out in the Section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

Remember: In all Child Protection issues –

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

Ensure the Club Child Protection Officer follows up with social services.

The Club Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the FA Child Protection Officer who will advise, support and report as necessary.