**RUSHALL VILLAGE FOOTBALL CLUB CIC**
Abbey Park, Glastonbury Crescent, Bloxwich, WS3 2RQ
Company number 16287379
Email: info@rvfc.co.uk
Website: www.rvfc.co.uk

Affiliated to Staffordshire Football Association

# Safeguarding Policy

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| Implementation date | 5th October 2023 |
| First reviewed | 13th April 2026 |
| Agreed by | Mark Adams |
| Next review date | 13th April 2027 |

**"It Takes a Village – Play with Pride, Respect and Fun"**

Rushall Village FC (RVFC) acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity. We subscribe to The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and endorse and accept the Policy Statement contained in that document.

**Policy Statement:**

We believe that every child has the right to protection from abuse and exploitation. Safeguarding and protection of all children is everyone's responsibility. RVFC believes that it is always unacceptable for any child to experience abuse of any kind and recognizes its responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of all children. By adhering to our safeguarding policies, procedures and processes we will do everything possible to safeguard children at our club, affiliated teams and within our Community Club Organization (CCO).

**RVFC recognizes and is committed to the following principles:**

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith, or belief.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- We will work in partnership with other organizations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.

**Purpose and aim of policy:**

RVFC will always seek to provide protection for the children who receive our services. We will provide all staff with guidance and access to Safeguarding policies and procedures which they should adopt should they suspect that a child is at risk of harm.

**Whom policy applies to:**

This policy applies to all who are involved with RVFC, affiliated teams, and community club organizations as applicable). This includes all the Club board, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and contractors.

**Types of Abuse:**

**Physical -** A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult, or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person. Common types of physical abuse include hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, scalding, and burning, inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint.

**Sexual Abuse:** When a child or young person is sexually abused, they are forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what is happening is abuse or that it is wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It is never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it is important to make sure children know this.

**Emotional abuse**: Is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate, or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

**Neglect -** Where a child's basic physical needs are consistently not met, or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised. Neglect is a persistent failure to meet basic needs (physical or emotional), and it leads to serious harm to the health or development of a child. Neglect can be failing to provide adequate shelter, clothing, or food, not protecting a child from harm or danger as well as failing to access medical care or treatment for a child when it is needed.

**Grooming:** Is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender, or race. Grooming can take place over a short or prolonged period – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE):** Is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited, they are given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status, and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they are being abused.

**Trafficking:** Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They are moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know cannot be repaid or use financial abuse to control them.

Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender, or race. The relationship could be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be used to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.

**Bullying**: Is behavior that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening, or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a prolonged period and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

**Cyberbullying**: Is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, and mobile phone.

**Online abuse:** Is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that is connected to the web, like computers, tablets, and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:

- social media
- text messages and messaging apps
- emails
- online chats
- online gaming
- live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse, which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.

**Criminal exploitation:** Is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

Example:

**County Lines**: Is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines.” Children as young as 12 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation, and selling and manufacturing drugs.

**Domestic abuse**: Is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behavior between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another. It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse. It is important to remember that domestic abuse:

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It is also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' but has many other names.

**Other Policies:**

Please read about this policy in conjunction with our other club policies and procedures relating to Safeguarding in football:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Adults at Risk Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

**Useful further reading and associated external policies:**

- Safeguarding - Rules & Regulations | The Football Association (thefa.com)

**Responding to Concerns or Allegations:**

It is not the responsibility of anyone employed by RVFC in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether the alleged harm or abuse has taken place. However, it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to act, by reporting any concerns or allegations of abuse of a child to the Club Welfare Officer (CWO)/Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or by contacting the appropriate authorities.

**When to report suspicions or incidents:**

Staff are not expected to be experts in recognizing abuse; however, staff should be vigilant and respond swiftly and appropriately. If any of the following circumstances occur, you should report this immediately to the CWO/DSO.

**Make a written record of the incident or grounds for concern:**

You will be guided by the CWO/DSO as to how, when and by whom the parents of the child are to be informed:

- If you suspect a child may be the victim of abuse by any person, including neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- If a child appears to have been the victim or perpetrator of bullying, including on-line cyberbullying.
- If you observe any injuries/marks on a child which they cannot account for, their explanation for the injury seems unlikely or you have suspicions as to how the injury may have been caused.
- If there is a sudden change in behavior, i.e., the child/young person's behavior alters significantly, they become withdrawn or tearful. If a child voices their intentions to self-harm or if you suspect, he/she may be exhibiting signs/symptoms of self-harm or an eating disorder.
- If you suspect a child has been exposed to any inappropriate or indecent images or discloses any inappropriate on-line behavior.
- If you accidentally hurt a child or young person, or you observe another adult hurting a child
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner and you have concerns for their emotional state or welfare.
- If a child or young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or may have developed an infatuation with you or another member of staff.
- If a child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, which may compromise your position or working relationship with that child.

Do not worry that you may be mistaken. Being worried about doing the wrong thing is not a reason not to act. It is better to have discussed it with somebody with the experience and responsibility of making an assessment.

**How to report a concern:**

- **If the child is in danger or injured, then call the emergency services.**
- If you receive an allegation, or have suspicion, or disclosure of poor practice or abuse. Report this to your CWO/ DSO.
- CWO/DSO will gather the relevant information and inform the National League DSO (Steps 1 & 2), or County FA DSO so that a decision can be made as to who should investigate the matter or escalate to the FA Safeguarding Case Management Team should the matter meet the `threshold`.
- CWO/DSO submits an incident form within 24 hours and sends it to CFA DSO.

**Possible outcomes:**

| **If concern is considered poor practice/misconduct:** | **If concern is considered, to be potential abuse:** |
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| Refer to CWO/DSO for resolution. | Criminal / Child protection investigation/ prosecution |
| Club Resolution | Investigation by the FA Safeguarding Case Management Team |
| Club Disciplinary action | Resolution as poor practice / misconduct |
| No further action | Club Safeguarding procedures |

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Club Welfare Officer:**

Kirsty Bradbury

Email: welfare@rvfc.co.uk

**If at any time you are not able to contact your Club WO/DSO, or the matter is clearly serious then you can contact either:**

Your County FA DSO directly:

Email: safeguarding@birminghamfa.com

• The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1862 or Safeguarding@TheFA.com

• The Police on 999 (if in immediate danger) OR

• Call the NSPCC Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

**Appendix A -**

**Legislation and guidance underpinning safeguarding:**

| **Children's Safeguarding Legislation** | |
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| **November 1989** | UN convention on the Rights of the Child |
| **July 1998** | Data Protection Act |
| **October 2003** | Female Genital Mutilation |
| **November 2003** | Sexual Offences Act |
| **November 2004** | The Children Act |
| **November 2006** | Safeguarding vulnerable groups Act |
| **April 2010** | The Equality Act |
| **May 2012** | Protection of Freedoms Act |
| **September 2016 (with annual updates)** | Keeping Children Safe in Education |
| **February 2017** | Working Together to Safeguarding Children |

| **Adults at Risk Safeguarding Guidance** | |
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| **January 2015** | No Secrets: Guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care |
| **2017** | Volunteer Now's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults |
| **February 2018** | LOT's LSAB's good practice guidance |

| **Adults at Risk Safeguarding Legislation** | |
|---|---|
| **July 1998** | Data Protection Act |
| **April 2005** | The Mental Capacity Act |
| **April 2010** | The Equality Act |
| **May 2014** | The Care Act |