



**FOUNDATION**

**AFC WIMBLEDON FOUNDATION  
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

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## **SECTION 1**

### **1.1 - Statement on Safeguarding Policy 2025 endorsed by the Foundation Board of Trustees**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation's "Safeguarding Children Policy" is provided for use by AFC Wimbledon Foundation for the security and protection of all children and, young people who participate in any activities organised and led by the Foundation. This includes young people who participate as volunteers for the Foundation. This document also provides professional support and guidance for all staff.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation's Safeguarding Children Policy applies to all staff, paid or volunteers (whether full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal), sessional workers, agency staff, consultants, interns / students, self-employed contractors, or anyone working on behalf of AFC Wimbledon Foundation referred to in this Policy as "staff", including Trustees.

The overriding feature of this policy is that the safety and welfare of every child or young person that meets AFC Wimbledon Foundation through any of its activities is paramount. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff, volunteers and trustees have a duty to always safeguard the welfare of children.

### **1.2 Aims of this policy**

- To safeguard all children and young people under the age of 18 — and up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) — who engage with the Foundation.
- To provide a framework for guidance to staff both during the staff recruitment process and whilst carrying out their role for the charity.
- To demonstrate best practice in safeguarding Children.
- To provide guidance for parents / carers to understand reporting procedures.
- To ensure that coaches and other adults who encounter children and young people provide good role models of behaviour.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout the Foundation.

### **1.3 - Safeguarding Children Policy**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation recognises and accepts its responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of those children and young people who come within the care of the organisation and its staff. This includes young people who volunteer.

**It accepts that every child has the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation.**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation accepts its responsibility in the belief that the welfare and protection of children and young people is paramount.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation will have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of service designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

A full copy of this policy is available to the public upon request to the Foundation office or can be found on the Foundation's website.

The policy has been written with reference to the Football Association's (FA) and English Football League (EFL) Trust's safeguarding processes and safeguarding law and policy. The

Department for Education (DfE) published and updated version of the statutory safeguarding and child protection guidance for schools in **England**, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) (DfE, 2025)<sup>1</sup>. This guidance will replace KCSIE 2024 when it comes into force on 1 September 2025.

The guidance sets out what schools and colleges in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18.

- the July 2018 DfE guidance document [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - Updated June 2025](#), the statutory guidance from the DfE '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' updates 2025 and
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- Advice from NSPCC [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#)

The AFC Wimbledon Foundation recognises that it is good practice to reach out to other organisations whose main purpose is safeguarding. Organisations such as the [NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#), The Ann Craft Trust <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/> or The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit <https://thecpsu.org.uk/>.

Our policy incorporates the safeguarding approach of the Foundation's local borough partners in Merton, Kingston, and Wandsworth.

The policy in its yearly review will implement changes at local and national level as required and will seek advice and guidance from the football authorities where appropriate. The Foundation is committed to supporting its knowledge and delivery of effective safeguarding practice by attending FA, Premier League and EFL Trust safeguarding workshops and training events across the year.

#### **1.4 - Review of the policy**

The policy will be reviewed yearly by the Board of Trustees, or in the following circumstances:

- Following a recommendation within a serious case review and / or from the Local Children's Services Board or any other regulatory body.
- Amendments to existing legislation, introduction of new legislation and /or government guidance.
- Any amendment in policy procedures or regulations as advised by the Football Association of English Football League Trust.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

#### **Strategic Responsibility and Accountability**

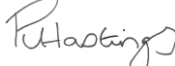
The Board of Trustees, along with the Foundation CEO are responsible for the implementation of the safeguarding and child protection policy and understand that they will review the progress and successful delivery of safeguarding across the organisation in the following ways:

- CEO and staff team to review safeguarding at every monthly review and termly staff INSET.
- CEO and staff team to deliver safeguarding training and update casual coaching staff and volunteers in termly INSET meetings.

- All staff receive information about the organisation's safeguarding arrangements, the organisation's safeguarding statement, Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), Child Protection Policy, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(s), and [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)
- Regular observation of delivery sessions as a part of the Quality Assurance process includes a focus on Safeguarding. Observations to determine staff safeguarding training requirements.
- Board of Trustees appoint a Trustee with lead responsibility for Safeguarding who reports back to Board at every scheduled meeting
- Safeguarding a core agenda item at all Board meetings and within CEO's report.

The policy will be made available on the Foundation website and on request from the office and will be an integral part of staff induction and training along with our Coaches Code of Conduct.

This policy was last reviewed by the Board of Trustees in November 2025. During the November 2025 review, the Board and CEO agreed that new a new policy should be written and that a working group of trustees and staff would be formed to create a new policy by September 2026.

**Signature:**  **Chief Executive Officer** **Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**Signature:**  **Chair of Trustees** **Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### 1.5 – Safeguarding Contacts

AFC Wimbledon Foundation, in line with The FA's safeguarding policies and procedures, has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and three Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) to manage initial reports of poor practice or suspected abuse. This structure reflects the safeguarding recommendations of the English Football League (EFL) and the Premier League, ensuring that our organisation meets recognised standards of best practice.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers are responsible for receiving the first reports of any concerns relating to poor practice, welfare issues, or potential abuse. Upon receiving a concern, the DSO will liaise promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will then determine the appropriate course of action and make contact with the relevant external agencies as required, which may include the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, or the County FA Welfare Officer. All concerns will be handled sensitively, promptly, and in accordance with statutory and football-specific safeguarding procedures.

**The Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding** is Karen Peck, whose role is to oversee and review the implementation of the policy and procedures – she can be contacted at [Karen.Peck@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:Karen.Peck@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk) or office hours telephone 07710 224946.

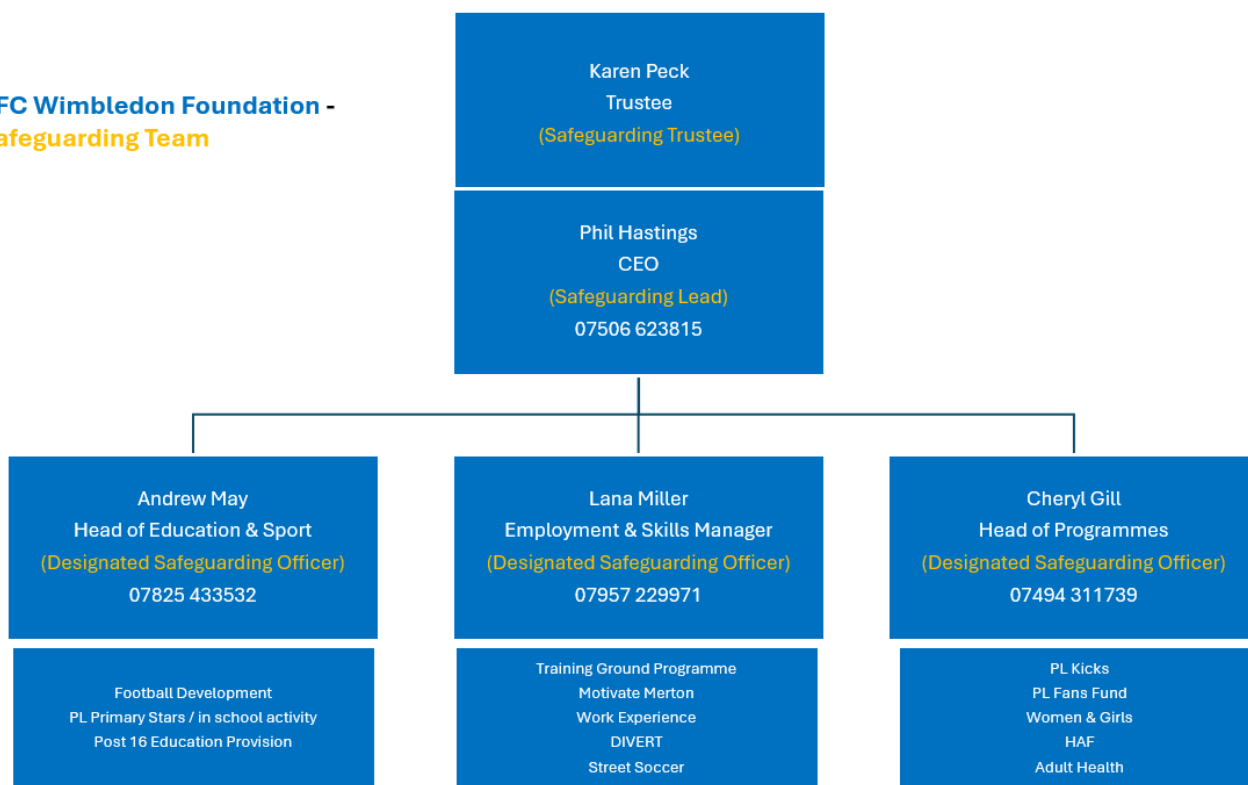
**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is CEO Phil Hastings**, if staff, partners or clients have a serious safeguarding concern he can be contacted at [phil.hastings@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:phil.hastings@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk) or by telephone 07506 623815.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for all Charity Programmes is Cheryl Gill** who is the first point of contact for this area of work and, if staff, partners or clients have a serious safeguarding concern she can be contacted at [cheryl.gill@afcwf.org.uk](mailto:cheryl.gill@afcwf.org.uk) or by telephone 07593 444924

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Education & Sport is Head of Education & Sport Andrew May** who is the first point of contact for this area of work and, if staff, partners or clients have a serious safeguarding concern he can be contacted at [andrew.may@fcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:andrew.may@fcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk) or by telephone 07825 433532.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Employment & Skills (mentoring) is Employment & Skills Manager Lana Miller** who is the first point of contact for this area of work and, if staff, partners or clients have a serious safeguarding concern she can be contacted at [ana.miller@afcwf.org.uk](mailto:ana.miller@afcwf.org.uk) or by telephone 07513 726737

**AFC Wimbledon Foundation -  
Safeguarding Team**



Karen Peck, Foundation Trustee will take lead responsibility for the Foundation’s safeguarding arrangements. Phil Hastings as Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have an overview of all aspects of Safeguarding at the Foundation and with support from Andrew May, Lana Miller and Cheryl Gill will implement staff training in this area and ensure staff are compliant with the Safeguarding policies and procedures.

In addition, the Foundation Safeguarding Team will attend an **AFC Wimbledon Football Club Senior Safeguarding Panel** made up of Elouise Gillette (Club **SSM**), Kate Shelley (**LDSO**), and representatives from **AFC Wimbledon Academy**, **AFC Wimbledon Women’s Team** and Security Teams. This will meet at least quarterly and as required to discuss current issues, review policy and procedure where required. In general terms the Panel’s role is to ensure that there is an efficient consistent approach to safeguarding across the scope of the umbrella organisations that are the known as or connected to the brand name of **AFC Wimbledon**.

## **1.6 – Multi Agency Working**

This section sets out the Foundation's procedures and expectations for working collaboratively with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the police when safeguarding concerns arise. It aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and representatives understand their responsibilities, follow appropriate escalation pathways, and contribute effectively to multi-agency safeguarding responses.

Our organisation recognises that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. We understand that timely communication and coordinated action with MASH and the police are essential in protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm. We will maintain positive working relationships with statutory partners and fully participate in multi-agency processes, including referrals, strategy discussions, investigations, and ongoing risk assessments.

### **Identifying and Reporting Concerns**

All staff and volunteers must remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. When a concern is identified:

- The staff member must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- The DSL will determine whether the threshold for a MASH consultation or referral has been met.
- If a child or adult is at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact the police via 999 and then notify the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

### **Making Referrals to MASH**

The DSL (or delegated safeguarding officer) is responsible for making referrals to MASH. Referrals will always:

- Be timely, factual, and based on clear evidence or credible concerns.
- Include relevant information about the individual, family context, presenting risks, and any actions already taken.
- Be documented securely in accordance with our recording procedures.

Where the threshold for statutory intervention is not met, the DSL may consult with MASH for advice or signpost to appropriate early help services.

### **Information Sharing**

We are committed to lawful, proportionate, and necessary information sharing in line with:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Relevant statutory safeguarding guidance

Information will only be shared with MASH or the police when it is essential to protect an individual from harm, prevent a crime, or support a multi-agency safeguarding response. All sharing decisions will be recorded on the safeguarding file, including what was shared, with whom, and why.



The designated manager for allegations can immediately [submit a LADO referral form](#), or call the LADO service on 07774 332675 for a consultation before submitting a referral form. [LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

## Football Safeguarding contacts

Kate Shelley - Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer – AFC Wimbledon Football Club  
07562 952001 [kate.shelley@afcwimbledon.ltd.uk](mailto:kate.shelley@afcwimbledon.ltd.uk)

London FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, Charmain Duberry Football Safeguarding & Welfare Manager 07938489199 [Safeguarding@LondonFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@LondonFA.com)

London FA Football Safeguarding Case Officer, Terese Molyneaux 07525237348  
[Safeguarding@LondonFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@LondonFA.com)

Tara Lawson EFL Trust Safeguarding & Incident Manager – office hrs 01772 376797  
07964 905652 [tlawson@efl.com](mailto:tlawson@efl.com)

The FAs Safeguarding Team via 0800 169 1863 # 6300 (during office hours Mon-Fri exec bank holidays) or (including out of hours) the FA/NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 08088005000

If you have an urgent concern that needs immediate attention outside of our working hours, please contact the NSPCC's 24 hour helpline on 0808 800 5000. A 24hr NSPCC helpline for calls around historical abuse within football can also be contacted via [08000232642](tel:08000232642) and /or <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/> and/or <https://www.sportingchanceclinic.com/>.

## SECTION 2

### 2.1 - An Introduction to Safeguarding Children

Due to their statutory responsibility for children and young people, all Children's Services Departments have established procedures that provide guidance and information on safeguarding children and responding to child abuse. Under these procedures, a "child" or "young person" is defined as any individual under the age of 18. This document outlines procedures that are specifically designed for AFC Wimbledon Foundation and applies to all staff who come into direct contact with children and young people who may be, or may become, victims of abuse.

The safeguarding of all young people who come into the care of AFC Wimbledon Foundation is the responsibility of all employees of the organisation and the board of trustees. AFC Wimbledon Foundation is committed to ensuring that staff at all levels, have the knowledge and ability to contribute effectively to the safeguarding of children. Our aim is to create a safe, secure environment for children and young people.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation staff working with young people will usually have built up good, trusting relationships. This may also mean that the young people come to see a member of staff as someone they can confide in and to whom they may go for help and protection.

These Procedures are intended to help all involved with the Foundation to understand more about Safeguarding, confront issues and consider how they might respond to a given situation.

In the course of their work with young people, staff must be prepared to hear information about abuse, and to take seriously what they hear.

At all levels AFC Wimbledon Foundation adheres to **Charity Commission** guidance

## **2.2 - Raising Awareness**

This Safeguarding Children policy sets out to be inclusive and the same actions should be taken regardless of the needs and background of the child or young person. The Foundation recognises however that some children and young people are disadvantaged by their experiences and would want to highlight the following.

Child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken. It is also important that child abuse and child protection are openly discussed as this helps create an environment where people are more aware of the issues and sensitive to the needs of children. Open discussions also create environments that deter abusers.

Child abuse both within and outside of the family can occur anywhere. This means that if abuse is detected, it is highly unlikely to be the first time it has happened. It is therefore crucial that all allegations and suspicions are treated seriously, and appropriate actions taken. An environment that explicitly attempts to identify and report abuse helps create a safer culture for children and young people.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult's or a peer's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person within an organisation. Many children and young people will lack the skills or confidence to complain, and it is therefore extremely important that adults in the Foundation advocate for children and young people.

Advocating for children and young people contributes to creating a safer culture for them.

## **2.3 - Poor Practice**

Poor practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action. Please refer to the Foundation's Discipline Policy. Any behaviour that contravenes existing Codes of Conduct, infringes an individual's rights and/or reflects a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care is an indication of poor practice. On occasions a child or young person may not be aware that poor practice or abusive is taking place, as they may deem the behaviour as 'acceptable'.

## **2.4 - Recognising Abuse**

What follows is not a comprehensive guide to assessing child abuse and must be seen in the context of the Foundation's Safeguarding Children training. The presence of one or other of these features will not necessarily mean that a child or young person has been abused and should not be seen in isolation but may indicate that careful investigation (by an appropriately qualified person) is needed.

'Child Abuse' may be described as harm to a child or young person, or the failure by a person with responsibility for a child or young person to provide reasonable care, or a combination of both. Abuse may take the form of physical injury, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. Harm

to a child or young person may be caused by a child or young person's parent or carer, a relative, a stranger of someone known to the child or young person, or even by another child.

## **2.5 - Key Safeguarding Terminology and Definitions:**

**Child** – Defined in the Children's act (1989) as any person under the age of 18.

**Adult at Risk** – An adult (person aged 18 or over) who is receiving one of the following services:

**Early Help** means the providing support as soon as additional needs and support emerge at any point in a child's life.

**Health care**; relevant personal care; Social care work; Assistance in relation to general household matters by reason of age, illness or disability; Relevant assistance in the conduct of their own affairs

or Conveying (due to age, illness or disability in prescribed circumstances)

**Safeguarding** – Preventative and reactional measures taken by the Club and Charity to ensure; the risk of harm or mistreatment to the welfare of Vulnerable Groups is minimised; the mental and physical health or wellbeing of Vulnerable groups is not impaired when engaging in Club or Charity related activities;

an environment exists that allows Vulnerable groups to be cared for safely and allows for the best possible outcomes for them and provides them with the best life chances possible.

**Welfare** – The health, happiness and fortunes of an individual and the humanitarian aspects of their life including personal need and physical and mental health or development.

**Significant Harm** - The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

**Child Protection** - The process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm because of abuse or neglect. It involves measures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect.

**Child abuse** involves acts of commission and omission, which results in harm to the child. The four types of abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

## **2.6 - Definitions of Abuse**

**Physical Abuse** may be defined as the actual or likely injury to a child or young person, the failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill-health to a child or young person they are looking after (fabricated or induced illness).

**Neglect and 'Failure to Thrive'** is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect a child or young person from physical harm or danger,

or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children or young persons in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or young person's to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young persons. It may involve causing children or young person's frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or manipulation of children or young persons. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child or young person, though it may occur alone.

## 2.7 - Signs and indicators

Children and young people are reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused, so it is essential that every adult is aware of the possible signs and indicators that a child and young person's welfare or safety is being threatened. However, there is rarely a clear sign and you may often have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on your instinct that something does not seem quite right. Never allow a child or young person's disability or cultural difference to explain away concerns.

You may have one piece of information that, when added to that of others, forms a clear picture of abuse. This is often compared to fitting pieces of a jigsaw together. Only when you have a few pieces can you start to see the true picture. Remember, it is not your job to decide whether or not a child or young person is being abused - however it is your responsibility to share your concerns.

## 2.8 - Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with an individual to gain their trust for the purposes of abuse or exploitation. Many children or other vulnerable people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse. Grooming happens both online and in person. Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time (this could be years) gaining an individual's trust. They may also try to gain the trust of the whole family so they can be alone with the person.

Grooming activity may include:

- offering advice or understanding
- buying gifts
- giving the child attention

- using their professional position or reputation
- taking them on trips, outings or holidays.
- using secrets and intimidation to control children

Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the individual from friends or family and creating a dependent relationship. They will use any means of power or control to make the individual believe they have no choice but to do what they want.

Groomers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the individual. Sometimes they will blackmail them, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

## **2.9 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to manipulate, coerce, or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This exploitation may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, such as attention, affection, money, drugs, or gifts. The perpetrator(s) may also exploit the child for their own or others' gain, gratification, or advantage.

CSE can occur through physical contact, but also through the use of technology, where children are persuaded to engage in sexual activity or share sexual images online. The child may not understand that they are being abused and may believe they are in a consensual relationship.

### **Key Indicators of CSE**

Staff and volunteers should be alert to a range of signs that may indicate a child is at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation. These include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Association with older individuals or groups
- Regularly missing school, training, or club activities
- Staying out late or not returning home
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour
- Use of inappropriate sexual language or behaviour
- Evidence of drug or alcohol misuse
- Increased secrecy, particularly around mobile phones or online activity
- Injuries or health concerns that are unexplained

## **2.10 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and it is illegal in the UK under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015).

FGM has no health benefits and causes severe physical and psychological harm. It is typically carried out on girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty begins. However, adult women may also be at risk.

## **Types of FGM**

The World Health Organization classifies FGM into four main types:

1. **Clitoridectomy** – Partial or total removal of the clitoris.
2. **Excision** – Removal of the clitoris and labia minora, with or without labia majora.
3. **Infibulation** – Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal.
4. **Other** – All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes (e.g. pricking, piercing, scraping).

## **Legal Responsibilities**

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to arrange or assist in performing FGM abroad on a UK citizen or resident.

All professionals working with children in regulated activity have a legal duty to report known cases of FGM in under-18s directly to the police under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.

## **Risk Indicators of FGM**

Staff and volunteers should be alert to potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM, such as:

- A family belonging to a community in which FGM is widely practised
- A girl talking about a "special ceremony" or holiday abroad
- Plans for a long family trip overseas or extended school absence
- A girl confiding in someone that she is worried about something happening to her
- A sibling, mother or other relative known to have undergone FGM

### **Signs that FGM may have already occurred include:**

- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing
- Spending longer than usual in the bathroom or toilet
- Sudden change in behaviour after a return from abroad
- Reluctance to undergo medical examination
- Menstrual or urinary problems

Any suspicion or disclosure of FGM must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where a girl under 18 is believed to have undergone FGM, there is a legal duty to report this directly to the police via 101, in addition to following the Foundation's safeguarding procedures.

**If there is immediate risk, call 999.**

## **2.11 - Anti Radicalisation and The Prevent Duty**

From 1 July 2015 all schools and childcare providers were required, under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 [Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales September 2023](#) , to have due regard to the prevention of people from being drawn into terrorism. This legislation is primarily aimed at the education system and revised for England and Wales in April 2019 (ref. above). However, all agencies having contact with young people must adhere to the prospect of preventing radicalisation. AFC Wimbledon Foundation must adopt the strategy laid down by law to ensure the safeguarding of all. 'The general risks affecting children and young people may vary from area to area, and according to their age. Schools and childcare providers are in an important position to identify risks within a given local context. It is important that schools and childcare providers understand these risks so that they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.' 'There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology.' 'As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views.' 'The Prevent duty does not require teachers, childcare providers or charities to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk, they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern.'

In these cases, the general safeguarding principles apply to the 'Keeping Safe' from radicalisation as per the general safeguarding relevant statutory guidance and AFC Wimbledon Foundation policy. Any concerns of a young person being at risk demonstrated by behaviour at or outside sessions and Foundation activity, views posted online or concerns from family or friends should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officers.

## **SECTION 3**

### **3.1 - AFC Wimbledon Foundation and Inclusion**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation believes that all children and young people are entitled to be given the opportunity to play a full part in society. The objectives of this Inclusion Statement is to put into place structures to empower all children and young regardless of race, disability; gender, cultural background or sexual orientation. For further detail please refer to the Foundation's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Foundation is committed to meet the individual needs of all young people who take part in any Foundation activity by:-

- Creating an environment where all needs are identified and subsequently met;
- Creating an environment where all children are treated with respect, feel valued, motivated and confident about themselves and their work;
- Establishing an ethos whereby all children and their families feel valued;
- Encouraging parents to be involved integrally with the process and development of their child in any Foundation activities;
- Recognising that all children and young people have a right to express his/her views whatever their abilities in communication;

- Ensuring that all staff have the ability to work supportively and positively so that, within their skill area, they are empowered to fulfil The Foundation’s policy;
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers working with children with disabilities, including full-time and part-time staff are confirmed by DBS/ISA as suitable adults to work with children and young people;
- Ensuring that all staff are trained in, and adhere to, the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures; to provide staff with the skills and professional knowledge of how to work effectively with young people with disabilities and to continue to identify the changing need of resources.

### **3.2 - Anti-Bullying Policy**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation is committed to providing a safe and friendly environment for all staff, volunteers and associates so that they can participate in Foundation’s functions in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable to the Foundation. If bullying does occur, all staff, volunteers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The Foundation expects that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell their line manager.

### **3.3 - Anti-Bullying Policy - Objectives**

- All Foundation staff, volunteers and parents/carers should understand what bullying is.
- All Foundation staff and volunteers should know what the Foundation policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All children, young people and their parents/carers should know what the Foundation policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- The Foundation takes bullying seriously.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

The importance to respond to Bullying. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The impact upon a child or young person can be devastating and, in some cases, affect all aspects of their life, in extreme circumstances it can lead to suicide threats or even attempts.

### **Bullying Signs and Symptoms**

“Bullying is the deliberate attempt by an individual or group to hurt, torment, tease, frighten or upset someone causing him/her to feel intimidated, uncomfortable or unhappy. Bullying includes racist and homophobic behaviour.” Bullying can be the physical, mental or emotional abuse of a person. It can take many forms, some more obvious than others.

The following are examples of bullying that coaches should watch out for:-

- Says he or she is being bullied

- Is unwilling to go to Foundation sessions
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- Has possessions go 'missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

**Peer to Peer** – coaches and Foundation staff should be aware that peer to peer bullying is a common situation and potentially likely to occur at Foundation sessions and before and afterwards.

Coaches can minimise the risks of peer to peer bullying by following the Coach and Player Code of Conduct and ensuring that they implement a positive form of behaviour management in their sessions.

They should provide a strong and consistent coaching style and not 'turn a blind eye' to any situation but actively address poor behaviour that may spiral into a bullying situation.

They should look out for signs and symptoms as outlined above and follow the procedure described below.

### **Online bullying**

The Foundation recognises that bullying can take place online and that this can have a very negative impact on a young person or vulnerable adult. It will take this issue seriously and follow the procedures outlined below and in its Social Media and Use of Technology policies in this document.

The Foundation will promote with young people and parents it works with positive ways with which to work with technology and use the 'The Click Clever, Click Safe Code' that is used by many local schools and the UK Council for Internet Safety's Child Safety Online.

### **3.4 - Anti-Bullying Procedure**

1. Report the bullying incident(s) to their line manager or/ Designated Safeguarding Officer. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
2. In any case of serious bullying, the incidents should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice.
3. The Parents of the victim and accused should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the incident(s).
4. If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted.
5. Attempt(s) will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the Foundation will initiate disciplinary action.

#### Anti-Bullying Recommended Action

If the Designated Safeguarding Officer decides it is appropriate for the Foundation to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails or is not appropriate, a panel consisting of Lead and Designated Officers, the Coach / staff member should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in the panel's view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. The Foundation should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. Relevant individuals such as coaches involved with both individuals, should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e., the warning.

### **3.5 - AFC Wimbledon Foundation Recruitment Policy**

#### Overview

AFC Wimbledon Foundation recognises that employees are their greatest asset. The Foundation employees have a crucial role to play in achieving the challenging mission, vision and strategic goals set out. The success of our strategic plan depends on having the right

number of staff, with the right skills and abilities. The purpose of this policy is to provide a sound framework, based around core principles that are outlined below, within which to facilitate this requirement.

- We will attract the best candidates for the job based on merit and ensure the identification of the person is best suited for the job and the charity.
- We will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation. We will provide appropriate training, development, and support to those involved in Recruitment and Selection activities to meet this core principle.
- Any member of staff involved in the selection of staff should satisfy him or herself that he/she is appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.
- We will treat all candidates fairly, equitably, and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.
- We will promote best practice in Recruitment and Selection. The Scheme will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow new ideas and approaches to be incorporated.
- We will ensure that the Foundation's recruitment and selection process is cost effective.

It is essential that any employee of AFC Wimbledon Foundation who is involved in any aspect of the recruitment and/or selection of staff in the foundation is aware of this document and adheres to it.

The CEO and Senior Leadership Team of AFC Wimbledon Foundation are responsible for ensuring that this policy is effective and implemented consistently. They also are responsible for ensuring that proper monitoring and review of the impact of this policy is conducted at appropriate times.

No individual will be recruited on a temporary or permanent basis to a 'Position of Trust' without satisfactory Clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for safeguarding purposes.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation is the registered body for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and uses the Disclosure Service to assess the suitability of any applicant to work with children and young people.

Patrick McLaughlin, is responsible for coordinating the Foundation's DBS applications processes by collating, for example, forms of coach ID required and processing the initial application online, once the staff member has registered an application.

No applicant conditionally offered a position of trust with AFC Wimbledon Foundation should start work with the organisation before a satisfactory clearance has been received. This will be a Football Association DBS clearance or an alternative DBS provider for non – football staff eg NCS staff. Whilst awaiting clearance of a DBS, a risk assessment will be undertaken and placed on file. The individual will be asked to complete a self-declaration form as part of the interview process stating if they have any previous criminal convictions.

An individual applying for a post which involves contact with children / young people must provide two references, one of which normally should be from their current employer. References will be taken up in advance of employment by the Hiring Manager with any concerns reported directly to the CEO.

All staff in a position of trust will be required to undergo regular DBS Clearances, normally every 3 years, as a condition of their employment.

The Foundation will ensure appropriate staff are fully aware and receive training as appropriate on Safer Recruitment. All advertisements will include statements that all successful candidates will need to undergo full DBS checks in advance of appointment and comply with our Safeguarding Policies.

### **Non-Disclosure**

If the staff member or volunteer has not disclosed any previous offences as part of the self declaration process and this subsequently comes to light the offer of employment or volunteering may be withdrawn or employment terminated upon the discretion of the CEO.

### **Volunteers – Foundation Delivery sessions**

All volunteers who will be potentially used at a regular session will undergo the same processes for safer recruitment as those for paid staff. They will complete an application form, including a self-declaration statement of any previous criminal convictions, be interviewed, provide two references, and provide a current valid full enhanced DBS police check, or need to complete and provide clearance from a FA DBS.

Volunteers will receive a short contract on completion of their induction that will include a safeguarding briefing and a copy of this policy.

### **Duty of care**

The Foundation recognises its responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns with individual staff members with the DBS and LADO as part of its reporting mechanism. Furthermore, that the local London FA Lead Safeguarding Officer and the EFL Trust Safeguarding Lead should be informed of the processes being put in place by the Foundation.

### **Recruitment of Ex Offenders**

Should an individual's DBS reveal any convictions and or when they inform the Foundation by completing the self- declaration form, AFC Wimbledon Foundation must consider whether the nature of the offence / offences renders the person concerned unsuitable for working with children and young people. In such circumstances, when the nature of any Disclosure must be considered, a formal interview will be necessary. The panel will conduct a risk assessment as to the suitability of the person for work with children / young people at AFC Wimbledon Foundation.

All new staff joining the workforce will complete an induction to the Foundation and this will include suitable safeguarding training relevant to their role. The staff member will complete the same application process outlined above including having to provide two references before the commencement of employment.

If the staff member has not disclosed their previous offences and this subsequently comes to light the offer of employment may be withdrawn or employment terminated upon the discretion of the CEO.

### **3.6 - Portability' of Enhanced Disclosures Policy**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation does not accept 'Enhanced DBS Disclosures' from other organisations or umbrella organisations other than if an applicant is on the DBS update service because of the risks of the process which is known as 'portability'

The risks are that the Enhanced Disclosure: -

- Could have been tampered with by scanning, editing, and reprinting.
- Does not belong to the person concerned or has been gained by using false I.D.
- Has not been carefully checked e.g., the postcode or name spelling may be incorrect which means it may not hold the correct information about the person.
- Was not completed for the same type of position and has, therefore, not does not provide 'full intelligence' information from the police. Intelligence is provided by the police according to the post applied for and may include allegations against the person that the police consider relevant even if there has not been a conviction. May have had 'Additional Information' provided with it. This information that the applicant does not know has been released and is effectively only known to the organisation that sought the disclosure. This is hidden information which, legally, cannot be shared with anyone.

### **3.7 - Risk Management**

Instinctively individuals assess the potential for risks when planning activities. This follows The Foundation's Health & Safety Policy. However, to ensure the welfare of children and young people within The Foundation's care, it is important always to ask the following basic questions.

- What is the activity?
- What are the ages involved?
- Where is the activity going to take place?
- Are there any special educational needs and what are the abilities within the group?
- Are these mixed groups?
- What experiences and qualifications do the organisers have?

It is important to consider the familiarity of the venue and the level of responsibility individuals will have for an activity. The principle for assessing potential risks remain the same whatever the activity, therefore you need to consider these and decide what ratios each activity will require of adult(s) to children to be appropriate to ensure the safety of all.

### **3.8 - A 'Position of Trust'**

Staff and volunteers who are coaching, supervising, instructing, or teaching young people aged 16–17 within the setting are in a legally defined position of trust. Under Section 21 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as extended in June 2022, this means that, regardless of a young person being above the age of consent, it is unlawful and strictly prohibited for staff or

volunteers to engage in any form of sexual relationship or sexualised communication with them.

This requirement is explicitly outlined within the Code of Conduct and forms part of our wider safer working practices. Any breach of the position of trust will be managed under workforce management policies and procedures, including the Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns policies. Where appropriate, statutory agencies will be notified, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Police, alongside referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and The FA Case Management Team.

### **3.9 - A 'Duty of Care'**

Because of your role and responsibilities at AFC Wimbledon Foundation, you have a 'Duty of Care' towards all the children and young people you come into contact with in the course of your employment.

- Sport and community activity provides easy access for someone who wants to harm children. 'Positions of Trust', working with children and young people, will only be offered subject to a DBS Clearance and two satisfactory references one of which must be from the most recent previous employer
- The proximity of staff in a potentially competitive atmosphere places child and adult in vulnerable situations.
- Relationships between staff and young people must, always, be totally professional.
- Sport is uniquely placed to contribute towards safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.

### **3.10 - Gifts and Favouritism**

Staff should take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

The Foundation recognises that there are occasions when Children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at Christmas or as a "thank you", and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value as this may be misinterpreted by others. Staff should report any gifts received to their line manager.

Similarly, it is not permitted for staff to give personal gifts to Children. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or to single out the Child. It might also be perceived that a "favour" of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a Child must first be agreed with the staff member's line manager as part of a structured reward system in line with the departmental policy and not based on favouritism.

### **3.11 - The Employment of Young People**

There are specific legal obligations that will need to be achieved prior to a young person (under the age of 18) commencing either paid or voluntary work with the Foundation. For current and precise information please contact the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The use of Young People for promotional activities may be considered as employment even if they are unpaid.

To 'employ' young people in the United Kingdom, the regulations require: -

- a) A licence from the local Education Authority must be obtained if the activity is of five days or more.
- b) Written confirmation from the Head Teacher at the young person's school, where 'Leave of Absence' is required during term time and/or it may affect their educational attainment.
- c) Applications for the licence (obtainable from the Education Welfare Service) should be received by the Authority at least 21 days before any performance.
- d) Completed application forms should be returned with:
  - A copy birth certificate or other satisfactory evidence of a young person's age
  - Two identical, signed, recent photographs
  - A draft contract or agreement relating to the performance
  - A signed medical certificate from the young person's doctor.

### **3.12 – Working with external partners or organisations**

External agencies who are providing a service to the Foundation that involves working with young people under 18 or vulnerable adults will have to fully comply with the Foundation's safeguarding policy.

They will be provided with a copy of the policy and will be inducted into the central procedures undertaken by the Foundation by a member of the SMT to ensure safeguarding is at the centre of their work. The provider will have to sign a declaration form stating that they understand the policy and that their organisation will always follow its procedures and processes.

If an agency is unable or unwilling to sign the declaration the partnership or work offered will be able to be withdrawn on the discretion of the Foundation CEO.

An external provider not working with children or vulnerable adults must be made aware of the possibility that they may come into contact inadvertently with these groups and they staff should be aware of how to act and behave around these responsibly.

When the Foundation provides a service to outside partners, eg schools, senior staff should be aware of the safeguarding processes in place and also ensure delivery staff are informed.

## **SECTION 4**

### **4.1 - Safeguarding General Staff Code of Conduct - Introduction**

- All Staff must have a working knowledge of the Foundation's Safeguarding policy and follow this Code of Conduct.
- This Code of Conduct applies to all activities that operate under the auspices of the Club at any site.
- There are roles and activities which carry their own specific Code of Conduct and should be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding General Code of Conduct. All staff must ensure that they receive, read, and comply with the Code of Conduct for the activity they are engaged in prior to commencing that role or activity.

The aim of the code of conduct is to provide guidance on best practice which should:

- safeguard children or adults at risk attending or participating in an event.
- safeguard staff involved in that event.

#### **4.2 - Code of Conduct**

1. Do not allow yourself to be in a situation alone with a child or adult at risk; ensure that you can be always observed by another adult.
2. Do not divulge personal details, contact telephone numbers or details about your personal life to any child or adult at risk known to you through your role at the Club.
3. Do not go into a toilet with a child who is or appears to be under the age of 18. If asked by a mother to escort her son to the toilet you must refuse but assist that mother to use a disabled toilet so that she may supervise the child or adult at risk directly herself. This applies equally if a father with a daughter asks. It is reasonable for you to assume the adult is the parent or designated person without checking. However, if there is anything about the child's or adult at risk's behaviour that suggests they do not know the adult or that they are distressed in any way, ask them if everything is all right.
4. Report a negative or worrying response to your Supervisor straight away or depending on the context of the situation report the matter directly to the Safeguarding Services Manager or another Senior Officer at the site the incident is on.
5. If you see conduct, hear comments or are in any way alerted to concerns about an individual in contact with a child or adult at risk, then you should raise this with the Designated Safeguarding Officer for further guidance in the first instance. If you consider that a child is in immediate and direct danger then seek protection and advice from the police immediately, then contact the Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Officer straight away.  
  
However, if you consider that an adult at risk is in immediate and direct danger then seek their consent to call the police immediately, then contact the Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer straight away.
6. Do not detain an individual by physical means. You may ask them to wait with you whilst a colleague meets up with you.
7. Where a safeguarding incident occurs or is suspected ensure that at least one member of staff attending is the same gender as the child.
8. In the event that you discover a child under the influence of alcohol or other substance report this to your Supervisor.

9. Do not give sweets or gifts, however small or insignificant to you, to any child you have contact with whilst acting for the Club. Your actions could be misunderstood, and you are not helping the child to develop a healthy awareness of individuals not known to them.
10. If a child becomes tactile with you (e.g., holds your hand, tries to sit on your lap or cuddle you,) in the gentlest manner possible ask them not to. It is acceptable to say something along the lines of 'we don't know one another well enough to be that friendly' or 'it is important for you to stay with your daddy/mummy/carer' or 'I'd rather you sit next to me than on my lap then we can both see what the others are doing'. When greeting a child or adult at risk for the first time it is acceptable to shake their hand.
11. If a child is distressed, crying, or frightened it is important not to try to cuddle or draw them to your body. You may be trying to comfort as you would your own family, but they are not, and you do not know what your action will mean to them. Approach and ask them quietly but audibly, if they can tell you what is wrong, as you want to help. Should they lean into you or attempt to cuddle you then squat down to their level, ask if you can put one arm around the top of their shoulders (not across their back) as they seem very sad. Do not place the other arm across the front in a full embrace. Care must be taken not to impose the supporting adult's need to comfort and make them feel better. In all circumstances, situations of this nature must be reported to a Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Officer in order that a record can be kept.
12. You must not accept social invitations to any event from a child or their family where you have met them through your role with the Foundation. In some rare situations this might be appropriate, but in all circumstances, this must have been agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer prior to the contact taking place.
13. You must not take photographs and/or use images for personal use of any child or their family where you have met them through your role with the Foundation. If asked by the family to take a photograph of them with their camera then this is permitted.
14. You should not encourage children to tell you their secrets, nor must you tell them any – even nice ones about parties or presents.
15. You should not attempt to engage children in conversation about their feelings e.g., whether they have a boy/girlfriend (irrespective of their age or for fun) and do not whisper things that any adult within proximity could not hear.
16. You should not promise to get access to or an autograph from a player, manager, or other prominent figure. If the opportunity presents itself for a child to be given appropriate access to such an individual, then it should be encouraged but no personal credit should be taken for it happening.
17. You must not accept gifts from children, or their designated carer (this includes money). If they want to show their appreciation of the time you have given them then ask them to send you a picture they have drawn or a painting of the Club's mascot. Should you receive any such token then make the Designated Safeguarding Officer aware so this can be noted and should reference in the future be made to it, it will be deemed to be common knowledge.
18. Be aware of the language, tone, and manner of delivery of instructions being given. At no time should you use language that could be considered offensive, obscene, or profane around children. Remember that some 'common usage' words are inappropriate around vulnerable groups. Also, bear in mind religious and cultural sensitivities. If you do use such language, then you should apologise immediately for it and explain that adults should not speak like that. If an adult confronts you, having heard you using poor language, you should accept that you did, adopting the same approach by way of apology.

19. Should you become annoyed, angry or in any way disgruntled you must ensure that this is not evident to a child in your vicinity, whether they have contributed to your state or not. You must distance yourself from the cause of your ill feeling and regain composure as quickly as possible. If taking this action would mean leaving a colleague alone with a child or adult at risk, you should instead move to the periphery of the group / individuals to compose yourself.

20. If you see a colleague beginning to become unsettled, and you are not the cause of this, you should suggest they take time out. You must ensure this does not mean you are left alone with any child. Commenting that they seem disgruntled can restore the equilibrium. If you are in some way the cause for their feelings, then seek the intervention of a supervisor or third party to assist you both.

21. You must never physically or verbally chastise a child. You must engage the parent/guardian or designated carer who is responsible for them and request they take suitable action for the behaviour that has occurred. In doing so, you should not suggest or permit physical chastisement and, wherever possible, you should promote them discussing the problem that has arisen and its appropriate resolution in private away from the main group. Should the designated adult become verbally or physically aggressive with you, then immediate assistance should be sought. In all circumstances you must do everything possible to prevent the child or adult at risk being hurt.

22. If the activity you are engaged in involves changing clothing, then the supervision of changing must be with the assistance of their parent, guardian, or designated carer and never with your direct involvement. A private area must be available for them to change in privacy; children should not be made to change “en masse” in an area not designated for changing. You must not be present in the private area used for changing. No other adult, including individual parents or carers, should be in this general area whilst changing occurs unless a specific individual requires that level of attention. The removal of tracksuits pitch side is exempt from this protocol.

24. You must not arrive for work under the influence of alcohol or any other substance and do not consume alcohol or use any other illegal substance during your shift.

25. Ensure that you know how to contact your Supervisor in an emergency including reporting a missing/lost child.

26. You must wear your Foundation uniform where one has been provided and any identification that you have been always issued with.

27. The Foundation has several Codes of Conduct which are applicable to core activities. All staff must always read and comply with the Safeguarding General Code of Conduct. In addition, there are roles and activities which carry their own specific Code of Conduct and should be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding General Code of Conduct. You must ensure that you receive, read and comply with the Code of Conduct for the activity you are engaged in prior to commencing that role or activity: -

## **SECTION 5**

### **5.1 - Disclosure**

The term disclosure in this context is used to describe the sharing of child protection concern(s) by one individual to another and not DBS the formal record of an individual's relevant convictions. There is a legal and moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. AFC Wimbledon Foundation will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded. The following guidelines are relevant whether or not the child or young person is involved in football.

### **5.2 - Management of Allegations made by a Child**

If a child or young person informs you directly that they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, this is known as a disclosure. The person receiving the disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person
- Tell the child or young person that he or she is not to blame and that he or she was right to tell
- Take what the child or young person says seriously
- If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue
- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person
- Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- In the event of suspicion of sexual abuse do not let the child bathe or shower until given permission to do so. Washing can destroy valuable evidence.
- Inform the parents/carers immediately unless you have specific reason not to, e.g., the child has named the parent/ carer as the abuser. If this is the case, then contact the designated person. If they are unavailable contact local Children's Services or the Police for guidance.

**5.3 - Management of Allegations against a Child by a Child** Any allegation concerning the abuse of a child by another child must be dealt with by normal protection procedures. Any such allegation should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. A decision, based on the advice of the Local Authority Designated Person (LADO), will be made as to whether the alleged abuser should continue with the Foundation activities because of the risk they may pose to others.

#### **5.4 - Management of Allegations against a Member of Staff**

In compliance with [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - Updated June 2025](#), in respect of cases in which it alleged that a member of staff who works with children / young people has:

“behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

behaved towards a child / young person in a way that indicates she/he is unsuitable to work with children”,

All incidents and allegations should be reported immediately to a Foundation Designated Safeguarding Officer, Andrew May, Cheryl Gill or Lana Miller or soon as is practically possible.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation will ensure that the matter is immediately reported to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) Children’s Services within 24 hrs or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Suspension should be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or the allegations warrant investigation by the police. AFC Wimbledon Foundation will comply with the advice of the LADO in such circumstances. In all cases it must be understood that suspension is a neutral act and does not prejudge guilt. The fact that a person tenders their resignation or ceases to provide their services must not prevent the continuation of the prescribed procedure.

Every effort must be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated to protect the child / young person and to protect the person against whom the allegation has been made.

**If the staff member is suspended, they will receive an update on an initial investigation led by the Foundation’s Designated Safeguarding Officer within five working days.**

Unless:

**The LADO Children’s Services indicate that their investigation takes precedence and requests that the Foundation postpone any internal disciplinary investigation until this is completed.**

#### **Football Authorities**

The football authorities, London FA, FA, EFL Trust ‘s safeguarding teams will also be informed with 48 hrs of any serious safeguarding incident resulting from an allegation made by a child, witness or staff member and a referral made to a LADO. In most cases this referral will be undertaken by the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

#### **Informing DBS**

AFC Wimbledon Foundation will register with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as an organisation which requires updates on individuals employed to work with children / young people. In the event of an employee becoming ‘barred’, AFC Wimbledon Foundation will invoke its disciplinary procedures and reach a decision based on the information obtained. It may be the case that AFC Wimbledon Foundation decides to terminate the individual’s employment with the Foundation on the basis that the individual is unable to fulfil the requirements of the position they hold.

It would be permissible for Foundation to offer the employee another position at AFC Wimbledon Foundation for which DBS Registration is not applicable. A DBS bar overrules any internal preference AFC Wimbledon Foundation may have. If a person is barred, they must be removed from a regulated activity.

Inappropriate behaviour will not necessarily lead to suspension, but the LADO may impose conditions for continued employment. Compliance with these conditions will be monitored by the LADO. An internal disciplinary procedure may take place at the discretion of AFC Wimbledon Foundation.

All incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse or behaviour which might be considered 'unsuitable' involving a member of staff must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence a Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will, in turn, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

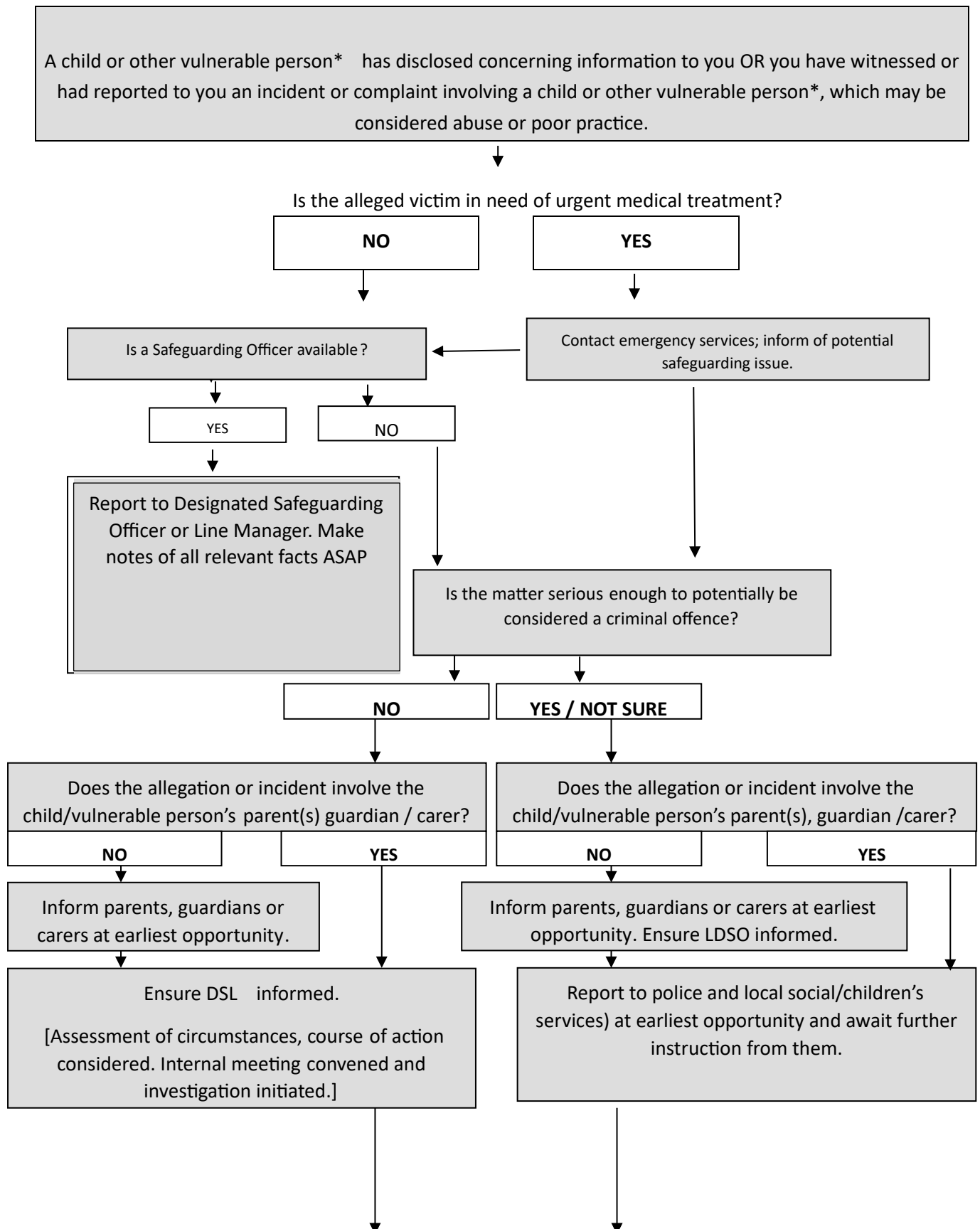
The Local Authority Designated Officer will then advise the Designated Safeguarding Officer of the course of action to be taken. This may involve the suspension of the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made. At all times complete confidentiality and sensitivity must be maintained

### **DBS Referrals**

The Foundation recognises that it has a statutory duty to refer individual staff to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if it dismisses, suspends, or decides to no longer use them due to concerns as to their suitability to work with children.

The Foundation CEO as Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the DBS service within five working days of an allegation or incident that results in the suspension of a staff member, or if he dismisses the staff member or feels they are not suitable to work with children.

**5.5 - Responding to a concern, incident or allegation.** The flowchart presented below details the immediate response to an incident or concern involving a child or other vulnerable person



Whatever the circumstances the person receiving and then reporting the complaint or incident must record *a written statement preferably using MyConcern Portal. This will be submitted to the designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity.*

Foundation DSL will report the incident to the borough LADO within 24 hrs and contact the appropriate football safeguarding authorities within 48 hrs

## **5.6 - Whistleblowing Policy**

All organisations face the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring malpractice. AFC Wimbledon Foundation believes it has a duty to identify such situations and take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation. By encouraging a culture of openness within our organisation AFC Wimbledon Foundation believes it can help prevent malpractice - prevention is better than cure. That is one of the aims of this policy.

By encouraging a culture of openness AFC Wimbledon Foundation wants to encourage its employees and volunteers to raise issues which concern them at work. Employees and volunteers have a right and duty to raise matters of concern they may have about the services being offered by the Foundation or serious malpractice associated with them. Employees and volunteers may be worried that by reporting such issues they will be opening themselves up to victimisation or risking their job security. However, all staff and volunteers are protected by law if they raise concerns in the right way. Provided they are acting in good faith, it does not matter if they are mistaken.

By knowing about malpractice at an early-stage AFC Wimbledon Foundation stands a good chance of taking the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of all staff and protect the organisation. In short, please, do not hesitate to “blow the whistle” on malpractice.

The policy is designed to ensure employees and volunteers raise concerns properly and to ensure that mechanisms exist in the Foundation whereby issues raised by employees and volunteers will be addressed quickly and effectively. The policy also sets out the legitimate course of action, which may be taken by the worker to raise issues with parties outside AFC Wimbledon Foundation if an issue is not addressed by the organisation, or it is felt that by raising it internally may lead to evidence of malpractice being concealed.

The purpose of the policy is to outline how employees may deal with concerns about other employees and/or service provision which may have an impact or threaten the wider public interest.

### **Procedure**

AFC WIMBLEDON FOUNDATION has an open-door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with their supervisor. If you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor’s response, you are encouraged to speak with the CEO. If the concern is about the CEO then you should write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Supervisors and managers are required

to report complaints or concerns about suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to the CEO who has the responsibility to investigate all reported complaints. Employees with concerns or complaints may also submit their concerns in writing directly to their supervisor or the CEO.

CEO contact: [phil.hastings@afcwf.org.uk](mailto:phil.hastings@afcwf.org.uk) – 07506 623815

Chair of Trustees contact: [Jennifer.scott@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.scott@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk)

## **1. Compliance Officer**

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated and resolved. The CEO will advise the Board of Trustees of all complaints and their resolution and will report at least annually to them on compliance activity relating to accounting or alleged financial improprieties.

## **2. Accounting and Auditing Matters**

The CEO shall immediately notify the Trustees of any concerns or complaint regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

## **3. Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence.

## **4. Confidentiality**

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

## **5. Handling of Reported Violations**

The CEO will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within 24 hours. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. A formal written response will be provided to the complainant within five working days, although a final investigation and response may take longer.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

The senior management team, with adequate consultation of the Board of Trustees, will regularly review the operation of this policy.

## **7. Safeguarding**

If the complaint or whistle blowing is related to safeguarding concerns the staff member should follow the same internal process as outlined above by reporting immediately to their direct line manager and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead on the contact details on **page 7/8** of this policy.

If the concern is regarding the DSL, they should report the concern to the Safeguarding Trustee **Karen Peck**, on the contact details above on **page 7**.

Externally the staff member would be encouraged to contact Local Authority Safeguarding staff and or Football Association / EFL Trust safeguarding lead staff highlighted on **page 7/8** of this policy.

## **5.7 - Complaints Policy**

To ensure that complaints that contain safeguarding issues are centrally recorded and actioned appropriately, the following procedure has been agreed:

Safeguarding concerns raised with the Foundation.

Any safeguarding disclosure received which states a complaint is running alongside a safeguarding investigation – The Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify the Safeguarding Trustee and the Board of Trustees of the complaint. If appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will send copies of minutes of the relevant meetings, planning, agree next steps and conclusion.

Safeguarding Disclosures which identify they have been closed as a referral and should be treated as a complaint not a safeguarding issue - The Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify the Safeguarding Trustee and the Board of Trustees the information received and decide who will manage the complaint.

Any complaints received which potentially have safeguarding issues.

The Foundation Safeguarding Trustee will discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to check if there is a need to alert Police or social services regarding safeguarding issues. Any complaints received, direct to or from the Foundation relating to coaching practice may also need to be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Procedure**

The AFC Wimbledon Foundation endeavours to provide its customers/clients with the highest possible levels of service. If anybody feels that we have not lived up to the high expectations that they can and should expect, they should make us aware of the situation by:

#### **To make a complaint:**

All complaints should be made in writing to:

[enquiries@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk)

or via post to:

AFC Wimbledon Foundation,  
Cherry Red Records Stadium,  
Plough Lane,  
Wimbledon  
SW17 0NR

Please note that both a postal address, email address and a telephone number must be provided for us to reply/respond.

### **Should people complain?**

We would love to be able to please everybody all the time, but we know that this is not always possible so please encourage people to let us know when they feel we have got things wrong. Although we hope to never receive any complaints, every complaint we do receive can be invaluable in helping us to improve our products, services, and strategies for the future.

### **What happens next?**

Once we receive a complaint, we will acknowledge receipt and include in this acknowledgement the date we received your complaint with 24 hours, and the date we shall endeavour to reply to it formally, usually within 5 working days, although this may take longer depending on the circumstances.

A complaint will then be passed to the appropriate person(s) to investigate and respond – see process below.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If any member of the public or staff member feels that he or she has received a poor level of service or that Foundation Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken, they should follow the procedures below.

1. They should report the matter to the Foundation Administrator or another member of Foundation staff.

The report should include:

- i. Details of what, when, and where the occurrence took place.
  - ii. Any witness statement and names.
  - iii. Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way.
  - iv. Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made.
  - v. A preference for a solution to the incident.
2. The Foundation Senior Management staff will investigate the issue and interview staff and witnesses or review evidence as appropriate and feedback the results on the investigation within five working days or indicate the date the investigation will be completed
3. If the complaint is with regard to a member of the senior management team the complainant has the right to report the matter direct to the AFC Wimbledon Foundation Board of Trustees.

### **Appeals Procedure**

1. If a complainant believes their complaint has not been resolved effectively, not taken seriously or dismissed they are entitled to appeal against the action taken to the Board

of Trustees and should contact the Chairperson of Trustees by writing to the address above or email **Jennifer Scott** [Jennifer.Scott@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Scott@afcwimbledonfoundation.org.uk)

2. Their appeal will be acknowledged within 24 hours and an investigation completed within 5 working days, although this may take longer in certain circumstances.

## **SECTION 6**

### **6.1 - Guidelines**

These Guidelines - are presented to meet the needs of individual roles. They do not stand alone and are considered part of the Foundation's "Safeguarding Policy".

### **6.2 - Physical Contact**

Physical contact is only permissible for the purposes of CARE; INSTRUCTION; RESTRAINT.

Physical Restraint occurs whenever a member of staff or volunteer, using intentional force, physically restricts a child's movement against their will. 'Physical restraint does not include the use of gentle physical prompting or guidance where the child is happy to comply and the aim is to assist him or her to participate appropriately in activities'.

- It is a procedure for dealing with an unsafe or crisis situation.
- It must not be used as a form of punishment.

Deliberate use of physical contact to punish a child or young person, cause pain or injury or humiliation is unlawful, regardless of the severity of the child or young person's behaviour or the degree of provocation.

### **6.3 - Behaviour Management**

Before restraint is used, it is advisable to calmly warn the child of your intention. If restraint is necessary seek to calm the child, reminding them that when they begin to exercise self-control, the need for restraint would end.

- Physically interposing between children
- Blocking a child's path
- Holding
- Pushing or pulling
- Leading a child by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of his/her back.

In all cases of physical contact with children, it might ultimately be for the Courts to decide whether a person acted reasonably, and the consequences of an error judgement could be serious.

#### **6.4 - One to One Situations**

One to one situations may be necessary in a learning environment especially if they are to avoid damaging the self-esteem of a young person, although this makes them more vulnerable to allegations.

Wherever possible it is advisable to draw the person to one side so that, although private, the discussion may take place in full view of others. This is for your protection. If it is considered that such a discussion will benefit from being away from others, a meeting should be organised with the knowledge of a senior member of staff and carer/parent.

If possible, another member of staff should also be present, or doors left open. Whenever possible parents should be present at such meetings. There should be nothing that is said to a young person that parents cannot hear. Feedback to young people should always be constructive and age appropriate.

#### **6.5 - Foundation Coaches**

Coaches must: -

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each child
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with each child. Over familiarity between coach and player may be misunderstood, therefore clear boundaries must be established from the beginning.
- Exert no undue influence.
- Encourage and guide children to accept responsibilities.
- Ensure that all activities are appropriate.
- Clarify with children exactly what is expected of them and what they are entitled to expect from their coach.
- Co-operate fully with other specialists.
- Ensure that all players are aware of the procedures that are in place i.e. when injured reporting to the physiotherapist before training. Failure to observe this may result in the player being withdrawn from playing. Coaches must not encourage children to train or play with injuries or illnesses.
- Consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance. • Personal data of children must be kept in a secure place. All such information is confidential. Access to the information should be limited to the Foundation Administrator or Development Officers.
- E-mails and text messages to volunteers under 18 should only be made of the purpose of the transference of information concerning training or matches.

#### **6.6 - Foundation Medical Department**

In compliance with the Foundation's Recruitment Policy, all physiotherapists employed to work in the Foundation must be confirmed by the DBS as appropriate and safe adults to work with children and young people. This clearance must be received before the physiotherapist

commences work at the Foundation. All Physiotherapy staff working in the Foundation will be trained in and adhere to the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

All members of staff should ensure that when treating or assessing a player with an injury on any part of the body, an adult chaperone is present. This chaperone may be the child's parent/carer or coach. Physiotherapists must advise squad coaches of injuries.

They must advise children, parents/carers and coaches of the treatment required and whether non-participation in training and or playing is necessary. After injury, physiotherapists must advise coaches and parents/carers when a child is fit to participate in training and playing.

## **6.7 – Venue Risk Assessments**

- Risk assessments must be completed before visits to schools or other venues are arranged
- When visiting schools or venues such as sports facilities, coaches must immediately report their arrival to the school secretary or other member of staff with responsibility for signing in visitors
- Coaches should make themselves aware of the behavioural code, health and safety and safeguarding procedures in place within the school or venue.
- Schools must be made aware that at all sessions taken by coaches, a member of the school staff must always be present during a curriculum time session. If no member of staff is available, the coaching session must not take place.
- In an afterschool session coaches can deliver a session independently without a school staff member being present. However, the coach must be able to ask for assistance from a school staff member on site if required
- Coaches must be informed of any pupils in their group who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), additional learning needs, social or emotional needs, or whose first language is not English, where this information is relevant to ensuring their safety, inclusion, and well-being during sessions
- Coaches should ask for information on the school's structure for dealing with behavioural problems.
- Coaches must also be considerate of the Schools' physical contact policy.

### **Visits and Trips**

- All visits and trips to off-site venues should be sanctioned by a Senior staff member of the Foundation in advance who should be provided with a detailed breakdown of the purpose of the visit and type of activities.
- Once agreed a full risk assessment covering the site, student needs and activity plan including lead responsibility for safeguard should be provided to Senior Management to sign off.

- Staffing for the activity must be clarified in advance and an appropriate staff / pupil ratio maintained of ideally 1: 10, with at least two staff members being always present.
- Appropriate staff should be selected for the activity in terms of experience and knowledge of the session activity and age group. A full briefing (and training if required) should be provided for staff members in advance of the visit.
- For any off-site activity parental permission should always be obtained for young people under 18 and contact details provided for the lead staff member on the trip
- Participants and parents should receive clear details of the visit, expectations of the Foundation for attitude, behaviour and sign up to a Code of Conduct where appropriate.
- Full personal and parental contact details of each participant should also be provided to Foundation office staff and a Senior Manager to have lead responsibility for contacting parents if required.

### **6.8 - If a Young Person is not collected**

In the event of a parent/carer failing to collect their child after an afterschool activity, match or training session, the following procedures must be followed: -

- Under no circumstances must a child be allowed off-site or left unsupervised.
- All possible attempts must be made to contact the parent/ carer using the Emergency Contact Numbers.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent/ carer or approved emergency contact, the coach must contact their line manager or department lead or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

THEN: -

- The coach must record the telephone contact made including the name and position of the person contacted.
- Continue to try to contact the parent/ carer and emergency contacts.
- Prepare a full written report for the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- Should it be necessary to transport the child home (with the permission of the parent/ carer), it is preferable for two members of staff to accompany the player and the player must sit in the rear seat of the vehicle.

### **6.9 – Lost Child**

If a child goes missing during a session or activity, follow these steps **immediately**:

#### **1. Raise the Alarm**

- Inform your **line manager** or **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- Contact the child's **parent/carer** using emergency contacts.

#### **2. Immediate Area Search**

- One staff member searches the area.
- Another remains with the group to supervise the other children.

### **3. If the Child Is Not Found**

- Call **999** and report the child as missing to the police.
- Notify the **DSL or DSO** without delay.

### **4. Safeguarding Actions**

The DSL will assess the need to:

- Refer to **MASH** if there are concerns about the child's safety, home situation, or if this is part of a wider safeguarding issue.
- Contact the **LADO** if any staff member may have acted inappropriately or failed in their duty of care.

### **5. Recording and Reporting**

- Log all actions and communications, including who was spoken to and when.
- Submit a written report to the DSL as soon as possible.

## **SECTION 7**

### **7.1 - Communication with Children and Young People Involving Technology**

For this policy 'technology' includes the use of mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails and all forms of electronic Messaging Services and Web Sites.

Communication between Children & Young People and adults, by whatever means, must only take place within the boundaries of professional behaviour.

AFC Wimbledon Foundation staff must not give their personal contact details, including home/mobile 'phone numbers or e-mail or messaging addresses to children and young people with whom they work at AFC Wimbledon Foundation, nor may they respond to any personal information from children and young people.

Staff must ensure that any communication with children and young people is used only for professional reasons, and that parents/ carers are aware and have consented to such contact.

Company e-mail systems should be the primary means of forwarding information if parents have given their consent for the use of this means of communication.

Any information transmitted using text messages should only be through use of a work mobile phone number provided by the Foundation, or from the Foundation offices. In no circumstances should a personal mobile phone be used to contact young people, unless in an emergency. The staff member should inform their line manager / Designated Safeguarding Officer that this has taken place.

The only permissible information to be communicated would be to inform players and their parents/ carers of any urgent changes in arrangements in the case of tours, tournaments, coaching sessions, The Foundation will have a central contact number for parents/ carers.

## 7.2 - Texting and Electronic Communication

Text messaging makes staff vulnerable and should under no circumstances be used for personal communication. Personal telephone numbers e-mail, Social Networking or other Electronic Communications addresses should NEVER be given to the young people you work with at AFC Wimbledon Foundation.

All communications between staff and young people should be through the Foundation Offices. If in the cases a child texts a member of staff, they should notify their Line Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer and the child's parent at the earliest opportunity. Staff should constantly reinforce to parents that their contact numbers or email addresses are not to be shared with children.

## 7.3 - Social Networks

Most children will assume they are safe when using the internet because they are in their own home. They will usually assume that the person they are chatting with is who they say they are. Using the internet is now central to how children and young people stay in touch with their friends and family by using Social Networks like face book, Instagram, snapchat and twitter. However, the internet is also a public place and while bringing many benefits and opportunities, also opens up new risks and challenges.

The Football Association, The EFL and AFC Wimbledon Foundation have teamed up with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, to promote the awareness of social networks to young people. It is advised that parents, adults, children, and young people access awareness training by CEOP.

## 7.4 - Employees and Volunteers Electronic contact with children & young people

It is strongly advised that AFC Wimbledon Foundation staff and volunteers do not use the internet to contact children and young people. However, in circumstances such as contacting mascots, young leaders or employees under the age of 18 years; where you use the internet to communicate with players be aware of what you say and how you say it.

Do not become 'friends' on social networks with children and young people you are in a position of trust with. If you are concerned about the way a player is attempting to contact you via the internet e.g., using a social networking site or a chat area, speak to your Line Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer. Remember that even when outside of work, the law deems that if you are in a position of trust, this must be always maintained.

## 7.5 - Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT is used by AFC Wimbledon Foundation in many and varied ways. We will:

- ensure that child welfare, safeguarding and the safety of all those under the age of 18 years are always the overriding principals of the use of ICT.
- ensure that the use of ICT will always be appropriate and necessary and only for official AFC Wimbledon Foundation business.
- ensure that **consent of parents** is obtained if staff will use SMS, email, or other electronic means of communication with a child.

- raise awareness amongst young participants regarding safer internet/social media use in respect of their position.
- raise awareness, through training and internal communications, with the workforce regarding appropriate use of such media and the importance of both professional and personal online activity;
- have a zero-tolerance approach to 'cyber-bullying'; and
- respond quickly and appropriately to inappropriate use of the internet and social media by participants and members of the workforce.

## **7.6 - Information Sharing**

Information sharing is key to the Government's goal of delivering better, more efficient public services that are coordinated around the needs of the individual. It is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare and for wider public protection. Information sharing is a vital element in improving outcomes for all.

The Government understands that it is important that people remain confident that their personal information is kept safe and secure and that practitioners maintain the privacy rights of the individual, whilst sharing information to deliver better services. It is therefore important that practitioners can share information appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice and do so confidently. It is important to remember there can be significant consequences to not sharing information as there can be to sharing information. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether to share or not, and what information is appropriate to share.

Golden rule - Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

## **7.7 - Best Practice in the Use of Images**

The Foundation takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the FA / EFL. All images are taken by Foundation or in some cases club officials who have been briefed by the member of staff (and where possible a Lead Safeguarding Officer) responsible for the activity being photographed / filmed.

- Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought in writing prior to the event. Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for informing the Foundation of any change of circumstances which may affect consent.
- Parents/Legal Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. The Foundation will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed.
- All Children featured in Foundation 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 broad range of people participating safely in the event.
- Designated Club 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 issued by the Foundation and by the Football League from time to time. Foundation/Club Identification will be worn at all times.
- Children who are subject to family, care or legal proceedings, or who are under a court order will not have their images published in any Foundation document.

- No images of Children featured in Foundation publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address.
- Any instances of inappropriate images in football should be reported to the Safeguarding Manager immediately..
- Images received or taken by the Foundation will be stored securely on official Foundation servers and never permitted to be held on a member of staff's personal storage device. They will only be kept for as long as is necessary for their intended use. They will be deleted as soon as the purpose they were intended for expires i.e., Image received for match day mascot's use in an official match day programme.

### **Links to useful additional documentation**

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(DofE 2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(DofE 2015\)](#)

**AFC WIMBLEDON**  
**SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Please return this form within 48 hours of the incident.

Date of completion:

Date received By FT DSO:

Date Actioned:

**Person Completing This Form:**

Your Name:

Role/Position:

Address (inc town, county & post code):

Phone numbers (inc mobile):

e-mail address:

**Name and Contact Details of Person Making The Allegation (if different from above):**

Name

Role/Position:

Address (inc town, county & post code):

Phone numbers (inc mobile):

e-mail address:

**Name and Contact Details of Victim - Child or Vulnerable Adult:**

(please use another sheet if there is more than one victim)

Name:

Club or Organisation:

Address of Parent/Guardian/Carer:

Position at Organisation (participant /volunteer):

Phone numbers (inc mobile):

e-mail address:

<b>Other useful information:</b>		<b>Ethnicity:</b>	<b>Disability(ies):</b>
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Age: (at time of incident)</b>	<b>Gender:</b>	

<b>Name</b>		<b>Club, Role or Organisation:</b>	
<b>Address</b>		<b>Position in Organisation (e.g. coach):</b>	
<b>Phone numbers (Inc. mobile):</b>		<b>How long have they held this position?</b>	
<b>Age:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>	<b>e-mail address:</b>	
<b>Relationship of accused to the victim/child/vulnerable adult:</b>			
<b>Is the accused a member of staff?</b>			
<b>Is the accused a member of paid or voluntary staff?</b>			
<b>Do they hold a current CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK?</b>			
<b>Are they a qualified coach or referee?</b>			
<b>Does the accused hold an FA Coach Licence (UK only)?</b>			
<b>Does this person work in any other role with children or vulnerable adults (e.g. performance teams, other clubs, teacher, scouts, care worker, other sports clubs)? If yes, please give details:</b>			
<b>The Allegation/Incident:</b>			
<b>Date of Incident:</b>		<b>Time of incident:</b>	

<b>Where incident took place (e.g. club name):</b>	<b>Where incident took place (e.g. Astro turf pitch):</b>
<b>Witness 1: Name and Contacts</b>	<b>Witness 2: Name and Contacts</b>
<b>Witness 3: Name and Contacts</b>	<b>Witness 4: Name and Contacts</b>
<b>How would you briefly describe or categorise the incident? (e.g. bullying, physical abuse, assault, intervention in a fight etc.)</b>	
<b>What happened? Please detail the incident as you saw it or how it was reported to you:</b>	
<b>If incident occurred during a match a referees report is required. Please supply contact details of the referee together with a copy of his/her report. Attached?</b>	<b>Y / N</b>
<b>Referees Name</b>	<b>Referees Contact details:</b>
<b>If Child/Vulnerable Adult spoke to you directly, please record actual details and words used by them. (Remember do not lead or question the child or young person):</b>	

**Action taken by you or others so far:**

Have you or anyone else from the club taken any action (e.g. suspended the accused, etc)?

Have you contacted a Safeguarding Officer?

If so, who and when?

If yes, then please state when and how (below):

FA or Premier League contacted?	Police Contacted?	Social Services?	Other (e.g. NSPCC)?
	Crime Number:		
By whom?	By whom?	By whom?	By whom?
FA / EFL Details:	Police details:	Social Services details:	Contact details:

Please sign here (if paper copy) to confirm your statement as a true and accurate account:

Date completed:

**Please return this form to AFC Wimbledon Foundation FC Designated**

### Appendix B

#### **COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT**

Coaches are key to the establishment of ethics in football. Their concept of ethics and their attitude directly affects the behaviour of players under their supervision. Coaches are, therefore, expected to pay particular care to the moral aspect of their conduct.

Increased responsibility is requested from coaches involved in coaching young people and vulnerable adults. The health, safety, welfare and moral education of young people and vulnerable adults are a first priority, before the achievement or the reputation of the club, school or coach.

- Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person and treat each equally within the context of the sport.
- Coaches must place the well-being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance.
- Coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by governing bodies.
- Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect.
- Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.
- Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the players exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach.
- Coaches must co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, physiotherapists) in the best interests of the player.
- Coaches must always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations.
- Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

- Not to use or tolerate inappropriate language.

\*Based on FACA Code of Conduct

## **IMPORTANT PROCEDURES (Use as check list)**

### **Registration procedure**

- All participants registered in writing at the start of each session.
- Ensure medical information of each individual is on site.
- Ensure you have emergency contacts on site.
- Ensure coaches are aware of medical conditions and can easily access contact information.
- All employees should know the number of participants in their group, and should regularly do head-counts to ensure nobody is missing. Children should be advised not to leave without obtaining permission from the coach.

### **Lunch procedure**

- There should be an enclosed eating area.
- Children should be supervised throughout breaks. • Take a register at the start of the afternoon session.

### **De-registration**

- Children must be checked out by an adult who has permission to do so. Or
- Parent's written permission has been obtained for the child to make their own way home (where age appropriate).
- A child must not be left alone...A member of staff must be on site until the last child has left.

### **Toilet procedure**

- Children should be encouraged to use the toilet during natural breaks in the course. This may mean building a toilet break into your programme.
- Children should not be allowed to leave the practice area alone

### **Weather procedure**

- You should have an alternative wet weather contingency plan.
- Cold drinks should be available in hot weather.
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed for the conditions.

### **Programme**

- Children should be grouped in terms of age (no more than 2 year banding).
- Coaching should be appropriate, realistic and fun.
- Coaches must be mindful of the child's age and ability when playing or demonstrating in their session.
- The programmes will be at least 80% practical, 40% of the programme will be small sided games.

## **Health and safety**

- All coaches must be in receipt of an up to date Emergency Aid Certificate.
- First aid kit must be available at all times.
- Telephone must be available at all times.
- Equipment must be checked at the start of every session.
- Playing area must be checked at the start of every session.
- Goalposts must be checked in accordance with FA Goalpost Safety guidelines at the start of every session.
- All coaches must adhere to the FACA Code of Conduct.
- Coaches must be mindful of the child's age and ability when playing or demonstrating in their session.
- The organisation & coaches follow the FA Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Coaches are responsible for familiarising themselves with the health and safety policies applicable at any premises which they are attending, including adherence to all fire safety procedures.

## **SPECIFIC COACHING SESSION GUIDELINES**

- Equipment should be checked before every session
- Staff should be dressed in correct and clean AFC Wimbledon branded clothing (AFC Wimbledon kit will be provided on loan, but must be returned when requested)
- Strictly NO SCARFS or HATS of any kind to be worn, unless AFC Wimbledon branded
- Staff should arrive at the venue for their session at least 15 minutes before the session is due to begin, allowing time for:
  - a. Signing in to the venue
  - b. Obtaining information regarding who to contact in an emergency
  - c. Conducting a register
  - d. Checking the surface of the pitch/court/sports hall for any dangerous objects
  - e. Re-checking equipment is ready to use
  - f. Setting up your session in good time

- All participants must be registered (in writing) at the start of each session and attendance must be taken before each session.
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed for the conditions
- Ensure that children are adequately hydrated – have at least one water break per hour.
- Children should not be allowed to leave the practice area alone
- Coaches must not play or demonstrate against a child too aggressively. *Remember it is the participant's game and not the coaches.*
- Coaching should be appropriate, realistic and fun...AND THE COACHES NEED TO HAVE MORE ENERGY THAN ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS
- Coaches should ensure they de-brief the players to:
  - a. Reinforce information given during the session using questions to ensure players understanding.
  - b. Give any important information about times and dates of future sessions.
  - c. Ensure an orderly exit from the session.
  - d. Coaches must be on site until the last child has left.
- Coaches should not liaise with schools directly; both parties should go through the AFC Wimbledon Foundation office.

### **GENERAL COACHING GUIDELINES**

- **Communication:** Ensure the terminology you use is clear and precise and on a level that the children can understand. Let players know you are in charge.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Whenever possible give individuals and/or groups positive reinforcement. Refrain from using negative comments. Use praise as an incentive.
- **Be creative and use initiative:** If the drill or game is too easy/difficult, modify to increase the chances of success or to provide a sufficient challenge.
- **Make a difference:** Be motivational and inspirational. Enthusiasm and being energetic are contagious.
- **Keep players active:** If the drill is static, create need of helpers or assistants to keep everyone involved.
- **Each player is an individual:** Be aware of player differences...recognition of player personalities will allow you to respond to all players, and they will respond to you positively.

- **Strive for quality:** In all demonstrations make the desired objectives clear. If a player shows mastery of a skill, use him/her to demonstrate.
- **Reinforce correct technique:** In all drills and games continually emphasize the use of correct techniques.
- **Encourage player movement:** At all times make players aware of importance of readiness. Emphasize weight forward on toes and bouncing instead of flat footedness.
- **Rotate player positions:** All players should be active as servers, assistants. In game situations change positions each quarter.
- **Develop player respect:** Continually get players to support one another. To show good sportsmanship towards all players including opponents, and respect for others attempts and effort.
- **Equality amongst players:** Give equal attention to all players in group or games. Do not leave the less competent players behind nor slow the advanced players down.
- **Fun and enjoyment:** Players will respond and want to continue if things are fun. Create their enjoyment.

**Remember as a coach you should be dedicated to the development of all players whether technically able or new to the game. Your position is very important. You are a role model to these children. Set exemplary standards. Developing good touch and technique, good sportsmanship and a good atmosphere is the goal. Keep away from creating a pressure to win. Maintain equality throughout your sessions and emphasize fun and development.**

## Appendix C

### AFC WIMBEDON FOUNDATION SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT CONSENT FORM

This Code of Conduct is to be issued to parents at any Foundation activity that involves competitive team sports, eg, Kids Cup / College fixtures / Tournaments

1. Do not force an unwilling child to participate in football.
2. Remember children are involved in football for their own development, not yours.
3. Encourage your child to play to the Laws of the Game and respect officials decisions
4. DO NOT coach your child or anyone else's from the side-lines at both matches & training.
5. Teach your child that honest effort is more important than victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
6. Turn losing into winning by helping your child work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship. NEVER ridicule or YELL at your child for making a mistake or losing the game.

7. Applaud good play by your team and by members of the opposing team and set a good example.
8. Show respect for your team's opponents, and match officials
9. Stay behind the supporter barrier at games and always viewing parameters at training and encourage other parents to do the same.
10. Do not question the Referee's judgement and never their honesty.
11. Be on your best behaviour. Do not use profane language or harass, physically or verbally, players, managers, coaches, Referees, or their assistants.
12. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's football.
13. Respect and recognise the values and importance of coaches. They give their time and resources to provide football for your child.
14. Read the Laws of the Games to better understand what you are looking at and commenting on.
15. Minor disciplinary issues will be dealt with by AFCWF management committee. If there is a need for further action the LFA will be asked for advice and guidance.
16. Gross misconduct by any player, parent, spectator, or associated foundation member will result in immediate suspension from Foundation activity and the LFA will be notified.

I ..... as a spectator agree to abide by the above code for

**AFC Wimbledon Foundation matches and sporting events:**

**Team** .....

**Signed**..... **Date**.....

**Appendix D**

**AFC WIMBEDON FOUNDATION  
PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT CONSENT FORM**

1. Play by the Laws of the game
2. Never argue with the referee or their assistant's decision
3. I will be punctual and aim to achieve 100% attendance at training and games
4. I will be polite and respectful to all Foundation staff
5. I will communicate directly by phone call to my coach in regards to being absence from training.
6. I will report all injuries promptly to physiotherapist and inform my coach prior to training when attending treatment.

7. I will attend training with a positive mind-set and have an enthusiastic approach to technical and tactical training.
8. I will co-operate with my coach/ AFC Wimbledon staff.
9. I will support and nurture team mates and other age group players on and off the pitch.
10. I will be proactive in completing any tasks or jobs given to me by my coach or any AFC Wimbledon staff.
11. I will develop a structured professional approach towards balancing my football participation , school life style and social life.
12. I will behave at all times with self-discipline on and off the pitch.
13. I will be sporting and competitive in all games and respect the opposition and match officials at all times.
14. I will play and train with full kit, socks pulled up with shin pad at all times.
15. I will look after and clean my footwear at all times.
16. I will prepare my kit in advance for training and games.
17. I will take responsibility for all my Training kit, keep it to a good standard and will not misplace any items.
18. I will maintain a healthy lifestyle and understand the importance of eating, resting, stretching and hydrating properly.
19. I will communicate with my coach regarding all my sporting activities away from AFC Wimbledon Academy.
20. I will approach my coach to discuss any problems that affect my Academy life.
21. Minor disciplinary issues will be dealt with by AFCWFManagement Team. If there is a need for further action the Football League will be asked for advice and guidance.
22. Gross misconduct by any player, parent, spectator or club member will result in immediate suspension from the club, AFC Wimbledon Ltd Board and the Football League will be notified.

**I ..... agree to play by the above code for AFC Wimbledon Academy**

**During the season ..... Team .....**

**Signed..... Date.....**

**Coach Name: .....**

**Head Teachers Name: .....**

**School Name and Full Address: .....**

**School contact name, number & e-mail .....**

.....

**Allergies / Medication:** .....

**Please tick this box if you do NOT consent to the players photograph being used in AFC Wimbledon Foundation Literature**

**Signed Parent / Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_