

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

GIRLS UNITED FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

1. Policy Statement

Girls United Football Association, referred to as the “Organisation” or “Girls United”, acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the emotional and physical welfare of every child, young person and adult who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members.

Girls United aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- Have an empowering, positive and enjoyable experience at Girls United in a safe and child centred environment
- Are protected from all forms of abuse, violence, deliberate neglect and exploitation

We acknowledge that some children or young people are more vulnerable than others to abuse, and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

2. Definitions

A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any learning, sport or social activity and programme provided by the Organisation.

The Organisation uses the definitions set out by the Children’s Commissioner for safeguarding:

Under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, safeguarding is defined as:

- protecting children and young people from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

‘Child abuse or maltreatment’ constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, deliberate neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (as defined further in Appendix A).

3. Key Principles

The key principles of the Organisation’s policy are that:

- the welfare of the child is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
- safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children;
- the Organisation will safeguard children and young people taking part in Organisation sport and social activities from physical, sexual, emotional harm or neglect;
- the Organisation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that through appropriate procedures and training, children participating in Organisation activities do so in a safe environment;
- the Organisation will create a safe and welcoming environment, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence;
- all children, young people and adults without exception have the right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith or beliefs;
- safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved in the Organisation;
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- every child, young person and adult who plays or participates in the Organisation’s football sessions and activities should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse; and
- bullying is a category of abuse and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at the Organisation.

4. Responsibilities

The Organisation has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual, or emotional harm and from neglect, bullying and/or cyberbullying.

This responsibility applies to everyone in the Organisation whether in a formal, informal, paid or voluntary capacity.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you are worried about a child, it is important you report your concerns - no action is not an option.

Responsibility to Prevent and Report

Everyone within the Organisation has a responsibility to report, if they:

- receive information concerning the safety and welfare of a child or young person;
- have reasons to suspect or to be concerned about the safety and welfare of a child or young person; or
- have witnessed a potential threat to the safety and welfare of a child or young person.

A written record must be kept about any safeguarding concerns using the Incident Report Form (See Appendix B). This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decisions made and why they were made. All records must be signed, dated and referred to the Organisation's Child Welfare Officer at the earliest opportunity. All records must be securely and confidentially stored.

5. Child Welfare Officer

The Organisation provides a single point of contact for welfare and child protection arrangements. The Organisation's Child Welfare Officer is: **ABIGAIL INGRAM.**

The main responsibilities of the Welfare Officer are as follows:

- to be the first point of contact for parents/guardians/carers, children, employees, workers, consultants, volunteers, trustees and external agencies in all matters of child protection;
- to coordinate the child protection procedures in the Organisation;
- to maintain ongoing training on child protection for employees, workers, volunteers, consultants and trustees;
- to advise and act upon all potential or actual cases of abuse reported to them; and
- to refer any child protection matter to the Local Social Services Department and/or police within 24 hours of being notified of the concern. In cases of serious actual or potential harm the police must be notified immediately.

Anyone who is concerned about a child's welfare should inform the Welfare Officer immediately, in strict confidence.

6. Safe Recruitment

The Organisation implements safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and suitability of all staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect contact with children or young people.

More specifically these procedures include:

- specifying the role profile or job description which highlights key responsibilities of the role;
- confirmation of the identity of the applicant with original documentation;
- shortlisting and interviewing as appropriate for the role;
- requesting at least 2 written references and following them up prior to any offer of appointment being made;
- substantiating qualifications;
- employment offers being subject to: suitable references and the relevant Criminal Record Check, including checks of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Barred Lists as appropriate; and
- upon employment, staff and volunteers are presented with the following documents: a) Girls United Football Association's Safeguarding Policy; b) Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct. After thorough revision, each individual will be required to confirm that they have read these and sign their commitment to comply with the Policies and Codes.

Please refer to Girls United's Safe Recruitment Policy for more information (<https://www.girlsunitiedfa.org/safeguarding>).

7. Complying with the Organisation's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

All adults coming into contact with children and young people through the Organisation must comply with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct. **The following information is provided to all such persons for them to agree to before commencing activities with the Organisation.**

As one such person, you are required to confirm you have read this document. By signing a participation agreement or contract, you agree to comply with the policy and follow the Code of Conduct. You need to read and understand the form prior to

participating with Girls United. If you have any queries, please contact the Welfare Officer for assistance (welfare@girlsunitiedfa.org).

The FA advises to remember the four Rs to help take action: Recognise, Respond, Report and Record:

- Recognise poor practice and abuse
- Respond in a constructive way
- Report to someone who can take appropriate action
- Record the incident and pass it on

If you have identified any signs or indicators that a child/young person is being abused:

1. Immediately contact the Welfare Officer at welfare@girlsunitiedfa.org
2. Record the known facts in writing in an email and include any other information you feel is relevant, and pass on this as soon as possible to the above person. Everyone can voice any concerns - please do not hesitate to contact us.
3. Any member of staff receiving safeguarding concerns via email must complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix B) and submit it to their Line Managers and the Welfare Officer.

If a child or young person discloses information relating to abuse:

1. Allow them to speak without interruption, encouraging them to tell you only what they feel comfortable telling you, and be accepting of what is said. Do not ask leading questions, for example 'did they do this to you?', as any testimony resulting from leading or closed questions is inadmissible. Only ask 'what happened?'
2. Let them know that you **MUST** pass information to the Welfare Officer.
3. If they refuse to tell you anything unless you promise to keep it a secret, inform them that you want to help and that there is one person you have to tell. If they then refuse to tell you any more, please respect their decision and report this incident.
4. Immediately after a disclosure, contact your Line Manager and the Welfare Officer within the Organisation. All staff and Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all reports are forwarded to the Welfare Officer at the earliest opportunity.
5. Record the facts as you know them in writing using the Incident Report Form (Appendix B), including the account given to you by the young person using the words that they used as well as including any other information you feel is

relevant. Everything must be written in the words used by the children themselves. You cannot use words like 'abuse' if they haven't used them.

6. Provide this Incident Report Form to your Line Manager and Welfare Officer at the earliest opportunity.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. Immediately inform your Line Manager and the Welfare Officer.
2. Record the facts as you know them in writing and give them to the Welfare Officer. (See Appendix B for Incident Report Form)

If you deal with the personal data of young people:

1. Handle all information with sensitivity and confidentiality, in line with the Organisation's Data Protection Policy.
2. The information should be kept securely and not be made available to others.
3. Where necessary, dispose of data relating to under 18s in a confidential manner.
4. Do not use the information inappropriately, especially if it will cause harm to the young person concerned.

If a player or participant of the Organisation behaves inappropriately towards you:

1. Close down the interaction as soon as possible.
2. As per the Code of Conduct, there will always be a second adult present in interactions with children and young people.
3. If you are at a session, distance yourself from the person in question and where possible remain with the group and in the close presence of other adults. If you continue to feel unsafe, speak to the session lead in order to leave the session. The session Lead must ensure that safeguarding ratios continue to be met and can resort to asking for parents, volunteers or other staff to remain at the session.
4. Immediately report the incident to the Welfare Officer, **ABIGAIL INGRAM**, calling 07534732201 and via email at: welfare@girlsunitedfa.org.

For online interactions:

1. Never approach children and young people through your personal online channels, personal mobile or attempt to make private contact with them. Decline any invitations you receive from children or young people to connect privately online.

2. When contacted by a child or young person via a work online channel, email or work mobile, request to speak to a parent or guardian.
3. Young people should only be contacted (exclusively using work channels and mobiles) when consent has been provided by parents/ guardians prior to the contact. Parents / guardians must consent for young people to be contacted to direct phone numbers or email addresses via the participants registration form.
4. Group chats with both parents/guardians and the young person present can be used to avoid lone messaging.

8. Code of Conduct

Codes of Conduct for players, staff and volunteers have been implemented by Girls United. Each individual must read, understand and sign the relevant Code of Conduct.

In order to validate these Codes of Conduct, the Organisation has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct.

9. Additional Contact Information

- The FA: Email safeguarding@thefa.com or call 0800 169 1863 and ask for The FA's Safeguarding team.
- Childline: 08001111 or visit www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk
- The Police: 999

10. Health, Safety and Programme Safeguarding




Girls United implements safeguarding and Health & Safety reviews ahead of delivering programmes. Programmes are defined as events, sessions, workshops and all activities delivered by Girls United.

The processes and procedures to ensure the Health & Safety as well as safeguarding of programme participants include:

- Risk Assessments to identify and rank procedures and potential risks associated with a programme and its venue.
- Emergency Action Plans to map out processes in case of emergency and should include main contact details for the activity.
- Safeguarding Training to provide programme delivery staff to create a safe environment for children and young people and identify signs of abuse.

Policy Reviews

This policy and its procedures are reviewed on an annual basis or as appropriate by the relevant Girls United management team and Welfare Officer.

Review Date	Full Name	Role	Signature
19 March 2021	Romina Calatayud Martinez Abigail Ingram Amelia Lampitt	CEO London Manager Welfare Officer	
February 2024	Romina Calatayud Martinez Abigail Ingram Steve Eadon	CEO London Manager Consultant	  

Appendix A – What is child abuse?

(Based on the statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2015)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (including via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children inflicting physical harm:

- by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating
- giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- In sport situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child’s physical maturity.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate
- imposing expectations which are beyond the child’s age or developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- allowing a child to see or hear the ill-treatment of another person
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- the exploitation or corruption of children
- emotional abuse in sport might also include situations where parents or coaches subject children to constant criticism, bullying or pressure to perform at a level that the child cannot realistically be expected to achieve.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Sexual abuse involves an individual (male or female, or another child) 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, to gratify their own sexual needs. The activities may involve:

- physical contact (e.g. kissing, touching, masturbation, rape or oral sex)
- involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images

- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or watch sexual activities
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
- sport situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs
- neglect in sport situations might occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that children are safe, or exposes them to undue temperatures or risk of injury.

Bullying (including 'cyber bullying' by text, e-mail, social media, etc.) may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person.

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

The acronym **STOP** – Several Times On Purpose - can help you to identify bullying behaviour.

Recognising Abuse



It is not always easy, even for the most experienced carers, to spot when a child has been abused. However, some of the more typical symptoms which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- sexually explicit language or actions
- a sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- a change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)
- a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- an unexpected reaction to normal physical contact
- difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others

It is important to note that a child could be displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, without this necessarily meaning that the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, but you may just feel that something is wrong. It may be that something has happened, such as a bereavement, which has caused the child to be unhappy.

If you are concerned

If there are concerns about sexual abuse or violence in the home, talking to the parents or carers might put the child at greater risk. If you cannot talk to the parents/carers, consult the Organisation's Welfare Officer and your Line Manager. It is this person's responsibility to make the decision to contact Children's Social Care Services or the Police. It is NOT their responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, BUT it is their responsibility to act on your concerns.

Parents should be informed of the situation and any reports or referrals made about their child, unless informing them will put the child at risk.

Appendix B – Incident Report Form

[Incident Report Form Available Here](#)

Please submit any reports on Accidents or Safeguarding concerns using the form available at: <https://www.girlsunitydfa.org/incident-report-form>

Your details

Your full name

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>First Name</small>	<small>Last Name</small>

Your role or relationship to Girls United:

Your contact email: Your phone Number:

example@example.com

Incident Details

Name of person in question

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>First Name</small>	<small>Last Name</small>

Name of Girls United staff in charge of activity Location of incident

Date of Incident

<input type="text" value="DD-MM-YYYY"/>	<input type="text" value="HH:MM"/>
<small>Date</small>	<small>Hour Minutes</small>

Which of the following best describes the person you are concerned about?

OPTIONAL: Contact information of person – If underage, please include name of contact and relationship to person

Phone number, email address and/or address.

Type of Incident

Safeguarding Report

Accident or Injury Report

No incident but raising a concern

Other

Nature of Incident

Please describe in one sentence



Appendix C – Incident Escalation Process

