



# Young Players Wellbeing in Scottish Welfare FA

Reviewed on the 7th June 2025



Affiliated to the Scottish Football Association

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## Introduction

A rights-based approach focuses on the undisputable human rights of each individual and our responsibility to promote, respect and protect these rights. It gives importance to **process** as well as **outcomes** and recognises the underlying determinants of a young player's needs, presenting issues and general wellbeing.

Overarching Aim	
To embed a rights-based approach in developing young player's wellbeing in Scottish Welfare Football	
Principles	
Availability	Regardless of where and what level a young player is playing Welfare football in Scotland, we will work to ensure that their involvement in our game is considered using the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach and principles, and recognising their rights will help them to flourish in football.
Accessibility	Safeguarding practices and implementation of policy and procedures in child protection will ensure playing environments are safe and activity is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
Acceptability	All young players are respected and supported to have fun, gain enjoyment, learn and develop their football skills and better understand their wider wellbeing.
Participation	In addition to the workings of the SFA's youth forum for shared goal setting and contributing at national, regional and community levels; individual young players will benefit from their coach's capacity to engage and include their views in any setting they are involved within football.
Equality and Non-discrimination	In increasing opportunities for all young players to enjoy football, respectful behaviours will be demonstrated and discriminatory behaviours challenged by developing learning and understanding in equality and children's rights.
Accountability	National and club level networks will measure, monitor and evaluate developments and progress in implementing policy and procedures for young player's wellbeing, including gaining feedback and experiences from young players engaged at different levels of the game.
Capacity Development	Training and resources will support adults engaged with young

	<p>players in football to understand their roles and responsibilities in wellbeing, safeguarding and protecting these young players. These developments will ensure all young players recognise their rights within football environments as part of their participation within our game.</p>
<b>Outcomes</b>	
Young Players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased promotion, support and safeguarding of wellbeing as a result of participation in football</li> <li>• Increased understanding of their rights and in relation to football</li> </ul>
All Adults Engaged With Young Players In Scottish Welfare Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased understanding of young player's rights and what it means to take a rights-based approach</li> <li>• Increased understanding and communication within relationships of young player's strengths and what they bring to football</li> <li>• Increased understanding of how to implement a rights-based approach improving their capacity to engage and support young players playing football</li> </ul>

(For an overview of the UNCRC & children's rights and GIRFEC, please see Appendices 1 & 2)

## Everyone's Responsibility

We all have a role and responsibility to promote, support and safeguard young player's wellbeing in Scottish Welfare football. Ensuring a young player's wellbeing at all times, includes celebrating when things have gone well, understanding their circumstances and forming positive relationships. Football can contribute in many different ways to a young player's positive wellbeing considering the health benefits of being active, the achievements they make in gaining new skills as well as their experiences in being included and respected as part of a team.

To ensure we can respond to situations when a young player needs help or support, we must firstly understand their rights and the meaning of wellbeing. Secondly, we must recognise a number of risks that exist for young players in football and therefore put in place a range of safeguards that minimise these risks. These are managed and promoted by people within particular roles who receive specific training for their level of responsibility. It is necessary for this understanding and the appropriate processes to be in place if ever a young player's wellbeing or need for protection is identified as a concern. The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs can then respond and support any young player who needs help, informing the relevant agencies and organisations.

These policies, procedures and safeguards, as well as training, will give us the confidence and support needed to fulfil our role and responsibility to keep young players safe in football.

**Where the term 'young player' is used within this Document, this relates to players who are under 18 years of age.**

## Young Players Wellbeing in Scotland

It is important to recognise what we mean by children's wellbeing. As part of Scotland's national approach to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the wellbeing wheel below demonstrates the eight indicators that are believed to be essential for a child's overall wellbeing.

By having a universal language and understanding for all people that work with children, collectively we can contribute to promoting, supporting and safeguarding a child's wellbeing whether they are in an educational, health, community or sporting setting. It is essential that in Scottish football, we understand these wellbeing indicators and if we are ever worried that something is impacting a child's wellbeing, we know who to share that with. As part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the concept of wellbeing and the GIRFEC approach is now enshrined in law.



This Act also identifies a Named Person for every child as the point of contact to share any concerns about wellbeing, ensuring an informed and early intervention if needed. (See Appendix 2 for further information on GIRFEC)

Source: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/well-being>

## Young Player's Protection Policy Statement

The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs are fully committed to promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of all young players in its care. We recognise young player's rights to protection, as provided in Article 19 of the UNCRC, from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. 'Child Protection' means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect, as stated within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014.

For the purposes of this policy, a young player is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all young players regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member clubs will:

- Respect the rights of young players as paramount;
- Promote the rights and wellbeing of young players by providing opportunities for them to take part in football safely;
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of young players and protect them from abuse, ensuring they know what to do and who they can speak to if they need help;
- Require volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and sign up to the Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Young Player's Wellbeing;
- Train and support its volunteers and members of the Association to adopt best practice in embedding young player's rights in Scottish Welfare football and promoting, protecting and respecting these rights to young players;

- Respond to any allegations of poor practice, misconduct or abuse of young people in line with procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures;
- Observe guidelines issued by both national and local Child Protection Committees for the protection of young people; and
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy, these procedures and associated safeguards in developing our young player-rights based approach and include young player's views in this process.

### Review

This policy and associated policies, procedures and safeguards will be regularly reviewed and will include young player's participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on young player's rights or following any changes within the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs;
- Following any issue or concern raised about young player's rights being denied within the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs; and
- In all other circumstances, at least every year and should form part of the agenda at the Annual General Meeting.

## Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs are fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all young players in its care. We understand that young player's wellbeing can be seriously impacted by bullying behaviour. The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs therefore recognise the information provided for young players by **respectme**, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service.

*'Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a child better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up. Bullying is a behaviour that can make a child feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. Something only has to happen once to make a child feel worried or scared to go to school or other places they enjoy going'*

For the purposes of this policy, a young player is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all young players regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member clubs will:

- Respect the rights of young players as paramount;
- Work together to develop positive relationships amongst young players and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting and promote their emotional health and wellbeing;
- Seek to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour, through the implementation of this policy and guidelines;
- Require volunteers and members of the Association to adopt and abide by this policy;

- Train and support its volunteers and members of the Association to adopt best practice to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying;
- Address the needs of young players who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support;
- Respond to any concerns raised either in the experiences of young players of poor practice/misconduct or abuse caused by an adult's bullying behaviour;
- Highlight bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues; and
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and guidelines and include young players views in this process.

### Review

This Policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed and will include young players participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in guidance on anti-bullying or following any changes within the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs;
- Following any issue or concern raised about bullying within the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs; and
- In all other circumstances, at least every year and should form part of the agenda at the Annual General Meeting.

## Code Of Conduct for Safeguarding Young Players Wellbeing

This Code of Conduct details the standards and practice required by all Scottish Welfare Football Association member association and clubs, volunteers and members of the Committee, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with young players. For the purposes of Young Player's Wellbeing, we include all activities within the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member clubs with young people under the ages of 18 years old.

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with the Scottish Welfare Football Association's Procedures for Responding to Concerns about the Conduct of an Adult and/or Disciplinary.

### Good Conduct

- Promote fair play;
- Treat all young players equally, with respect, dignity, sensitivity and fairness (Article 2, UNCRC);
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust;
- Put the wellbeing and best interests of each young player first before winning or achieving performance goals (Article 3, UNCRC);
- Support young players to understand their rights in Welfare football and the safeguards put in place to protect them;
- Include young players in decisions and activities affecting them wherever possible, respecting and taking seriously the views they contribute (Article 12, UNCRC);
- Always work in an open environment, wherever possible;
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young players; and
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible.

### **Practice to be Avoided**

In the context of your role within the Scottish Welfare FA, the following practice should be avoided:

- Having ‘favourites’ – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other young players and could be misinterpreted by others;
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young players away from others; and
- Excessive training and competition, pushing young players against their will and placing undue pressure.

### **Unacceptable Conduct**

In the context of your role within the Scottish Welfare Football Association, the following practices are unacceptable:

- Failing to act on, record or acknowledge allegations or concerns raised by a young player;
- Allowing bullying behaviour in any form between young players to go on unchallenged;
- Displaying bullying behaviour or making inappropriate comments to a young player causing emotional harm;
- Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay or touching a young player in a sexually suggestive manner;
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young player, even in fun;
- Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with young players;
- Engaging in rough physical contact;
- Establishing inappropriate contact with young players via social media either online or on mobile phones;
- Reducing a young player to tears as a form of control;
- Inviting or allowing young players to stay with you at your home; and
- Sharing a room alone with a young player.

## Anti-Bullying Guidelines

Bullying can take some young players rights away from them. There have been many different definitions and theories about what constitutes bullying, but it's not helpful to define bullying purely in terms of behaviour. Bullying is a mixture of behaviours and impacts, behaviours that can impact on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what is termed as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out, it strips a person of their capacity for agency.

Bullying may be seen as particularly hurtful behaviour where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can be a 'one-off' occurrence or repeated over a period of time and can take many forms including young players being bullied by adults, their peers and in some cases by members of their families. Bullying can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and those who are bullied often do not tell anyone. Bullying is not always deliberate.

Bullying behaviours can be:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened;
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked;
- Having belongings taken or damaged;
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you;
- Receiving abusive messages, threats or comments on social media sites;
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves; and
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be.

When talking about bullying, it's never helpful to label young players as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a young player, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. It is preferable to talk about someone displaying bullying behaviour rather than label them a 'bully'. Behaviour can be changed with help and support.

## Support for young players involved in bullying behaviour:

- Cultivate an ethos where there's an anti-bullying culture – it is especially important that adults are good role models for young players;
- Take all signs and reports of bullying very seriously;
- Encourage all young players to speak and share their concerns. Help those being bullied to speak out and tell a coach or adult who can support them. Create an open environment;
- Take all allegations seriously and take action to ensure the young player is safe. Speak with those being bullied and those displaying bullying behaviour separately;
- Reassure the young player that you can be trusted and will help them, although you can't promise not to tell anyone. Explain what will happen next, and how they are going to be kept informed;
- Keep records of what is said (i.e. what happened, by whom and when);
- In cases of online/electronic bullying advise young players who are being bullied by text, email or online to retain the communication or to print it out. Be clear that online bullying behaviour will be treated seriously, like any other form of bullying behaviour, as it can impact on both the young player and football;
- Report any concerns to the Safeguarding Officer and complete a Concern Recording Form as part of the Procedures for Responding to Concerns about a Young Player.
- Talk with the young player(s) who have been displaying bullying behaviour. Explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour;
- In some cases it might be worth considering seeking an apology from those involved in bullying behaviour (for example where those on the receiving end wish reconciliation). Apologies are only of real value however when they are genuine;
- Be sensitive and use good judgement when it comes to informing parents/carers of those whose negative behaviour is impacting on others. Put the young player at the centre (will telling the parents/carers result in more problems for the young player?) What are the young player's views on parents/carers knowing;
- If appropriate, insist on the return of borrowed items;

- Aim to restore positive relationships and only consider imposing consequences as necessary (e.g. exclusion from the team or particular activity until behaviour standards are improved);
- Encourage and support those displaying bullying behaviour to change this behaviour. Ask them to consider the impact their actions are having; and
- Keep a written record of action taken.

These guidelines have been informed and developed with support from **respectme**, their publication 'Bullying in Scotland 2014' and the National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, Scottish Government 2010. Copyright remains with **respectme** and we acknowledge all and any material taken from [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

## Procedure For Responding To Concerns About A Young Player

Children have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously (Article 12, UNCRC). This must be at the forefront of any concerns that are raised about a young player. Their views must be considered based on the age and maturity of each young player. They also have a right to privacy (Article 16, UNCRC) which is also important to consider when assessing if and at what stage information is shared and who with.

These procedures apply to all volunteers and members of the Committee involved in Scottish Welfare Football Association activities with young players under 18 years old.

### **1. Best interests of the young player**

The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs, are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers whenever there are concerns about a young player. Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children.

Where concerns are raised about a young player, this will be considered in line with the wellbeing indicators and *may* be discussed with parents/carers. For example, if a young player seems withdrawn, they may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations and the best interests of the young player will be considered as to what is the best support for each individual. Young players will be asked who they feel is suitable to be informed and when relevant, consent gained from the young player.

Confidentiality will not be maintained if it is assessed that a young player is at risk or their wellbeing is being impacted in such a way that their right to be protected becomes more significant. Any incidents which cause concern about the wellbeing of a young player should be recorded on the Concern Recording Form and reported to the Scottish Welfare Football Association Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. In line with early intervention, the principles of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the

Getting it Right for Every Child approach, appropriate and proportionate information may be shared with the young player's Named Person.

## **2. Information regarding a concern about a young player**

Volunteers or members of the Association may be informed in different ways with regards to details of a concern about a young player. This may be a direct disclosure by the player. In this situation follow section 4 in responding to that disclosure. The details may become clear due to the observation of a young player, which is perhaps demonstrated in a change in their behaviour, appearance or nature. A third option could be information that is shared from another individual or organisation. A concern or possible abuse of a young player may be observed by another young player or adult.

Depending on the nature of the concern, observations or information from others, this may not need to be discussed with the young player, instead the information recorded then reported. Advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about a young player's wellbeing which can be discussed by anonymising the young player, therefore maintaining confidentiality if appropriate.

If the Safeguarding Officer is not available and an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be contacted. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and they may already hold other concerning information about the young player. Record any advice given, actions taken and the response by other agencies. At the earliest opportunity thereafter the Safeguarding Officer should be informed and the young player's Named Person notified. Where the Scottish Football Association has a service level agreement in place with a local authority, the members of staff based in these local authorities under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 have a legal duty to share information with the child's Named Person.

### 3. Concerns affecting a young player's wellbeing

If a concern about a young player is identified that affects one or more of their eight wellbeing indicators (Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included), complete Part A of the Concern Recording Form.

When information is being recorded about a young player, it is important that the player understands why we are recording their details and gain their consent where possible for further reporting of the concern. If a young player recognises that people can help and support and that this is the purpose of their details being shared, they will be more included and informed of the processes.

Where there is information or details in relation to the conduct an adult affecting a young player's wellbeing, this should be recorded in Part B of the Concern Recording Form.

### 4. Young players' right to be protected

Where the concern about a young player's wellbeing suggests they are in need of protection, the information must be passed on with or without their consent for the purposes of their protection. Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. **No member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a young player has been abused.** False allegations are very rare. If a young player says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a young player is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure.

#### What to Do if a Young Player Discloses Abuse

##### 4.1 Respond

- React calmly so as not to frighten the young player;
- Listen to the young player and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief;
- Reassure the young player they are not to blame and were right to tell someone;

- Be aware of interpreting what a young player says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language;
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable;
- Avoid projecting your own reactions onto the young player;
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the *possibility* that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions (e.g. What, When, Where and Who); and
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other young players.

#### 4.1.2 Avoid

- Panicking;
- Showing shock or distaste;
- Probing for more information than is offered;
- Speculating or making assumptions;
- Making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made;
- Approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made; and
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets and giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

**If you are concerned about the *immediate* safety of the young player:**

Take whatever action is required to ensure the young player's immediate safety.

Pass the information immediately to the police and seek their advice.

#### 4.2 Record

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the Concern Recording Form, completing as much of the form as possible.

### 4.3 Report

Contact the Safeguarding Officer on **07734325612** to report the concern then email the completed form to [steve.aitken@scottishwelfarefa.org](mailto:steve.aitken@scottishwelfarefa.org) as soon as possible after completion. Do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections. Please do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of this form. It is important to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on.

### 4.4 Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parents/carers may place the young player at further risk. ***In such cases advice must always firstly be sought from the police/social work services or Named Person as to who informs the parents/carers.***

## Procedure For Responding To Concerns About The Conduct Of An Adult

In all cases where there are concerns about the conduct of an adult towards a young player, the best interests and wellbeing of the player will be the paramount consideration. These procedures aim to ensure that all concerns about the conduct of an adult are dealt with in a timely, appropriate and proportionate manner. No member of staff, volunteer or member of the council and its member clubs, in receipt of information that causes concern about the conduct of an adult towards young players shall keep that information to himself or herself, or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

***At any point in responding to concerns about the conduct of an adult, advice may be sought from the police or social work services.***

### • Initial Reporting of Concerns

Any concerns for the wellbeing of a young player arising from the conduct of an adult must be reported to the Scottish Welfare Football Association Safeguarding Officer on the day the concern arises, as soon as practically possible.

Where the concern is about the Safeguarding Officer, it must be reported to the CEO of the Scottish Welfare Football Association ([john.campbell@scottishwelfarefa.org](mailto:john.campbell@scottishwelfarefa.org))

In this situation, they will then take on the role and responsibilities as listed below of the Safeguarding Officer.

### • Recording and Reporting

Concerns must be recorded using the Concern Recording Form as soon as possible. Contact the Safeguarding Officer on **07734 325612** to report the concern then email the completed form to [steve.aitken@scottishwelfarefa.org](mailto:steve.aitken@scottishwelfarefa.org) as soon as possible after completion. Do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections. Please do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of this form. It is important

to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on.

All subsequent actions taken and reasons for decisions shall be recorded (in the order in which they happened). These records should be signed and dated by the Safeguarding Officer. Where Scottish Welfare Football Association Disciplinary Procedures are invoked for volunteers, a written record will be made of all actions and reasons for decision.

- **Establishing the Basic Facts**

Once the concerns have been reported, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Establish the basic facts;
- Conduct an initial assessment of the facts in order to determine the appropriate course of action; and
- Consult external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice at any time. This is important because they may hold other important information which, when considered alongside the current concerns, builds a significant picture of concern.

- **Conducting the Initial Assessment**

The Safeguarding Officer will conduct the initial assessment.

The purpose of the initial assessment is to clarify the nature and context of the concerns. It should determine if the adult's conduct was inappropriate behaviour, serious poor practice/misconduct or whether there is reasonable cause to suspect an adult's behaviour and conduct has been criminal. Every situation is unique so guidance cannot be prescriptive.

- Where the established facts support a concern of criminal behaviour, the initial assessment will not form part of the disciplinary investigation;
- Subject to the nature and seriousness of the situation, if it is not clear at this stage whether a criminal offence may have been committed, the member of staff, volunteer

or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association *may* be approached as part of the information gathering process;

- Where the nature and seriousness of the information suggests that a criminal offence *may* have been committed, or that to assess the facts may jeopardise evidence, advice will be sought from the police before the member of staff, volunteer or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association is approached;
- An initial assessment of the basic facts may require the need to ask a young player some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions *solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts*. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other young players, or other appropriate individuals; and
- Interviewing young players about possible abuse and criminal offences is the sole remit of specially trained police officers and social workers. Questioning of young players by those conducting an initial assessment should always be avoided as far as possible. If it is necessary to speak to the young player in order to clarify the basic facts, best practice suggests that consent from the parent/carer be obtained.

Possible outcomes of initial assessment:

- No further action (facts do not substantiate complaint);
- Situation is dealt with under the Scottish Welfare Football Association's Disciplinary Procedures for volunteers or any member of the Association;
- Child protection investigation (jointly by police and social work services);
- Criminal investigation (by the police). The results of a criminal investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not in all cases; and
- Civil proceedings (by the player/family who raised the concern).

- **Initial Assessment Supports Concerns about Poor Practice and/or Misconduct**

The Safeguarding Officer will deal with the concern in line with the Scottish Welfare Football Association Disciplinary Procedures for volunteers or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association. In the event of an investigation into the conduct of a volunteer or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association, all actions will be informed by the principles of natural justice:

- They will be made aware of the nature of concern;
- They will be given an opportunity to put forward their case; and
- The Scottish Welfare Football Association will act in good faith, ensuring the matter is dealt with impartially and as quickly as possible in the circumstances.

Pending the outcome of any investigation, precautionary suspension will be considered in all cases where there is significant concern about the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association towards children. Any impact on a young player's wellbeing caused by an adult's poor practice and/or misconduct will be passed on to the young player's Named Person.

• **Initial Assessment Supports Concerns about Possible Criminal Behaviour**

Where the initial assessment of information gives reasonable cause to suspect an adult's behaviour and conduct has been a criminal offence, the Safeguarding Officer will report the concerns to the police as soon as possible on the day the information is received. The Safeguarding Officer will make a written record of the name of the police officer to whom the concerns were passed together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.

Referrals to the police will be confirmed in writing by the Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours. A copy of the Concern Recording Form should be provided to the police on request. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the young player(s) or who may be at risk. The parents/carers of the young player(s) involved will be informed as soon as possible following advice from the police. Any impact on a young player's wellbeing caused by an adult's possible criminal behaviour will be passed on to the young player's Named Person.

Advice will firstly be obtained from the police about informing the member of staff, volunteer or member of the Council involved in the concerns. If the advice is to inform them, they will be told that information has been received which may suggest an allegation of abuse or possible criminal offence. As the matter will be *sub judice* (i.e. under judicial consideration) no details will be given unless advised by the police. All actions will ensure

the best evidence is preserved for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the member of staff, volunteer or member of the Council. The Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member associations/clubs, will take all reasonable steps to support a member of staff, volunteer or member of the Council against whom a concern has been raised.

- **Precautionary Suspension**

Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The volunteer or any member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association involved may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out. Suspension will be carried out by the CEO & or the Chairman and confirmed by the Scottish Welfare Football Association Committee. At the suspension interview, the volunteer or member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association will be informed of the reason for suspension (within the confines of sharing information) and given the opportunity to make a statement, which will be recorded should they wish to do so.

Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the volunteer or member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association.

- **Disciplinary Investigation**

An ongoing criminal investigation does not necessarily rule out disciplinary action. However, any action taken must not jeopardise the criminal investigation. Advice must be taken from the police on this. Sufficient information should be available to enable the Safeguarding Officer to make a decision whether to go ahead with disciplinary action.

- **False or Malicious Allegations**

In exceptional circumstances where an investigation establishes an allegation or concern raised is false, unfounded or malicious:

- The volunteer or member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association involved will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. They may wish to seek legal advice;
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation shall be kept confidentially;
- The Safeguarding Officer will take all reasonable steps to support the individual in this situation;
- In these circumstances the Scottish Welfare Football Association and its member clubs, will review the young player's participation in football. It will be appropriate to have a discussion with the young player (with parental/carer permission) in determining their views and opinions; and
- Data collected for the investigation will be destroyed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### • **Historical Allegations of Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a young player by someone who is still currently working with young players. These procedures will be followed in the event of an allegation of historical abuse.

#### • **Media**

All media enquiries relating to the conduct of a volunteer or member of the Scottish Welfare Football Association will be referred to the CEO.

## Procedure For Responding To Concerns About The Conduct Of An Adult Flowchart

### *Possible outcomes:*

- Police investigation
- Criminal proceedings
- Civil proceedings
- Disciplinary Hearing
- Referral to Disclosure Scotland where PVG criteria met

### *Possible outcomes:*

- No case to answer
- Informal discussion
- Formal discussion
- Further training and support agreed

Safeguarding Officer will report concerns to police  
Concern about the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer or member of the  
Council  
Opportunity to appeal decision of the Disciplinary Hearing



## CONCERN RECORDING FORM

This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving information that causes a concern. Contact the **Safeguarding Officer** on **07734 325612** to report the concern then email the completed form to [steve.aiken@scottishwelfarefa.org](mailto:steve.aiken@scottishwelfarefa.org) as soon as possible after completion; do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections. Please do not keep any electronic, printed or written versions of this form. It is important to maintain confidentiality to delete or shred as soon as the information has been passed on.

Complete Part A where the concern relates to the wellbeing of a young player and/or Part B where the concern relates to the conduct of an adult. Finally, complete Part C to provide your contact information.

**PART A – WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF A YOUNG PLAYER**

(SAFE, HEALTHY, ACTIVE, NURTURED, ACHIEVING, RESPECTED, RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDED)

- **Young player's Details**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>
<b>Post Code:</b>	
<b>Young player's Named Person:</b>	<b>Named Person Tel No:</b>
<b>Preferred Language:</b>	<b>Is an interpreter required? YES / NO</b>
<b>Any Additional Needs?</b>	

- **Details of situation giving rise to Concerns**  
(including date, time, location, nature of concern, who, what, where, when, why)
  
- **Details of any witnesses/other people involved**  
(including names, addresses and telephone contacts)
  
- **Details of any injuries**  
(including all injuries sustained, location of injury and action taken)
  
- **Young player's views on situation (if expressed). Where possible, please use the player's own words.**

**PART B – WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF AN ADULT**

- **Details of adult where there are concerns about their conduct**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Relationship to Young player:</b>
<b>Post Code:</b>	

- **Details of concerns**  
(including date, time, location, nature of concern, who, what, where, when, why, continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

- **Details of any action taken**

- **Details of agencies contacted**  
(including date, time, name of person contacted and advice received)

- **Have the young player’s parents/carers been informed?**      **YES / NO**      (delete as appropriate) If yes, record details / If no, please state why not

**PART C – YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION**

- **Details of Person Recording Concerns**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tel No:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Position/Role:</b>
<b>Post Code:</b>	

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed June 2025 – To be reviewed June 2026