



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & PROCEDURES

2024-25

[For the latest copy refer to the Club Website](#)



Version Control

Document Title:	Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy Season - 2024/2025
Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Jon Bloore – Head of Safeguarding
Reference:	July 2024 (Revised Policy)

Document Review

Last Reviewed	Position	Reason
02/02/2024	Rich Talbot (Head of Safeguarding)	Updated legislation, staff changes & structure
01/07/2024	Rich Talbot (Head of Safeguarding)	Annual Review

Version History

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	24/08/2023	Rich Talbot	Board	Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy (New)
1.1	02/02/2024	Rich Talbot	Board	Revised Version
1.2	01/07/2024	Rich Talbot	Board	Revised Version
1.3	08/08/2024	Claire Halket	Board	Replaced HoS with JB

1. Introduction

[IT IS A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT THAT THIS POLICY IS READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENT "TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE" \(See Appendix A\).](#)

Statement

1.1 Port Vale Football Club (hereafter referred to as the Club) is committed to ensuring that we create a safe environment for everyone visiting or taking part in activities at the Club. The Club takes our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people very seriously. Our approach to any concerns will always be children and young people focused and their best interests will always be paramount when dealing with any incident. This policy sets out our commitment to safeguarding and provides a framework for what to do if concerns arise about the welfare or protection of children and young people whilst at the Club or those who become known to the Club.

Carol Shanahan

Chair and Co-owner



Scope

1.2 This policy is for use across the Club and is to be observed by all those working or volunteering and who may encounter children and young people, this to ensure best practice in safeguarding is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following departments/locations are under the remit of this policy including:

Port Vale Football Club and the Vale Park Stadium

Port Vale First Team

Port Vale Academy

Port Vale Foundation Trust and Youth Development

Port Vale Women's Team

Port Vale Retail Store

Any location visited by staff/volunteers in an official capacity.

The Club acknowledges and accepts it has a statutory obligation and responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people who are under the care of the Club or are utilising the facilities. Every person working or volunteering at the Club has a "Duty of Care" to safeguard the welfare of children and young people by creating an environment that protects them from harm.

The wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, all staff must make themselves aware of the Club's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Definitions

1.3

Children and Young People	This Policy relates to children and young people (defined as a person from birth until their 18th birthday). Young people refers to older or more experienced children who are more likely to be able to make decisions, this in line with the gillick competency test further information here . Children and young people from hereafter will be referred to as a 'Child' or 'Children'.
Regulated Activity	For the purpose of this policy, "Activity" will always refer to Regulated Activity. Regulated Activity means any activity or series of activities arranged for Children by, or in the name of the Club if it is carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequently, meaning once a week or more, or• Overnight, meaning between 02:00 and 06:00



	<p>hours, or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period and • Provides the opportunity for contact with Children. <p>Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis. These activities therefore activate the required levels of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks that are associated with the various roles throughout the Club.</p> <p>Whether a position amounts to “regulated activity” will be considered by the Club to decide which checks are appropriate, this through guidance provided by the EFL DBS eligibility document (See Appendix D).</p>
<p>Position of Trust</p>	<p>is a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with Children.</p> <p>Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers. • Care workers. • Youth justice workers. • Social workers. • Doctors. <p>In England, Wales and Northern Ireland changes to the law made in 2022 extend the definition to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith group leaders. • <u>Sports coaches.</u> <p>It is against the law for someone in a ‘Position of Trust’ to engage in sexual activity with a Child in their care, even if that Child is over the age of consent (aged 16 years or over).</p>
<p>Local Authority Designated Officer (hereafter referred as LADO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible for managing and overseeing allegations against adults who work with children. • The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness and fairness.

Rules and Regulations

1.4 The Club has a ‘Duty of Care’ when operating activities with Children and staff and volunteers will remain alert to this.

Associated Legislation and Guidance:

The Club is also mindful of its responsibilities under the following legislation and

Port Vale Football Club - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures
 Season 2024/2025 (Review – July 2025) / Classification Status: External



guidance:

- The Children Act (1989) and Children Act (2004) [further information here.](#)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) [further information here.](#)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003) and Serious Crime Act (2015) [further information here.](#)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) [further information here.](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) [further information here.](#)
- Data Protection Act (2018) [further information here.](#)
- General Data Protection Regulations UK (GDPR) (2018) [further information here.](#)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018) [further information here.](#)
- Football Association (hereafter referred to as the *FA*) Safeguarding Children Rules [further information here.](#)
- English Football League (hereafter referred to as the *EFL*) Rules and Standards [further information here.](#)
- Equality Act 2010 [further information here.](#)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 [further information here.](#)
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England & Wales (2023) [further information here.](#)

The Club is fully committed to ensuring that the above legislation and best practice recommended by these bodies is employed throughout the Club.

The Club is committed to ensuring that we are up to date with the latest legislation and recommendations and will endeavour to ensure that any new legislation such as [Child sexual abuse: mandatory reporting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) is embedded in policy and practice.

1.5 The Club recognises the definition and follows the guidance relating to ‘Position of Trust’ as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (see 1.3 above).

1.6 The Club also recognises that it has a responsibility to work with other agencies to protect Children from harm when responding to safeguarding concerns including referrals to statutory bodies (LADO/NHS/Police/Social Care etc.).

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or prior to this, if there is a:

- statutory change in law and legislation.
- following a safeguarding incident, concern or allegation whereby the policy is found to need revision to ensure the aims and key principles are met (see below at 1.7 & 1.8).
- learning outcomes that reflect best practice.
- Operational/staffing change within the Club.

All policy documents and reviews will be submitted to the Board for approval.



Aims and Key Principles

1.7 The *aims* of the Club's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy are:

- To safeguard all Children who interact with, or become known to the Club.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of safeguarding Children.
- To positively reflect and promote the club values in regard to safeguarding Children.
- To underpin a positive and pro-active welfare programme to enable all Children to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- To encourage parents and other family members of the Children to be involved in a relationship with the Club.
- To ensure that staff, volunteers and parents/guardians who come in to contact with Children act as good behavioural role models, this achieved through the safer recruitment process for staff and volunteers and through workshops provided to parents/guardians.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout the Club.

1.8 The *key principles* underpinning this policy are:

- The welfare of all Children must always be the paramount consideration when concerned about them.
- Staff will always act in the best interests of Children.
- All Children have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to efficiently and proportionately.
- Everyone who comes into contact with Children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding Children. Board members, employees, staff, agency workers, contractors and volunteers have a responsibility and role to identify concerns, share information appropriately and take prompt action.

Roles and Responsibilities at the Club

1.9 Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM)

The current Director of People and Operations Officer at the Club has overall responsibility for the safeguarding of Children and is the nominated Senior Safeguarding Manager (hereafter referred to as *SSM*)([See Appendix B](#)).

The *SSM* is a board member at the Club so is able to deliver information in relation to safeguarding at this level on a regular basis, this including recommendations for changes to the safeguarding policy and procedures when identified by the Head of Safeguarding whom they work closely with at the Club.

The *SSM* will undertake regular and appropriate training for the role.

1.10 Head of Safeguarding & Lead Disclosure Officer

The Club has a Head of Safeguarding (hereafter referred to as *HoS*) who is also the Lead Port Vale Football Club - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures Season 2024/2025 (Review – July 2025) / Classification Status: External



Disclosure Officer for the club ([See Appendix B](#)). They have overall daily management responsibility for the safeguarding of Children who are involved in activities at the Club or who become known to the Club.

The *HoS* will:

- Provide guidance and training to each Designated Safeguarding Officer (hereafter referred to as a *DSO*) employed across the club, both internally and through the use of external partnerships (such as the NSPCC, *EFL* and Local Authority).
- Be the main point of contact for audit procedures as required by the *EFL*, Barnardo's, Professional Game Academy Audit Company (PGAAC) and any others as required.
- Record, manage and investigate all reported safeguarding concerns, managing the caseload appropriately.
- Report to the Board of Directors regularly on organisational safeguarding and 'Duty of Care' matters, including highlighting areas of risk/concern, identifying areas of poor practice/areas for improvement, and providing analysis of numbers and types or safeguarding concerns/disclosures, complaints, and bullying incidents within the organisation.
- Manage the electronic case management system (MyConcern) for recording and tracking concerns and allegations pertaining to the safety and welfare of Children.
- Be the main point of contact and provide expert advice for all Club safeguarding concerns (Adults at Risk & Children) for internal and external individuals and appropriate agencies.
- Report and refer to external agencies any identified child protection/poor practice concerns in line with policy guidance advised by *EFL/FA/Local Childrens Safeguarding Partnerships* (Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire).
- Ensure they undertake regular and appropriate training for the role and take accountability for ensuring that they are up to date with legislation and guidance.

1.11 Academy Player Care Lead

The Club has an Academy Player Care Lead ([See Appendix B](#)) who will:

- Support players off the pitch throughout their academy journey, including release.
- Support players with their well-being and personal development.
- Organise and facilitate the life skills programme for players.
- Lead on player and parent voice.
- Support players who live in host family arrangements.

1.12 It is the responsibility of the Head of People, Human Resources (hereafter referred to as *HoP*) to ensure that the Club has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff.

It is the responsibility of the *HoP*, the *HoS* and the *SSM* to:

- Ensure that safer recruitment procedures are adhered to.
- Ensure all appropriate and necessary checks are carried out on successful candidates.



- Monitor contractors and external agencies compliance with this policy.
- Promote the welfare of Children at every stage of the procedure.

All employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and complying with, the provisions of this policy.

1.13 Anybody with a concern about the safety or welfare of a Child at the Club, or who becomes known to the Club, should contact the *HoS* direct to discuss the concern. In the absence of the *HoS* they should contact the departmental *DSO* or their line manager for advice in the first instance, if a member of staff or volunteer.

1.14 All staff, volunteers and external consultants are expected to:

- Be alert to signs of abuse and radicalisation and take responsibility for referring concerns to the *HoS*.
- Be prepared to listen to and take seriously the concerns of Children.
- Abide by the codes of conduct for employees and volunteers.
- Promote the health, safety and welfare of Children.
- Maintain records as necessary.
- Set a good example to Children by their own behaviour.
- Report concerns and seek advice as highlighted at 1.12 above.
- Complete appropriate safeguarding training as directed by the *HoS*.

2. Safer Recruitment

2.1 As part of the recruitment and selection process of the Club, offers of work for positions which involve working with Children are subject to Safer Recruitment practices.

This policy will provide a brief overview of the Safer Recruitment Policy in order to evidence best practice for recruitment procedures that the Club follows to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, that it only recruits individuals that are deemed suitable to work with Children.

(*Please also refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy owned by Human Resources*).

Aims and Objectives

2.2 The aims and objectives of the Safer Recruitment policy are:

- To attract, select and retain the best candidate for any given vacancy on the basis of their abilities and suitability for the role.
- To ensure that all candidates are considered equally, consistently and fairly for the role.
- To ensure that no candidate is discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).
- To ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance in place at any such time, including statutory guidance published by the Department for Education,



Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, Prevent Duty of Guidance for England and Wales, guidance published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy of the Club, amongst others.

- To ensure that the Club meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children by carrying out all necessary pre- employment checks.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Criminal Records Check

2.3 The Club is registered with *DBS* to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service Checks upon individuals who work or volunteer for the Club. Enhanced *DBS* checks, plus barred list check where appropriate, enable the Club to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions which involve working with Children.

2.4 *DBS* checks will be carried out for all relevant postholders. New staff will not be allowed unsupervised access to Children until a satisfactory *DBS* check has been received by the Club. In the event of a delay with the *DBS* process, the member of staff or volunteer will complete a Self-Declaration Risk Assessment form that is signed off by the People Manager and *HoS*, if suitable and only if the risk is assessed to be low. The People Manager is responsible for ensuring all checks are carried out in the required timescales, this in collaboration with the *HoS*.

The Club processes *DBS* checks through an approved regulated company called First Advantage Online Disclosures.

2.5 Should a check highlight a criminal record on the individual that would deem them unsuitable to work with Children, the following will apply:

The People Manager will confidentially liaise directly with the applicant, following consultation with the *HoS*. In the event that a *DBS* check highlights a criminal record on the individual that would not deem them necessarily unsuitable to work with children and young people, a risk assessment will be completed by the People Manager and *HoS* after which this will be forwarded to the *SSM* for consideration of a final decision around potential employment. This will be recorded onto the 'MyConcern' safeguarding concern digital reporting platform.

Any subsequent job offer will be subject to consideration of:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence.
- The time passed since the offence occurred and the age of the individual when the offence occurred.
- Whether it is an isolated offence or numerous offences.
- Decriminalisation.

In the event that the applicant disputes any information contained in the disclosure and has contacted the *DBS* about the dispute, the Club may defer the decision regarding the



appointment until the applicant has had reasonable opportunity to have the dispute considered by the *DBS*, but this deferral is at the absolute discretion of the Club.

- It is compulsory that postholders also agree to inform the Club of any cautions or convictions that they have received at any time during their employment with the Club.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

2.6 Prior to employment, any prospective employee shall be recruited in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy (See 2.1 above).

Equal Opportunities

2.7 The Club is committed to providing equal opportunities for all players (any age group), staff and volunteers. The Club's policy on equal opportunities can be found in the Employee Handbook (currently under review).

3. Code of Conduct

3.1 The Club has a code of conduct that is applicable to all staff, volunteers, parents, guardians, match day supporters, children, young people and adults at risk that must be adhered to.

3.2 Identification cards are issued to all staff or volunteers along with Club logo issued lanyards. All scholars and members of staff or volunteers who are aged under 18 years are issued with 'bright green' coloured lanyards making them easily identifiable to all staff as a Child should any incidents occur.

4. Process for Disclosure and Barring Service (*DBS*) Checks

4.1 The Club is registered with *DBS* to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service Checks upon individuals who work for the Club, including the Port Vale Foundation Trust. Enhanced *DBS* checks, plus barred list check where appropriate, enable the Club to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions which involve working with Children. Please refer to the Safer Recruitment Policy (see 2.1 above).

External Consultants

4.2 The Club will ensure that all external consultants sign a Contract for Services, Non-Disclosure Agreement and the Club will obtain a role specific *DBS* certificate. External consultants shall never have unsupervised access to Children without appropriate checks being in place and consent being obtained from parents/guardians.

5. Training and Awareness for Staff, Volunteers and Work Experience

5.1 The *HoS* holds a specific safeguarding induction with all new fixed-term, permanent



starters and volunteers during which the key elements of the Club's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures are discussed in more detail and is more role specific.

5.2 All staff working at the Club are required to complete the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training and undertake a refresher course, as advised by and offered by the *HoS*. Details of training and qualifications are retained by the People Manager and *HoS* (Mental Health and Safeguarding Training only).

5.3 Staff are signposted to this policy upon the Club website at induction stage and following review of same, this so that they are aware of its existence and content.

Work Experience & Volunteers

5.4 The Club may from time to time offer work placements for both work experience and volunteer purposes to Children (14-17 years). Whilst undertaking this work for the Club, they will be supervised by those who hold relevant *DBS* certification relevant to the role undertaken and will have also undertaken the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training.

Contractors

5.5 All external contractors engaged by the Club undergo a suitability test prior to commencing work. This will include evidencing the contractor's Safety Record, Safety Policy, Liability Insurance, Risk Assessment/Method Statement and details of Competent Person.

On arrival at the Club the contractor will receive a site induction from a member of the facilities team which covers the safeguarding of both Adults at Risk and Children and details of the Club's expected code of behaviour. Contractors are subject to regular inspection from Club personnel. In the event of a Contractor carrying out work on an area that is usually occupied by Children, this work where possible, will be undertaken when Children are not present. If this is not possible, the Club will provide a member of staff who is *DBS* registered to oversee the safety of all Children who may be present.

Contractors shall never have unsupervised access to Children without appropriate checks being in place and consent obtained from parents/guardians.

Service Level Agreements/Partnership Agreements

5.6 The commitment of the Club towards safeguarding is outlined in any partnership agreements, service level agreements or any other agreements that are in place with any service provider or for commissioned services insofar as those services relate to children.

6. Ratios and the Supervision of Children

6.1 Any activity undertaken by the Club will always be given full consideration to the appropriate number of staff members available depending on the age of the Children involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are any additional disability needs. The lower the age of the participants, the greater the need for supervision.



6.2 Regardless of these ratios, a minimum of 2 members of staff or delivery partner will always be available to supervise an activity. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g., a participant requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).

- For children under 5 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:6.
- For children under 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:8.
- For children over 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:10, but this varies depending on the activity. Advice should be sought from the Club DSL if unsure.
- For Academy activities, the Premier League's Youth Development Rules prescribe a ratio of 1 Coach to 8 Players (over 8s).
- For organised groups of Children attending a match day at the Vale Park Stadium, the minimum ratio is 2 responsible adults to 20 Children.

Where the Club is taking responsibility for the care of the children, parents/carers should not be included in supervision calculations.

These ratios are partially based upon guidelines provided by Ofsted which are as follows:

Age of Child	Ratio of Adults to Children
0 - 2	1: 3
2 - 3	1: 4
4 - 8	1: 6
9 - 12	1: 8
13 - 18	1: 10

Lone Working Guidance

6.3 Working 1:1 with Children should only occur in exceptional circumstances, and if it does occur, the staff member must seek and follow the specific guidance from the HoS.

7. Use of Images

7.1 The Club takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the FA and the EFL [further information here \(FA\)](#) and [EFL Ground Regulations Points 26 & 28](#).

All images are taken by Club officials who have undertaken the Safeguarding in Sport training provided through the EFL.

Upon entry into the stadium every Parent or Responsible Adult of a Child must acknowledge that on occasions images of the Child may be captured by third party agents, including mainstream media sources, e.g., Sky Football etc. (see Ground Regulations above).

This policy covers images taken and used by official Club staff in relation to Children.



Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought in writing at the commencement of each football season or prior to the event, this with the exception of attendees at designated football fixtures.

- Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for informing the Club of any change of circumstances within the season which may affect consent.
- Parents/Legal Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. The Club will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed.
- All Children featured in Club publications will be appropriately dressed.
- Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific Child.
- Where appropriate, images should represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event.
- Designated Club photographers will, where applicable, undertake a *DBS* check and undertake the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training. They will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest safeguarding guidelines issued by the Club.
- 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 Club document.
- No images of Children featured in Club publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address.
- Recordings of Children for the purposes of legitimate coaching aids are only filmed by Club officials and are stored safely and securely on Club premises.
- Any instances of inappropriate images in football should be reported immediately to the Head of Media at the Club and the *HoS* who will in turn notify the *SSM*, if appropriate.
- The Club does not put young player profiles with images onto its website, but these will never contain personal information.

8. Matchday

Unaccompanied Children

8.1 In accordance with the ticketing terms & conditions of the Club, the minimum age that a Child is permitted to attend a match at the Club unaccompanied is 14 years old. Any Child aged 13 years and under must be accompanied by a Responsible Adult who must be aged 18 years or over ([See Appendix E](#)).

(*Please also refer to Guidance for Bringing Children to Football Matches Policy*).

Mascots & Ball Persons

8.2 The Club will only allow Children to be match day mascots or ball persons once parental consent has been obtained. A signed image consent form is also required before any images are published in the Club's match day programme.

No photographs of mascots or ball persons featured in Club publications will be accompanied by personal information about the Child, such as their school or home address.



Whilst at the Vale Park Stadium, mascots and ball persons are accompanied at all times by at least 2 members of staff who have a valid *DBS* Check. Staff who are responsible for mascots and ball persons on a match day are also required to have a good level of understanding and awareness of the safeguarding of Children and Young People.

9. Communications via Social Media

9.1 The Club is committed to the welfare and safety of all Children, both within the Academy and at the Club as a whole. The Academy also acknowledges the importance of communication and works closely with parents, carers, host families, schools and local authorities to ensure that the wellbeing of all Children is paramount.

9.2 In the interests of ensuring that professional boundaries are maintained all staff and volunteers must not become friends with, add to their social media network or otherwise communicate via personal devices with any potential, current, or former young people (under the age of 18 years), or parents, unless a clear reason exists, i.e., essential business-related contact. Entering into such a relationship may lead to abuse of an employee's position of trust and breach the standards of professional behaviour and conduct expected by the Club. The only exception to this is if a family relationship exists between the Child/parent and staff member, this must however be approved by the *HoS* and consent forms signed by parents/guardians.

9.3 The Academy currently use the digital platform "Spond" as the preferred method of communication between staff with parents/guardians of players and scholars, this to ensure a safer communication platform for all parties.

9.4 The WhatsApp digital platform is used by Hospitality staff within the club, including young people (16-17 years) and the *HoS* has been included upon the single communication group with staff so that this can be monitored to ensure compliance with point 9.2.

(*Please note that the Club has a separate Online Safety & Social Media Policy*)

10. Medical

10.1 There will be occasions where medical treatment is necessary during training sessions and weekend fixtures and unfortunately, due to staffing numbers, the Club is unable to guarantee that two members of staff are present during treatment sessions.

10.2 All members of the medical department have a valid *DBS* check and are required to undertake both the *FA* Safeguarding Children and *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training. The Club is fully committed to equal opportunities for all individuals and, as such, the Club employs all genders of staff to work within the medical department.

10.3 The Club is more than happy for parents and carers to attend pre booked medical treatments of their Child if required.



10.4 In the event that a safeguarding disclosure is made to a member of the Medical Department, the staff member must always report such a disclosure to the *HoS* as soon as possible.

11. Host Families

11.1 Prior to the commencement of an agreement between the Academy and a Host Family, an enhanced *DBS* plus Barred List Check is carried out on the designated house parent along with an enhanced check on any other person residing at the home who is over 16 years of age.

11.2 At present the Academy does not have any accommodation arrangements that fall within the regulations of Private Fostering [further information here](#).

11.3 References from previous employers and local authorities (where applicable) are also sought.

11.4 Home visits are undertaken by the Player Care Lead supported by the *HoS*, this includes unannounced visits, all of which are recorded upon the 'MyConcern' reporting digital platform.

11.5 A Host Family Induction Evening is held at the Academy on an annual basis which includes a safeguarding children briefing. Each appropriate member of the host family must complete the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training.

11.6 The Academy Player Care Lead maintains a positive working relationship with each Host Family throughout the season and beyond.

(*Please note that the Club has a separate Host Family Policy*)

12. Youth Loans, Trials and Work Experience

12.1 If an Academy player or young professional under the age of 18 years joins another club on trial, work experience or a Football League Youth Loan, the Academy will seek written parental consent (additional to the standard consent sought at the start of every season) prior to the activity taking place. Consideration will also be given to the player's education programme, travel and accommodation arrangements. If the new club is not located within a reasonable travelling distance from the player's current address, the Club will insist that, where possible, players are placed in host family accommodation during their time away from the Club and not in hotel accommodation, and as good practice the Club should designate a member of Academy Staff to check upon the player(s) on a regular (weekly) basis, not just for game situations but for their general welfare whilst on loan, trial or work experience.

12.2 For players under the age of 18 years who are joining the Club on trial, parental consent will be sought prior to the trial taking place, along with suitable checks e.g., medical forms. Where accommodation is required during the trial period, this will be in designated host family accommodation or, if the player's parent/guardian is also travelling with the player



then a local hotel may be used as an alternative. Transportation will be arranged during the trial period via the Academy Administrator and agreed with parents/guardians.

12.3 All players under the age of 18 years will have access to the *HoS*, Player Care Lead and *DSO's*, whilst at or away from the parent Club.

13. Academy and First Team Progression

13.1 As players progress through the Academy system they may have the opportunity to train and play with the adult provisions of the Club. This may raise concerns for the individual and/or their parent/guardians as they will be entering an adult provision and as such may witness adult behaviours and language. The Club will support the player(s) during this transition and ensure that the welfare of the player concerned is paramount. Parents will be included, and consent sought.

13.2 The individual will be provided with a separate changing/shower room from the adult players, this to minimise the risk of any contact with adults who may be in a state of undress. A risk assessment will be carried out during an away fixture where contact will be made with the host club to ensure that appropriate facilities are in place for the individual who will be supported by a safeguarding trained member of staff.

13.3 All first team staff receive safeguarding training delivered by the *HoS* where topics including, away accommodation and travel, behaviour in and around Children including the use of mobile telephones and social media are covered. Such staff also undertake the *FA* Safeguarding Children Training, details of which are recorded on the Club *FA* Portal managed by the *HoS*, and they also undertake refresher training delivered via the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport online training.

14. Transport

14.1 The Club has a Fleet Manager who is responsible for overseeing transport arrangements across the Academy, including registered Academy players and players attending the Club on trial. The Fleet Manager attends weekly Academy Operations meetings in order to report on the Academy's transport programme and other relevant matters.

14.2 The Academy employ a small number of fleet drivers who hold relevant valid *DBS* certificates for their role. These members of staff have also undergone the safer recruitment process and will always be used for the transportation of Academy scholars.

14.3 Each Academy driver will complete the *EFL* Safeguarding in Sport training. Safeguarding refresher training is provided by the *HoS* annually or when any situation occurs that results in a learning outcome.

14.4 The Port Vale Foundation Trust has a Transport Policy that should be followed when Children are being transported on behalf of the Trust. Children shall be accompanied at all times by the Activity Leader. Only vehicles and drivers approved under the Trust's Transport Policy will be used to transport children. Under no circumstances will a member
Port Vale Football Club - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures
Season 2024/2025 (Review – July 2025) / Classification Status: External



of staff use a private vehicle to convey children engaged in an activity being delivered by the Trust.

14.5 The only exception to a member of staff using a private vehicle to convey a Child would be for a medical emergency and only if there was a delay with the response time of a medical professional (i.e. delay in ambulance attending the incident) and the advice provided by the medical professional (NHS Emergency or 111) was that the Child needed to be conveyed to a hospital or other medical venue immediately. On this occasion there would have to be two members of staff conveying the Child and the parent or carer of the Child would have to be notified at the earliest opportunity. Should an incident of this nature occur the member of staff must contact the *HoS*.

(*Please note that the Club has a separate Transport Policy owned by the Fleet Manager*)

15. Gifts and Gratuities

15.1 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. All staff are expected to adhere to the Staff/Volunteers Code of Conduct.

15.2 The Club 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 of any significant value as this may be misinterpreted by others. Staff should report any gifts received to their line manager and they should be dealt with appropriately.

15.3 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.

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

16. Honour Based Abuse/Violence, Forced Marriage and the ‘One Chance Rule’

16.1 Honour Based Abuse/Violence: Honour based abuse (HBA) or violence (HBV) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

It is a violation of human rights and may be a form of domestic and/or sexual violence. Where it affects children and young people it is child abuse.

It can be distinguished from other forms of abuse and violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members.



Women, men and younger members of the family can all be involved in the abuse. Victims of honour-based abuse are more likely to be abused multiple times by multiple perpetrators.

Honour based abuse and violence manifests itself in a diverse range of ways with children and young people, it can lead to a deeply embedded form of coercive control, built on expectations about behaviour that are made clear at a young age. Often the control is established without obvious violence for instance through family members threatening to kill themselves because of the victim's behaviour.

Honour based abuse can also include forced marriage (approximately 1 in 5 cases), domestic and/or sexual violence, rape, physical assaults, harassment, kidnap, threats of violence (including murder), witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or indeed another family member, and female genital mutilation. Do not underestimate the potential risk of harm.

16.2 Forced Marriage: A marriage in which one or both spouses do not (in the case of Children) consent to the marriage and duress involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial and sexual pressure. A forced marriage is different from an arranged marriage, which is a marriage entered into freely by both parties, although their families take a leading role in the choice of partner. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence to force someone to marry (may result in a sentence of up to 7 years imprisonment).

16.3 "One Chance Rule": All staff working with suspected or actual victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence need to be aware of the "one chance" rule. That is, they may only have one opportunity to speak to a victim or potential victim and possibly only have one chance to save a life. If the victim is allowed to leave without the appropriate support and advice being offered, that one chance might be wasted. The above list is not exhaustive in terms of risk posed to Children. Additional risks include, drug taking, alcohol abuse, missing from education, care and sexting (also known as youth produced visual imagery).

16.4 It is important to acknowledge that safeguarding concerns do not always arise from a disclosure from the Child. Concerns can emerge from worrying behaviours or changes in patterns of behaviour displayed by the Child, or they can come directly from another individual (Child or Adult).

16.5 The Club is aware of these threats which may appear within the local community and has a network of local organisations which it can refer to in case of being made aware of extra-familial threats.

16.6 The Child may also be a young carer and local authorities also have a statutory duty to identify and assess such Children. The Children and Families Act 2014 gives young carers similar rights to assessment as other carers have under the Care Act 2014.

17. Responding to a Report of an Allegation or Suspicion of an Incident



17.1 The *HoS* should be contacted as soon as possible and within 24 hours in any circumstance, or the departmental *DSO* if the *HoS* is not available. It is recognised that an individual may need to respond to a safeguarding concern immediately so the person reporting must follow the Club's 'what to do in response to a concern, incident or allegation' flow chart. This document provides a clear breakdown of what to do in order to deal with any given concern ([See Appendix G](#)).

With this in mind the following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse or poor practice.

DO:

- Ensure the safety of Child.
- Treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the Child as if you believe what they are saying, although do not directly say the words "I believe you".
- Tell the Child they are right to tell you.
- Reassure the Child that they are not to blame.
- Be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Tell the Child what you are doing and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse.
- Write down everything said and what was done (handwritten is preferable) and sign and date the notes.
- An Incident Reporting Form (Child/Young Person) should be used where possible and, in any case, a referral must be made to the *HoS* within 24 hours of the incident taking place.
- Seek medical advice if necessary.
- Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, this information must only be shared with the *HoS*, departmental *DSO*, Line Manager or Safety Officer (match day only), as appropriate and on a strictly 'need to know' basis only.

DO NOT:

- Make promises you cannot keep or to keep secrets.
- Interrogate the Child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the Police and Children's Services who have experience in this.
- Cast doubt on what the Child has told you, do not interrupt or change the subject.
- Say anything that makes the Child feel responsible for the abuse.
- Inform parents/carers – the *HoS* will make this decision based on whether there is suspicion of their involvement.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT.

18. Recording a Report of an Allegation or Suspicion of an Incident



18.1 Trained staff within the Club must record the matter as soon as is practicable onto the 'MyConcern' digital recording platform. Alternatively, an Incident Reporting Form (Child/Young Person) ([See Appendix F](#)) must be completed and submitted within 24 hours to the HoS, who will record the incident onto 'MyConcern' on behalf of the staff member. This form must be emailed to: safeguarding@port-vale.co.uk.

18.2 Once the concern is recorded, it will be triaged by the HoS who will decide on the best course of action on how the concern will be dealt with.

18.3 The HoS may ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report, dependent upon the circumstances.

18.4 Any statement made by the Child should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts. Any opinion, interpretation or judgement should be clearly stated as this.

18.5 Questions should be kept to a minimum, and where used, they should be of an open format, good practice being the use of the 'TED' system;

- 'Tell me'
- 'Explain'
- 'Describe'

No suggestion of who the perpetrator was or how any concern or incident happened should be suggested.

18.6 A Child should never be pressured to give information or show physical marks unless they do so willingly. If they choose to show markings, **two members of staff must be present**, any marks raising concern should be recorded on the disclosure form.

18.7 There are actions which staff have to, and are obliged to take, once they are aware of a problem. Undertakings of confidentiality should not be given either to the person making the allegations or to the person being interviewed. A matter is confidential on a need to know basis, and nobody should have any reservations about referring any issue to the HoS. The key issue is that the welfare of the Child is protected. There is always tension and caution around issues of confidentiality. The advice for all staff at the Club is that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a Child (although this does not necessarily mean that the parents/carers have to be told).

The Club will ensure that any Child concerned is immediately removed from any possible risk of harm.

18.8 Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. In these cases, the HoS will first seek the advice of the Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Partnership, including the LADO, the Police, or the FA/EFL Safeguarding Children Team, before setting up an internal inquiry and take their advice on informing the child's parents.

18.9 In any case of suspected abuse, as soon as the Local Authority or the Police have been informed, the Club must provide a report to the FA Head of Safeguarding, the EFL Head of Port Vale Football Club - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures Season 2024/2025 (Review – July 2025) / Classification Status: External



Safeguarding and the *HoS* will also inform the *SSM* of the Club. Any external Local Authority provision will naturally take the lead on any case.

18.10 In the event that the allegation or suspicion is investigated internally by the *HoS*, the Club will follow best practice guidance when recording allegations/suspicions and any subsequent investigations (Sport Resolutions Practical Guide to Undertaking Safeguarding Investigations in Sport).

Any investigation we undertake will follow the key principles as follows:

- Integrity – we will be honest with all parties involved in regard to the process and what we can and cannot do.
- Fairness and Impartiality – we will speak to the complainant/s, witnesses, and the individual(s) to which the concern relates, this to seek a balanced and unbiased account of events.
- Confidentiality – we will ensure that we follow confidentiality protocols and only share information with parties necessary for safeguarding reasons e.g., statutory authorities, (such as Police or Children’s Services/LADO)
- Proportionality – decision making will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration a number of factors relevant to each case
- Timeliness – whilst we recognise that investigations can be disruptive to the Club, we will ensure that investigations are prioritised, but also thorough and methodical with a person-centric approach and are never rushed.

Providing it is appropriate to do so, the *HoS* will maintain dialogue with all parties involved with the allegation until such time as the matter has reached a reasonable outcome, taking the lead from the external agency. Escalation to inform Board level will take place at the earliest opportunity by the *HoS*.

Specific information regarding allegations against members of Staff

18.11 If the report involves an allegation about any member of the Club staff (whether full time, part time, paid, unpaid, contracted, engaged, voluntary etc.) and the Club believes that the report could demonstrate that the member of staff in question has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a Child or may have harmed a Child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a Child
or
- behaved towards a Child or Children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with Children.

The *HoS* will then immediately inform the *LADO* where the alleged incident took place so that they can consult with the Police and Local Authority Children’s Social Care colleagues as appropriate. Where the *HoS* is unsure as to whether the report meets the criteria stated above, the advice of the *LADO* shall still be sought.

18.12 The member of staff in question may be asked to write a brief report, as may any other person that is deemed to have an involvement in the allegation. The member of



staff in question will be asked to stay away from activities pending the conclusion of any investigation. This process would only be carried out once the advice of the above mentioned external bodies had been sought and only then in consultation with the *HoS/SSM*. Providing it does not contradict with any advice received from the *LADO*, any internal investigation will be carried out in line with the Club's Management and Human Resource Policies.

18.13 If the Child resides within Stoke on Trent, the referral is made via the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHaD) on 01782 235100 (Monday to Friday – 08:30 to 18:00 Hours), or out of hours via the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01782 234234.

If the Child resides within another geographical area of Staffordshire, the referral is made via the Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support Service (SCAS) on 0300 111 8007 (Monday to Thursday – 08:30 to 17:00 hours and Friday – 08:30 to 16:30 Hours), or out of hours via the Emergency Duty Service on 0345 604 2886 or email via eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk.

If the referral is made via a telephone call there will be a conversation based assessment with a trained social worker who will decide on the appropriate response. Details of external partners, including email address and contact number, are detailed fully below ([See Appendix C](#)), this along with a number of useful external resources.

18.14 If the concern is in relation to a person in a 'Position of Trust' as the potential perpetrator, the same procedure applies but a request for the information to be passed to the *LADO* must be made and recorded.

18.15 The Local Authority, with the assistance of other organisations, as appropriate, have a statutory duty in law to make enquiries in accordance with the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a Child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

18.16 Where a referral is made to the Local Authority, the *HoS* must inform the *SSM* without delay. All other issues that are raised with the *HoS* will be routinely shared with the *SSM* during the multi-disciplinary team monthly safeguarding meeting.

18.17 **Where a Child is at immediate risk of harm then the Police must be contacted by calling '999' and the HoS notified at the earliest opportunity.**

19. Stoke on Trent Prevent/Channel Programme

19.1 The Prevent/Channel programme is the response of the city to the national counter-terrorism strategy of the UK government which aims to stop Children from being drawn into supporting terrorism [further information here](#).

The Prevent programme, which staff at the Club are aware of, is designed to:

- Divert vulnerable individuals away from the radicalisation process and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support through local safeguarding



structures.

- Deter extremist groups from creating division and disharmony and spreading hate.
- Keep the majority safe from the few who seek to harm others.
- Ensure that the club staff understand how to recognise extremism.

19.2 The Stoke-on-Trent Channel Panel meets monthly and is attended by safeguarding professionals who discuss how best they can reduce the risk of an individual being drawn into terrorism based on the circumstances of each person. Support options can encompass an array of different interventions, addressing educational, vocational, mental health, and other vulnerabilities.

19.3 The Channel programme works in a comparable way to existing safeguarding partnerships aimed at protecting vulnerable people and is designed to work with individuals of any age who are at risk of being exploited by extremists.

19.4 All club staff know that if they are concerned that someone is at risk of becoming involved in extremism that they should discuss this with the *HoS* who will notify the *SSM* and liaise directly with the Channel co-ordinator at Staffordshire Police Prevent Team where a referral will be made, if required.

20. Whistleblowing

20.1 Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing in their organisation. As a whistle-blower you are protected in law because you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you raise concerns. You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future. Whistleblowing law derives from the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). It provides the right for a worker to take a case to an employment tribunal if they have been victimised at work or they have lost their job because they had “blown the whistle”.

(*Please note that the Club has a separate Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy*)

20.2 The Club want to ensure there is a healthy and supportive culture across the organisation whereby people have the confidence to come forward to speak out or act if they are unhappy with anything. At the first instance it may be appropriate for the person to speak with their Line Manager but if this opportunity is not available then either the *HoS* or *SSM* would be the most appropriate.

20.3 The person may also wish to contact the *FA* for advice by contacting the *FA* Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863. The *FA* will treat your disclosure in confidence and will only reveal your identity if absolutely necessary. For example, in connection with legal action, unions and professional associations who can support and assist their members.



20.4 If in the event you make a disclosure to the Club, the FA, or partner agencies such as the Police and Social Care Services and they are found to be malicious or made for personal gain then disciplinary action will be taken against you.

20.5 Anyone found to be harassing or victimising an individual who makes a protected disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.

21. Port Vale Football Club Safeguarding Accountability Network & Structure

21.1 The Club has a safeguarding accountability network who attend monthly safeguarding meetings chaired by the HoS. The SSM often attends these meetings along with other board members and club staff ([See Appendix H](#)).

21.2 The Club also has a safeguarding structure with a number of DSO's and Safeguarding Champions in place across the club, this with a view to underpinning the aims and principles of this policy ([See Appendix I](#)).

22. Associated Policies and Documentation

Other associated policies and documentation linked directly or indirectly to this Policy include:

- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Child Friendly Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Guidance to bringing a Child to a Match Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Allegation of Abuse against Staff Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Host Family Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Online Safety & Social Media Policy & Procedures 2024-25
- Safer Recruitment Policy 2024-25 (Owned by Human Resources Department)
- Transport Policy 2024-25 (Owned by Transport Fleet Manager)
- Data Protection Policy 2024-25
- Consent/Incident Reporting Forms



Appendix A – TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Types and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

This document should be read in conjunction with the Port Vale Football Club Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a Child. They can be caused 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, much more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

It is important to acknowledge that some Children are more vulnerable to abuse. For example, Children with disabilities and high performing / elite young athletes.

Should you have any concerns that abuse is occurring you should contact the HoS, departmental Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Line Manager, if appropriate immediately.

There are varying types of abuse which can range from physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect, these along with a number of other types of abuse as listed below.

Physical Abuse: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a Child.

Emotional Abuse: 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 or unloved.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a Child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the Child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other Children.

Neglect: 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 occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a Child's basic emotional needs (WT 2023).

Child Sexual Exploitation (hereafter referred as CSE): is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a Child into sexual activity, (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the



Appendix A – TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT (Continued)

sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

Contextualised Safeguarding: As well as threats to the welfare of Children from within their families, Children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside of their families. These extra familial threats may arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and Children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as ‘county lines’, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influence of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Psychological Abuse: Includes emotional abuse which has a harmful effect upon the Child’s emotional health and wellbeing. It also includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Modern Slavery: This includes trafficking that may involve Children being exploited through violence, control, coercion and forced work against their will. There are varying forms of exploitation which can include forced marriage, forced labour or domestic servitude.

Domestic Abuse: An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, between those aged 16 years or over, who are, or have been, intimate with partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse including honour based abuse.

Discriminatory Abuse: Abusive or bullying behaviour, because of discrimination, occurs when motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be based upon the ethnic origin, colour, nationality, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability of an individual. Actions may include unfair or less favourable treatment, culturally insensitive comments and verbal insults. Discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable and will be reported to the Football Association (FA). This includes incidents on and off the pitch (including social media).

Peer-on-Peer Abuse: All staff should be aware that Children can abuse other Children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying); physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; up skirting (taking a photograph under a person’s clothing without their consent with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm); sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.



Appendix A – TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT (Continued)

Grooming: This is defined as developing the trust of an individual and/or their family for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming can happen both online and in person. It is important to remember that someone can groom an organisation for the purpose of sexual abuse that has been evidenced in recent high-profile cases. Appropriate awareness of grooming behaviour patterns can present a significant opportunity to prevent abuse.

Radicalisation: The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Anybody from any background can become radicalised. The grooming of Children for the purposes of involvement in extremist activity is a serious safeguarding issue.

Female Genital Mutilation (hereafter referred as *FGM*): Involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure has no health benefits for female Children. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to practice *FGM* or to take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for *FGM* whether or not it is lawful in another country.

Bullying: Repeated behaviour intended to intimidate or upset someone and/or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, for example, name calling, exclusion or isolation, spreading rumours, embarrassing someone in public or in front of their peers, threatening to cause harm, physically hurting someone or damaging their possessions.

Cyberbullying: The use of technology to harass, threaten, humiliate, spread rumours or target another person. By definition it occurs amongst Children. Bullying because of discrimination occurs when motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be based upon the ethnic origin, colour, nationality, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability of an individual. Actions may include unfair or less favourable treatment, culturally insensitive comments, insults and 'banter' (the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks).

Poor Practice: This is behaviour that falls short of abuse but is nevertheless unacceptable. It is essential that poor practice is challenged and reported upon even where there is belief that the motives of an individual are well meaning. Failure to challenge poor practice can lead to an environment where abuse is more likely to remain unnoticed. Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of the Child are not afforded the necessary priority, thus compromising their welfare, for example, allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported, placing them in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations, failing to ensure their safety, ignoring health and safety guidelines and giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals.

Hazing: Any rituals, initiation activities, or situation, with or without consent, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the physical or emotional wellbeing of a Child.



Appendix A – TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT (Continued)

Infatuations: Children may develop an infatuation with a member of Staff who works with them. Such situations should be handled sensitively to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Staff should be aware, that in such circumstances, there is a high risk that words or actions may be misinterpreted and that allegations could be made against Staff. Staff should therefore ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach. A member of Staff who becomes aware that a Child may be infatuated with them, or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the *HoS*, the departmental *DSO* or their Line Manager in the first instance.

Fabricated or Induced Illness: This is easiest understood as illness in a Child which is fabricated by a parent or person in loco parentis. The Child is often presented for medical assessment and care, usually persistently, often resulting in multiple medical procedures. Acute symptoms and signs of illness cease when the Child is separated from the perpetrator.

County Lines: This is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal substances into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile telephones or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit Children to move and store the substances and money and they will use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. Child Criminal Exploitation (hereafter referred as *CCE*) is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a Child. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. *CCE* does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology. *CCE* is broader than just county lines and includes for instance Children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit offences of theft.

The Concept of Significant Harm

Some Children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, 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 and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a Child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

A court may make a care order (committing the Child to the care of the local authority) or supervision order (putting the Child under the supervision of a social worker or a probation officer) in respect of a Child if it is satisfied that:

- the Child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- the harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant



Appendix A – TYPES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT (Continued)

harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the Child, and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the Child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, for example, a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the physical and psychological development of the Child. Some Children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected.

For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the Child's own assessment of his or her safety and welfare, the strengths and supports of the family, as well as an assessment of the likelihood and capacity for change and improvements in parenting and the care of Children.

What happens next?

The Local Authority, with the assistance of other organisations, as appropriate, have a statutory duty in law to make enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a Child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The purpose of a Section 47 enquiry is to decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a Child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm. The enquiry is carried out by undertaking or continuing with an assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in Working Together 2023.

Local Authority social workers have a statutory duty to lead assessments under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 – (“Section 47 – A local authority must investigate if they are informed that a child in their area is subject of an Emergency Protection Order, is in police protection or is suffering or likely to be suffering significant harm. They must then take any steps, as reasonably practicable, to ensure that the child is safeguarded”). The police, health practitioners, teachers and school staff and other relevant practitioners should help the local authority in undertaking its enquiries (Section 47 is further described on Pages 89-90, within the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 document).



Appendix B – INTERNAL CONTACT DETAILS

List of Internal Contacts

Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM)(Board Representative)

Claire Halket (Director of People & Operations)

(E): claire.halket@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 01782 655800

Head of Safeguarding & Lead Disclosure Officer

Jon Bloore

(E): jon.bloore@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 07703 753688

Safeguarding Team

Concerns / General Enquiries

(E): safeguarding@port-vale.co.uk / (T): 01782 655800

Port Vale Academy Designated Safeguarding Officers

Daniel Lloyd (Head of Academy Coach & Player Development (14-18 years) YDP Lead)

(E) daniel.lloyd@port-vale.co.uk / (T): 01782 655800

Megan Walters (Player Care Lead)

(E): megan.walters@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 01782 655800

Port Vale Foundation Trust Designated Safeguarding Officer

Will Turner (Head of Community)

(E): will.turner@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 01782 757066

Disability Access Officer (DAO)

James Copeland (Ticket & Supporter Service Executive)

(E): DAO@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 01782 655821



Appendix B – INTERNAL CONTACT DETAILS (Continued)

Port Vale Football Club Abuse Hotline (Match Day Only)

Match Day Control Room

Reporting of Homophobic / Racial Abuse

(T): 07801 216675

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Lead

Will Turner (Head of Community)

(E): EDI@port-vale.co.uk / (T): 01782 757066



Appendix C – EXTERNAL CONTACTS & RESOURCE DETAILS

List of External Contacts & Resources

Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership (*Stoke on Trent Only*)

Childrens Advice and Duty Service (CHaD)

If you suspect a Child or Young Person is at risk of significant harm.

(T): 01782 235100 (Monday – Friday 08:30 to 18:00 Hours).

Out of Hours

Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

(T): 01782 234234

(W): www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Stoke on Trent)

John Hanlon (T): 0800 561 0015

Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support Service (SCAS)

This service does not cover Stoke on Trent (Refer to CHaD above).

If you suspect a Child or Young Person is at risk of significant harm.

(T): 0300 111 8007 (Monday – Thursday – 08:30 to 17:00 Hours & Friday – 08:30 to 16:30 Hours)

Out of Hours

Emergency Duty Service

(T): 0345 604 2886 / (E) eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Staffordshire excluding Stoke on Trent)

Linda Hancock (T): 0300 111 8007

Staffordshire Police

(T): 999 Emergency / (T): 101 Non-Emergency / (W): www.staffordshire.police.uk (Live Chat)

Staffordshire Police Prevent Team

(T): 01785 232054 / (E): prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

Police Anti-Terrorist Hotline

(T): 0800 789 321



[Appendix C – EXTERNAL CONTACTS & RESOURCES DETAILS \(Continued\)](#)

NSPCC Helpline

(T): 0808 800 5000 / (Text): 88858 / (E): help@nspcc.org.uk

Text phone for Deaf Users: 0800 056 0566

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

(E): cpsu@nspcc.org.uk / (W): [NSPCC Safeguarding Training for Parents/Guardians](#)

Football Association (FA) Safeguarding Team

(T): 0800 169 1863 / (E): safeguarding@TheFA.com

English Football League (EFL) Safeguarding Team

(T): 01772 325490 / (E): safeguarding@efl.com

Staffordshire Football Association (Staffs FA)

Jan Scott (Safeguarding & Education Officer)

(T): 01785 256994 (Ext: 205) / (M): 07969 294023 / (E): Support@StaffordshireFA.com

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

(T): 0808 2000247

Stonewall (LGBTQ+ Support Network)

(W): www.stonewall.org.uk

Hub for Hope

Mobile Telephone App (IOS & Android) – Links to numerous support services

Mind (Mental Health Support)

(T): 0300 123 3393 / (W): www.mind.org.uk

The Samaritans

(T): 116 123 / (W): www.samaritans.org.uk

Papyrus Suicide Prevention (Hopeline247 - 24 Hours – 7 days a week)

(T): 0800 068 4141 / (Text): 07860 039967 / (E): pat@papyrus-uk.org

UK Internet Safety Centre (Online Safety Issues)

(T): 0844 381 4772 / (E): helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

Children Online Safety

(E) www.internetmatters.org



Appendix D - EFL DBS ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE

Regulated Activity

Roles in football required to have enhanced disclosures with the appropriate barred list checks:

- Safeguarding Manager
- Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Childcare Provider
- Academy Manager/Director/ Head of Youth Development
- Football Team Manager U18's
- U18 Football Coach
- Coach working with Children and Adults at Risk
- Sport scientists (Fitness Trainer, Nutritionist, Psychologist, Physiologist)
- Driver of a vehicle transporting children on behalf of Club/CCO
- Head of Education
- Tutors and Assessors (FAL, BTEC Tutors, Functional Skills, SEP co-ordinators)
- Academy Steward
- Employee accompanying U18 trips/tours/tournaments
- Chaplain
- Host Family
- Club Doctor
- Physiotherapist
- Sport Psychologist
- All other HCPC listed Health Care Professionals
- Community Coach (any sport CCO)
- Youth Worker (CCO)
- NCS Activity Worker (CCO)

Enhanced Disclosures

Roles in football required to have enhanced disclosures checks:

- Head of Recruitment/Player Liaison Officer
- Chief Scout
- Academy Performance/Video Analyst
- Matchday Co-ordinators
- Driver of Vehicle for Transporting Adults at Risk
- Charity Trustee
- Matchday Regular Family Area Stewards
- Club Organised Matchday Away Travel Stewards
- Matchday Disabled Area/Support Area Stewards



Appendix D - EFL DBS ELIGIBILITY GUIDANCE (Continued)

- Academy Directors/Board of Governors
- Kit Person/Manager
- Furry Mascot/Character Mascot

Standard Disclosures

Roles in football eligible for standard disclosures checks:

Stewards performing licensable activities as per Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) guidance and do not hold a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence (see below).

Note – SGSA licensable stewarding activities: Stewards searching spectators on their entry to the ground. Stewards specifically tasked with physically intervening against and ejecting spectators who are in breach of ground regulations. This includes decisions of refusal of entry. The supervisors of those stewards in categories above. In a non-front-line capacity, safety officers and chief stewards.

Basic Disclosures

Roles in football eligible for basic disclosures checks:

- Chairperson
- Club Secretary
- Finance Officer/CCO Finance Officer
- Lead Disclosure Officers/Verifiers/Counter Signatories
- Scout/Recruitment officer (Child Workforce)
- Academy/Community/Foundation Administrator
- Ticket Office Staff
- Club Shop Staff/Commercial Team
- Photographer
- Cleaning Staff
- Maintenance Staff
- Video Analyst
- Club/CCO Safeguarding Senior Manager (SSM)
- CCO NCS Salesforce User



Appendix E – CODE OF CONDUCT – MATCH DAY SAFEGUARDING

Port Vale Football Club - Match Day Safeguarding Code of Conduct 2024-2025

- Any Child under the age of 14 years (13 years and below) must be accompanied by a Parent or other Responsible Adult, an adult is anyone aged 18 years or older.
- The role of the Parent/Responsible Adult is to safeguard the interests, rights and welfare of the Child whilst present on the Stadium footprint.
- **Any Child under the age of 10 years (9 years and below) should always be kept at arm's length and clearly in view.** Should the Child need to leave your presence, always be aware of their location during your visit.
- If you fail to supervise your Child, you may be asked to leave the Stadium along with your Child.
- Please familiarise yourself with the “Lost Child Meeting Point” clearly signed within each section of the Stadium and have a plan to meet there if you get separated. Ensure your Child is aware of this location.
- Should you get separated from your Child please contact a Safety Steward immediately and listen to announcements over the stadium speakers.
- On a match day a number of Dedicated Safeguarding Stewards will be available to help. They are identifiable by their pink-coloured high visibility vests.
- Other Safety Stewards are situated around the stadium in high visibility clothing for your safety and confidence.
- Our Safety Stewards are trained in how to deal with a lost Child, please ensure your Child knows not to go off with any person that they do not know.
- In an emergency, please ensure your Child is aware of what to do including how to evacuate the stadium and where to meet up with you.
- Should you see anything that causes you a concern or does not look right please report this to a Safety Steward.
- Ensure that your Child knows who to contact should they become lost or worried.

Remember if something doesn't look or feel right, it probably isn't.....Report it!



Incident reporting form

Your information			
Name			
Address			
Contact Number(s)			
Email			
Name of Organisation		Your Role	

Personal information – Child / Young Person					
Name				Date of Birth	
Gender ⁱ	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/>	Another description (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there any information about the child that would be useful to consider?					

Contact information – Parent / Carer		
Name(s)		
Address		
Contact Number(s)		
Email		
Have they been notified of this incident?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain why this decision has been taken
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please give details of what was said / actions agreed

Incident details*			
Date and time of incident			
Please tick one:	<input type="checkbox"/> I am reporting my own concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am responding to concerns raised by someone else – please fill in their details:	
Name of person raising concern		Relationship to the child	
Contact Number(s)			
Email			



Details of the incident or concerns (include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay)

* Attach a separate sheet if more space is required (e.g., multiple witnesses)

Incident details (continued)			
Child's account of the incident			
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident			
Name of witness (and date of birth if a child)		Relationship to the child	
Address			
Contact Number(s)			
Email			
Details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury			
Name (and date of birth if a child)		Relationship to the child	
Address			
Contact Number(s)			
Email			
Further Details – If answered Yes to incident been reported to external agencies below:			



Please provide details of action taken to date	
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – please provide further details in Box 1
Name of Organisation / Agency	
Contact Person	
Contact Number(s)	
Email	
Agreed action or advice given	

Declaration	
Your Signature	x
Print Name	
Today's Date	

Contact the Head of Safeguarding, Departmental Designated Safeguarding Officer or Line Manager, if appropriate, in line with PORT VALE FOOTBALL CLUB reporting procedures	
Head of Safeguarding	Jon Bloore – Email: safeguarding@port-vale.co.uk / Mobile: 07703 753688
Date Reported	

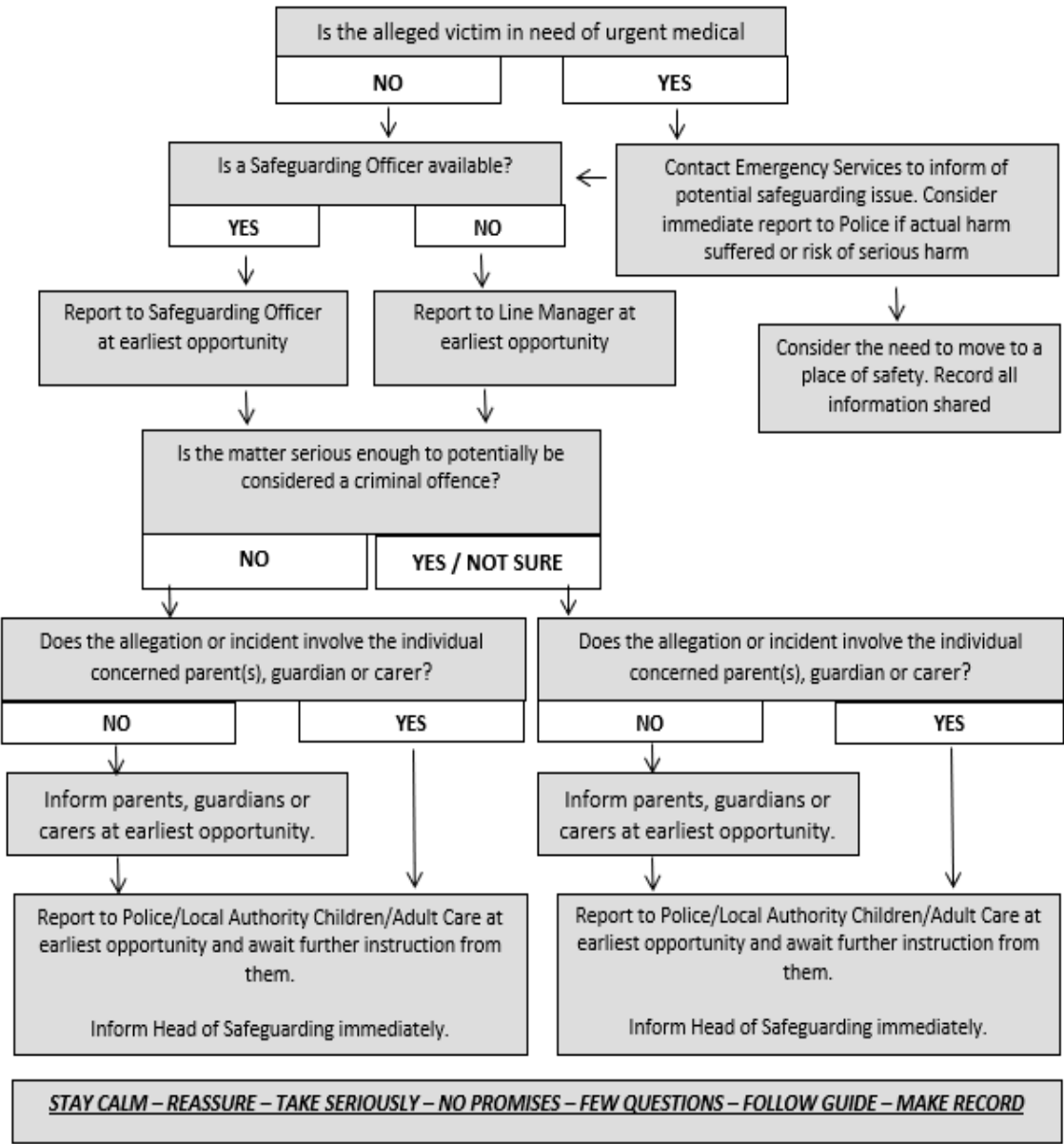


Appendix G – HOW TO RESPOND TO AN INCIDENT OR ALLEGATION

What to do in response to a concern, incident or allegation

When a Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk has disclosed concerning information to you
OR
 you have witnessed or had reported to you an incident or complaint involving a Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk which may be considered abuse or poor practice.

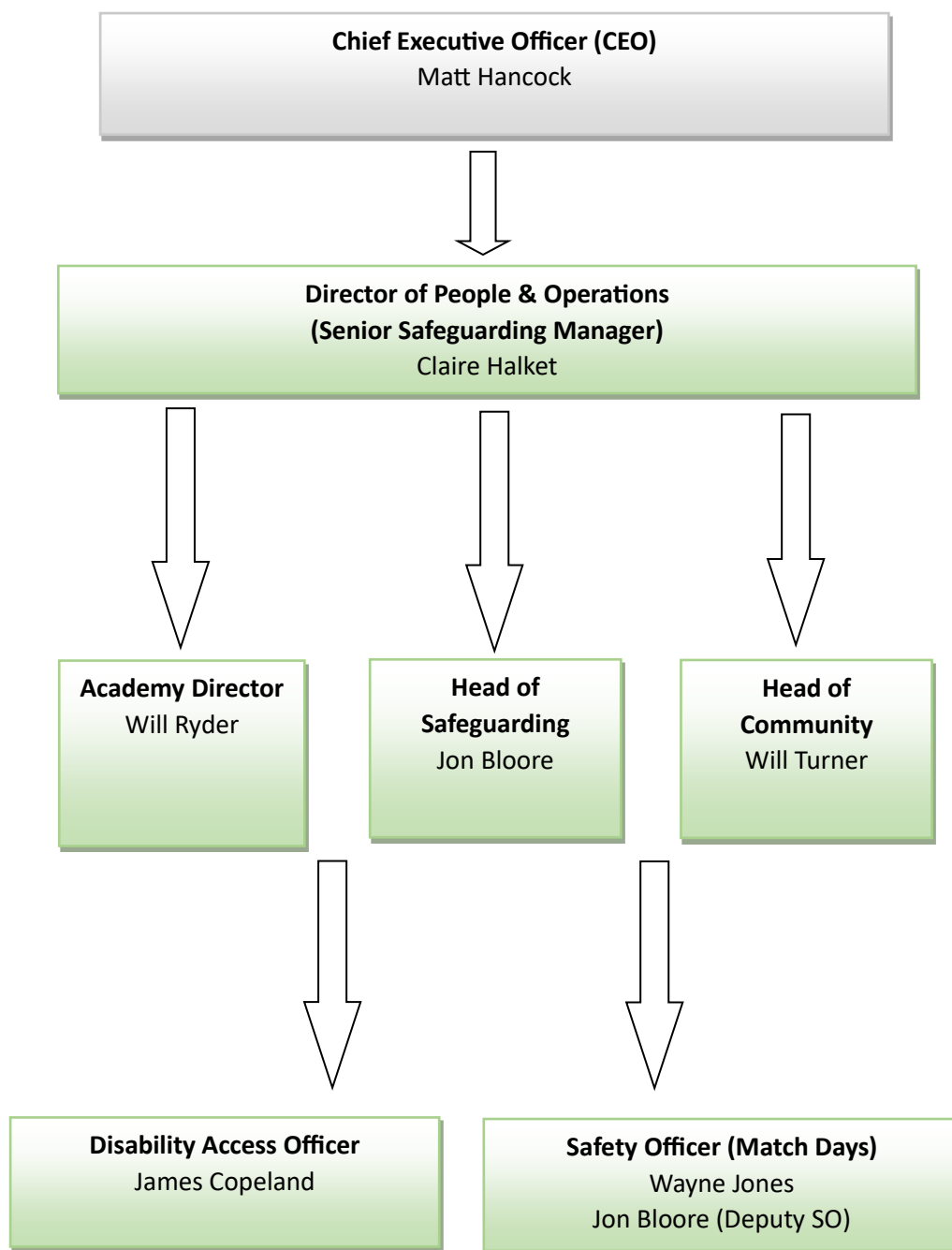
**It is essential when considering an incident or concerns involving an Adult at Risk to obtain the consent of that adult before referring the matter to a statutory agency, unless there is an immediate risk of harm.*





Safeguarding Accountability Network

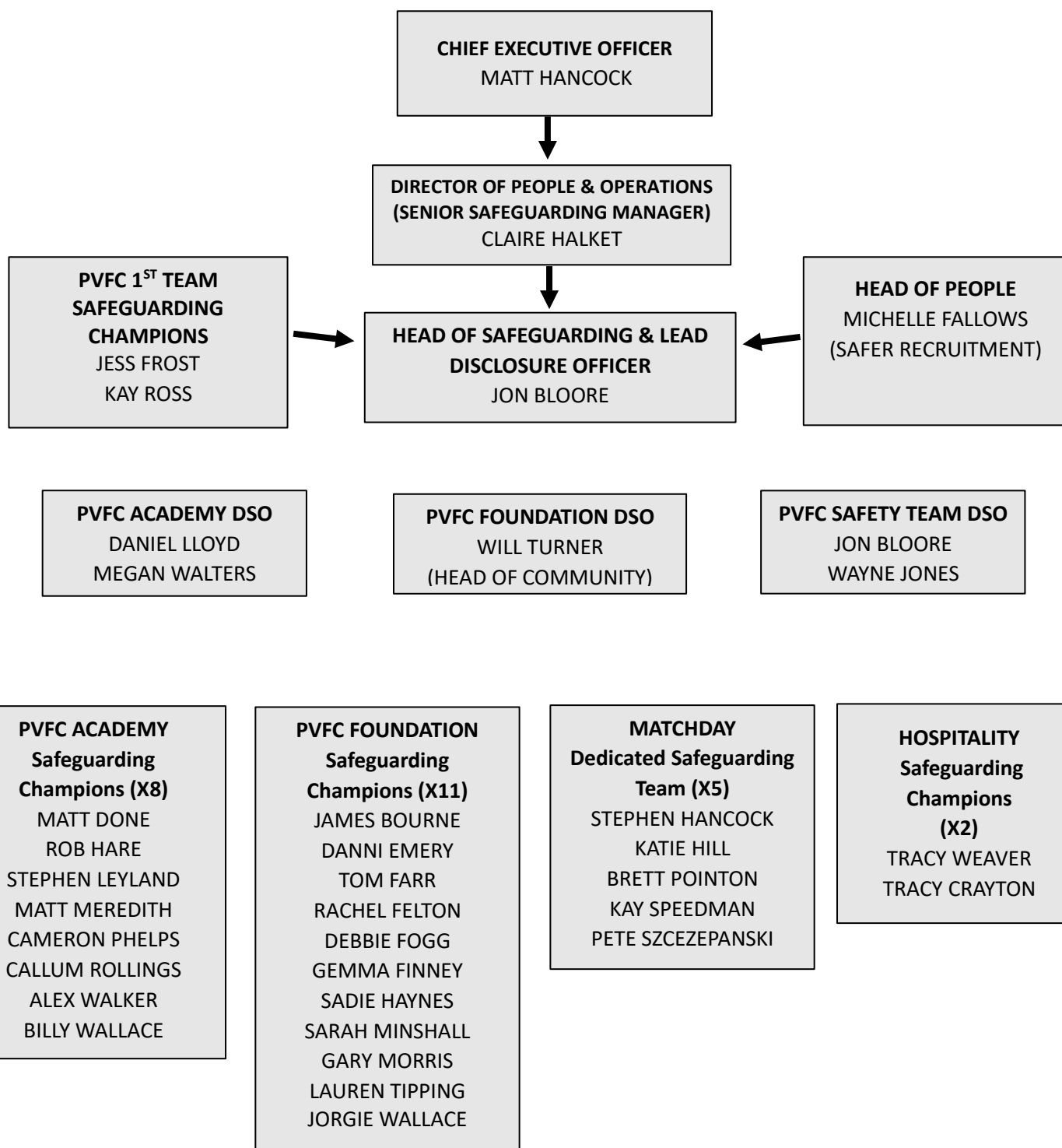
2024-25





PORT VALE FOOTBALL CLUB

SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE 2024-2025





Authority from Port Vale Board and Acceptance of Policy

External Verifier:	Rachael Holdcroft NSPCC, Strategic Services Manager
Signature:	<i>Rachael Holdcroft</i>
Date:	01/07/2024

Senior Safeguarding Manager (Board Member):	Claire Halket
Signature:	<i>Claire Halket</i>
Date:	01/07/2024 (Annual Review)

Chief Executive Officer (Board Member):	Matt Hancock
Signature:	<i>Matt Hancock</i>
Date:	01/07/2024 (Annual Review)

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Safeguarding regularly and annually or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation or statutory guidance changes are implemented.