WEST BROMWICH ALBION FOOTBALL CLUB

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY











"To protect and empower everyone by creating a welcoming, trusted and supportive environment where voices are heard and strong partnerships help our entire Baggies family thrive."

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Policy Statement & Board Commitment



West Bromwich Albion FC & The Albion Foundation Board Commitment

Everyone at West Bromwich Albion Football Club and The Albion Foundation is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, young person and adults-at-risk who we engage with.

We will strive to provide safe and positive activities and environments for everybody who engages with our services and activities. We will ensure that our Strategic Safeguarding Plan, policy framework and approach in practice reflect our commitment to this.

Mark

Executive Director (WBA FC)

Rob

Foundation Director (TAF)

Baggies Safe Safeguarding Statement

West Bromwich Albion Football Club and The Albion Foundation have merged their safeguarding functions to form 'Baggies Safe'. Baggies Safe is a commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of all who we engage with and who visit the club or the Foundation activities. Whether online or in person, Baggies Safe will strive to achieve its Vision and Principles through the implementation of its Safeguarding Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Creating positive and safer environments for everyone is our priority. We will work continuously to embed and sustain a safeguarding culture where everyone feels listened to, heard, responded to positively and supported in the management of any welfare issues or safeguarding concerns. This includes children and young people, parents/carers, players, those of any age with additional care and support needs, community partners, our paid and volunteer workforce and our supporters.

For the purpose of this policy, reference to West Bromwich Albion (WBA) includes West Bromwich Albion Football Club and The Albion Foundation. This policy uses the term young people where appropriate to support engagement and reflect the language preferred by many older children. While young people is used as an inclusive and accessible term, it does not replace the legal definitions of child or adult, which remain the basis for all safeguarding duties, responsibilities and decision-making under this policy.

Key Contacts, Initiatives and Legislation

Baggies Safe Safeguarding Team - Safeguarding@wbafc.co.uk and Safeguarding@albionfoundation.co.uk

Lisa Reynolds: Head of Safeguarding & Welfare
Email: Lisa.Reynolds@wbafc.co.uk
Mobile: 07971 632104

Andy Wheeler: Safeguarding Manager (Academy)
Email: Andy.Wheeler@wbafc.co.uk
Mobile: 07816 126120

Dave Webb: Designated Safeguarding Lead (Foundation)
Email: Dave.Webb@albionfoundation.co.uk
Mobile: 07393 019638

Sandwell Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
Email: access_team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org
Daytime: 0121 569 3100
Out of Hours: 0121 569 3100
Childline: 0800 1111

Police: 101 or 999 in an emergency
Samaritans: 116 123
FA NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) Agency: 0370 496 7622

Key Initiatives and Legislation

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- English Football League Rules
- English Football League Safeguarding Standards
- FA Safeguarding Children Rules
- FA Respect Codes of Conduct
- UK GDPR – Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Care Act 2022
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
- Premier League Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- Premier League Rules
- Premier League Safeguarding Standards Prevent Duty 2023
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sex Offenders Act 1997
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Youth Evidence & Crime Evidence Act 1999
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (annually)
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2023

Safeguarding Children and Young People

This Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy outlines West Bromwich Albion Football Club and The Albion Foundation's (WBA) commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who engage with our activities. It sets out the principles, expectations, and responsibilities that underpin our approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all children and young people are provided with safe, positive, and inclusive environments in which they can develop and thrive.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners working on behalf of WBA, across all areas of activity including the Academy, Women's team, and The Albion Foundation. It provides a clear framework for recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns, while also highlighting the importance of early intervention, professional boundaries, and effective partnership working with parents, carers, and statutory agencies.

This document should be read alongside WBA's wider safeguarding framework, including associated policies and procedures such as Safer Recruitment, Responding to Concerns, Low-Level Concerns, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and E-Safety. Together, these documents ensure a consistent, robust, and legally compliant approach to safeguarding, reinforcing WBA's commitment to creating a culture where the welfare of children and young people is always paramount.

Legislation and Guidance

WBA recognises its legal and statutory responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people and is committed to operating in line with current legislation, national guidance, and football governing body standards. This includes, but is not limited to, key legislation such as the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the Online Safety Act 2023, as well as statutory guidance including Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education. These frameworks set out the expectations for protecting children and young people and promoting their welfare and underpin all safeguarding activity within the organisation.

WBA ensures that its safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with this legal and regulatory framework, as well as the requirements of the Football Association (FA), Premier League (PL), and English Football League (EFL), including their associated 'Trusts'. Full details of the legislation and guidance that inform this policy are outlined in Appendix A. Staff and volunteers are expected to be familiar with the principles of this guidance and to apply them in practice, ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are consistently understood and effectively implemented across all areas of WBA activity. A list of safeguarding definitions to assist staff and volunteers are outlined in Appendix B.

Voice of the Child

WBA is committed to ensuring that the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people are central to all safeguarding decisions and processes. We recognise that children and young people are experts in their own lives and that listening to them is essential in understanding their experiences, identifying concerns, and ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Staff and volunteers are expected to actively listen, take children and young people seriously, and create

environments where they feel safe, respected, and confident to share their views. The voice of the child or young person will be considered in all safeguarding responses, balanced with professional judgement and the need to always act in their best interests.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding at WBA is underpinned by clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all levels of the organisation. The Board and senior leadership retain ultimate accountability for safeguarding and ensure appropriate governance, oversight, and resourcing are in place. The Head of Safeguarding & Welfare has operational responsibility for safeguarding practice, including managing concerns, liaising with statutory agencies, and ensuring that safeguarding standards are consistently applied across all departments, including the Academy, Women's team and The Albion Foundation.

All staff, volunteers, contractors and partners share responsibility for safeguarding and are required to act in accordance with this policy and associated procedures. This includes maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, responding to concerns, and reporting safeguarding issues without delay. These responsibilities are further detailed within WBA's Safeguarding Policies & Procedures, Code of Conduct, and Safer Working Practice Guidance, which provide clear expectations for behaviour and accountability.

Safer Recruitment

WBA is committed to recruiting individuals who are suitable to work with children and young people and operates a robust safer recruitment framework. All roles are subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including identity verification, references, qualifications, employment history, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required. Recruitment processes are designed to deter, identify and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people.

Safer recruitment practices are supported through WBA's Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, which set out clear processes for vetting, appointment, and ongoing monitoring of staff and volunteers. Safeguarding considerations continue beyond recruitment, with all staff receiving appropriate induction, safeguarding training, and supervision to ensure they remain suitable and confident in their roles.

Safeguarding Procedures for Staff, Volunteers, External Parties and Subcontractors

Maintaining professional boundaries and appropriate behaviours

Everyone who works or volunteers with children and young people is responsible and accountable for the way in which they behave towards them, and every child and young person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It's expected that all adult-young person relationships always maintain clear and appropriate boundaries, are supportive, positive and aimed at improving the child or young person's skills, development and progress. Adult-young person relationships should all focus on the respective activity/event. Good safeguarding practices protect everyone.

The PL and EFL have produced a guide entitled “Safer Working Practice”, a copy of which has been received by all staff and can be requested from our Safeguarding Team. Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of activities in this guide it is recognised that it cannot cover all eventualities. Staff and volunteers are expected to make judgements about their actions and behaviour to secure the best interests and safety of children and young people in their care and to seek the help and support of the Safeguarding Team.

All actions and behaviours should be guided by the principle that the safety and welfare of children and young people is paramount. We recognise the emotional impact upon staff and volunteers when concerns arise, and our Safeguarding Team are also available to ensure that appropriate support is extended to anyone involved in the management of concerns.

Position of Trust

A Position of Trust exists where an individual has responsibility for, or authority over a child or young person, including roles such as coaches, staff, volunteers, and others involved in delivering WBA activities. These positions carry a significant level of influence, and there is an inherent power imbalance which can be exploited if appropriate boundaries are not maintained. WBA recognises that all adults working with children and young people must uphold the highest standards of conduct and behaviour, both within and outside of their professional role.

In line with UK legislation and safeguarding standards, it is strictly prohibited for any adult in a Position of Trust to engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with a child under the age of 18 involved in WBA activities, regardless of the perceived consent of the child. All staff and volunteers are required to always maintain clear professional boundaries. Expectations relating to conduct are set out in WBA’s Code of Conduct, Safer Working Practice Guidance, and Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy, which provide clear guidance on appropriate relationships and the actions to be taken where concerns arise.

Responding to Disclosures, Safeguarding Incidents and Concerns

Recognising Abuse

WBA recognises that abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, as well as neglect. Staff and volunteers are expected to remain vigilant to signs and indicators of harm affecting children and young people, including less visible forms such as online abuse, exploitation, coercion, or peer-on-peer abuse. Safeguarding risks continue to evolve, particularly in areas such as online abuse, criminal exploitation, and radicalisation.

Detailed descriptions of abuse types and indicators are contained within Appendix C and D, ensuring staff and volunteers have access to comprehensive information. Training and continuous professional development further support staff and volunteers in recognising concerns early, enabling timely and appropriate intervention.

What is a Disclosure

A disclosure is the process by which a child or young person shares information about abuse, harm, or a safeguarding concern with another person. This may happen directly, where a child or young person clearly tells someone what has happened, or indirectly, through changes in behaviour, emotional responses, or communication in other forms such as play, writing, or interaction. Disclosures can occur at any time and in any setting, often when a child or young person feels safe enough to speak and may not always happen in a structured or expected way.

WBA recognises that making a disclosure can be extremely difficult and requires courage, and children and young people may only share partial information or disclose gradually over time. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers are prepared to respond appropriately by listening carefully, taking what is said seriously, and acting without delay. All disclosures, whether complete or partial, must be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in line with WBA's Responding to Concerns Policy, ensuring that the child or young person's safety and wellbeing always remain the primary focus.

Identifying Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of children and young people are not given appropriate priority, resulting in their safety, wellbeing, or development being compromised. Examples include:

- Failing to take adequate steps to prevent injury, such as through excessive training, inappropriate training methods, or activities that do not reflect the age, maturity, experience, or ability of participants.
- Showing persistent or unjustified preferential treatment towards certain individuals, or repeatedly excluding others (for example, focusing only on higher-performing players and failing to engage the wider group).
- Placing children and young people in situations that may be inappropriate, compromising, or uncomfortable, particularly in relation to one-to-one interactions with adults (e.g. unsupervised changing arrangements).



- Failing to challenge or report inappropriate, abusive, or concerning behaviour, such as a coach using humiliating, intimidating, or overly critical language.
- Disregarding established health and safety procedures, for example allowing young players to undertake potentially hazardous tasks without appropriate supervision.
- Some practices historically referred to as “initiations”, now more commonly described as hazing, can involve actions or situations which, whether intentional or not, may place children and young people at risk of psychological, emotional, or physical harm.

It is not always possible to determine at the point of referral whether a concern constitutes poor practice, abuse, or behaviours such as hazing. A full assessment may only be possible following the collation and review of relevant information. Most concerns relating to poor practice can be addressed internally by WBA through appropriate intervention, support, and guidance, or with advice from the PL, EFL, or The FA Safeguarding Teams where required.

Where concerns meet the threshold for abuse, these will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures and referred to the appropriate statutory agencies, with The FA, and any other relevant body such as the Charity Commission, involved as required.

Responding to Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be taken seriously and responded to promptly, regardless of their perceived severity. Staff and volunteers must listen carefully, reassure the child or young person, and avoid asking leading questions or making promises of confidentiality. Immediate action must be taken where a child or young person is at risk of harm, including contacting emergency services where necessary.

WBA has clear reporting procedures in place to ensure concerns are escalated appropriately. All concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Team and recorded on the organisation’s safeguarding system within 24 hours of the disclosure/incident. These processes are fully detailed within WBA’s Responding to Concerns Policy, which provide step-by-step guidance to ensure consistency, accountability, and compliance.

Low-Level Concerns

WBA promotes a proactive safeguarding culture where low-level concerns are recognised and addressed early. A low-level concern may involve behaviour that does not meet expected standards but does not necessarily meet the threshold for formal safeguarding action. Recording and managing these concerns helps identify patterns, supports early intervention, and strengthens safeguarding practice.

All low-level concerns must be reported and recorded in line with organisational procedures. These expectations are outlined in WBA’s Low-Level Concerns Policy, which complements safeguarding and whistleblowing processes and encourages openness, transparency, and professional accountability.

Reporting Escalation and Whistleblowing

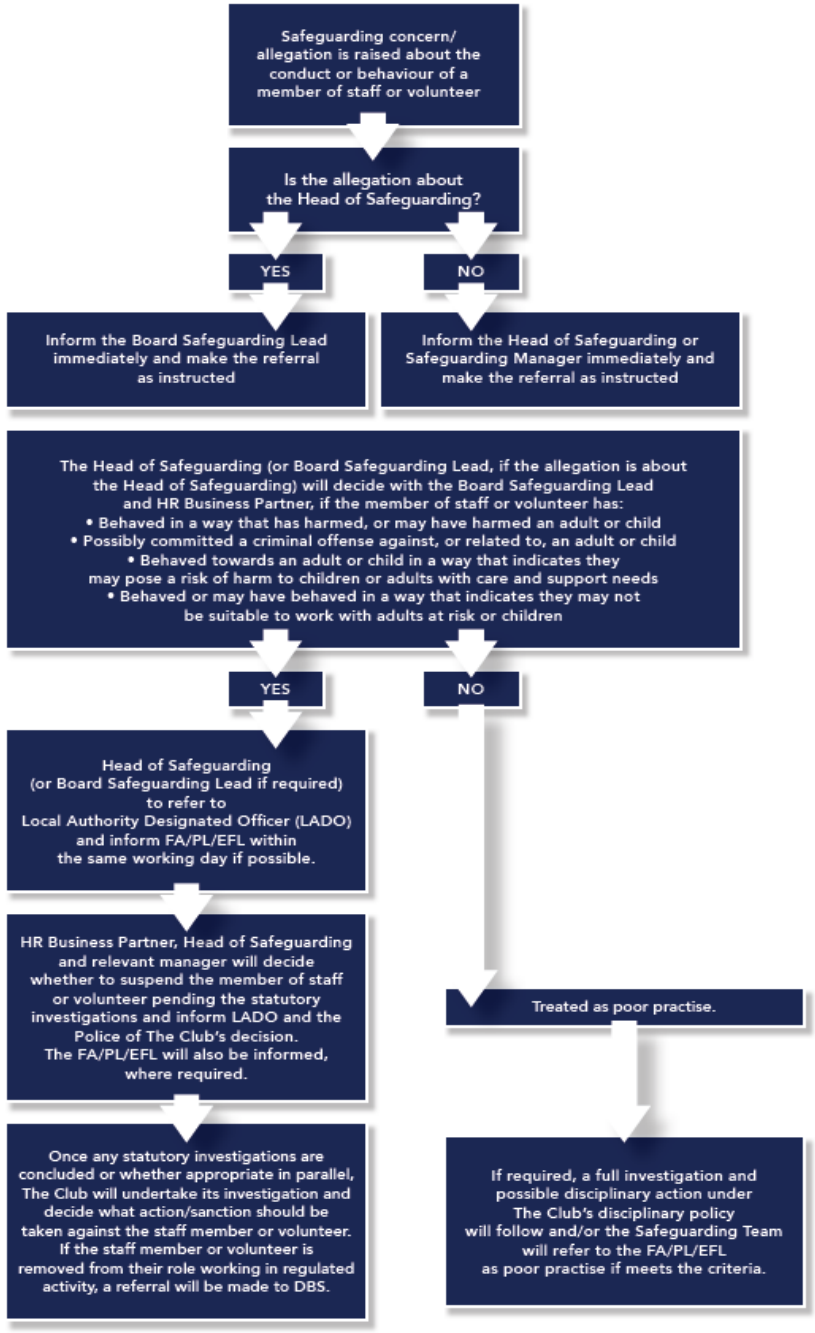
WBA encourages a culture where staff and volunteers feel confident to raise safeguarding concerns and to challenge decisions where necessary. If an individual (staff, volunteer, player, or parent etc) feels that a concern has not been addressed appropriately (either the risk remains or the concern has not been dealt with sufficiently), they are expected to escalate the matter through internal channels or directly to external agencies where appropriate.

The Whistleblowing Policy, which provides a safe mechanism for staff and volunteers to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. WBA is committed to protecting those who report concerns in good faith and to ensuring that all safeguarding matters are addressed transparently and effectively.

Managing Allegations Against Staff

WBA takes all allegations against staff and volunteers extremely seriously and will respond in a manner that prioritises the safety and welfare of children and young people. Any concern that an individual in a position of trust may have harmed a child or young person, committed a criminal offence, or behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children and young people will be dealt with in accordance with statutory guidance.

All such concerns must be referred immediately to the Head of Safeguarding & Welfare and, where appropriate, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The process is supported by WBA's Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy and Disciplinary Procedures, which ensure that safeguarding and HR processes are aligned, fair, and robust.



Data & Information Sharing

Confidentiality

WBA recognises that concerns about confidentiality can arise when safeguarding issues are reported; however, a failure to share information appropriately is a key factor in safeguarding failures. Staff and volunteers must not promise confidentiality to any individual making a

disclosure or raising a concern. Instead, they should explain that information will be shared with the Safeguarding Team and, where necessary, with relevant external agencies to protect children and young people from harm.

All safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a strict need-to-know basis. WBA is committed to ensuring that concerns are treated seriously, respectfully, and appropriately, and that no member of staff or volunteer delays or fails to act where a child or young person's welfare may be at risk.

Data Protection and Storage

WBA uses secure electronic systems to record and store safeguarding information. All records are maintained in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring appropriate levels of security, confidentiality, and retention. Safeguarding information is protected against unauthorised access and managed in line with organisational data governance standards.

Further guidance on how information is recorded, stored, and retained is set out in WBA's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy. Staff or volunteer may also seek advice from the Data Protection Officer where required.

Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends on appropriate and timely information sharing. WBA recognises that concerns about confidentiality must not prevent the sharing of information where a child or young person may be at risk of harm. Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately, and in line with safeguarding responsibilities.

All information sharing will be conducted in accordance with WBA's Data Protection Policy, ensuring that information is shared securely and appropriately with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and WBA works closely with statutory and partner agencies to protect children and young people. This includes collaboration with local authorities, statutory agency support services (early help, child-in-need, child protection etc), police, health services, and education providers where appropriate, ensuring that safeguarding concerns are managed effectively and in line with statutory expectations.

WBA will participate in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including referrals to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). These processes are supported by WBA's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, which ensure coordinated and effective responses.

Thresholds for Referrals to Statutory Authorities

WBA may receive information regarding the welfare of a child or young person that arises outside of football-related activity, for example within the home or wider community. In such circumstances, WBA's safeguarding responsibilities still apply, and all concerns must be managed in line with the safeguarding policy and procedures.

Where a child or young person is considered to be at risk of harm, a referral will be made to the relevant Children's Social Care service and/or the Police, in line with local safeguarding partnership thresholds. Statutory agencies will determine the appropriate level of intervention and advise on any further action required. WBA will work in partnership with these agencies, sharing relevant information and supporting any enquiries to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.

Safeguarding Across West Bromwich Albion FC

Online and Digital Safeguarding

WBA recognises the increasing risks associated with online environments and digital communication. Children and young people may be exposed to online abuse, grooming, bullying, or exploitation, and staff and volunteers must remain vigilant in identifying and responding to such risks. The use of social media and digital platforms must always prioritise safety, transparency, and appropriate boundaries.

Staff and volunteers must not engage in private or inappropriate communication with children outside agreed organisational channels. Expectations are clearly outlined within WBA's E-Safety Policy, which provide standards for safe digital engagement and the use of communications technology in all WBA activities.

Use of Video and Photos

WBA recognises that the use of photography and video is an important part of football activity, including for coaching, performance analysis, promotion, and celebration of achievements. However, it also presents potential safeguarding risks if not appropriately managed. The use of images and recordings of children and young people must always prioritise their safety, dignity, and privacy. Consent must be obtained from parents or carers prior to capturing or using images, and children and young people should be appropriately dressed and never placed in situations that could be considered exploitative or compromising.

All images and video recordings must be used for legitimate purposes only and stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements. Personal information that could identify a child must not be shared alongside images unless strictly necessary and appropriately authorised. The use of personal devices for recording images should be avoided unless explicitly risk assessed and approved. Expectations for the safe and appropriate use of photography and video are set out in WBA's Use of Video and Photos Policy, which all staff, volunteers and partners are required to follow.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

WBA recognises that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers and vulnerabilities that can increase their risk of harm or abuse. They may have difficulties in communication, emotional regulation, or understanding relationships and boundaries, which can make it harder for them to recognise, resist, or report safeguarding concerns. WBA is committed to ensuring that all children and young people with SEND are supported in a way that is inclusive, responsive to their individual needs, and promotes their safety, wellbeing, and active participation in all activities.

Staff and volunteers must take extra care to understand the specific needs of each child or young person and adapt their approach accordingly, including using appropriate communication methods and ensuring that instructions and expectations are clearly understood. It is essential that staff and volunteers remain vigilant to any signs of concern, recognising that indicators of abuse may present differently in children and young people with SEND. All safeguarding concerns must be reported in line with WBA's safeguarding procedures, with additional consideration given to ensuring that the child or young person's voice is heard and that reasonable adjustments are made to support their engagement and protection.

Non-Recent Abuse

Non-recent abuse (also referred to as historical abuse) is an allegation of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse that is made by, or on behalf of, an adult relating to an incident that occurred when they were under the age of 18. Disclosures of non-recent abuse may be made many years after the alleged events took place. There are several reasons why individuals may not disclose abuse at the time, including fear of reprisals, the level of control exercised by the alleged perpetrator, feelings of shame, or concerns that they may not be believed.

Reports of non-recent abuse can be complex, as individuals involved may no longer be in the same environment and the whereabouts of the alleged perpetrator may be unknown. However, all such concerns must be taken seriously and managed in the same way as any current safeguarding concern. This is because individuals who have harmed children in the past may continue to pose a risk to others, and criminal investigations and prosecutions can still take place regardless of when the abuse is reported. WBA will ensure that appropriate referrals are made and will work in partnership with statutory agencies to support any investigation and safeguard others who may be at risk.

Supervision Ratios

Staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that children and young people are always appropriately supervised. The level of supervision required will vary depending on the nature of the activity and the needs of those involved. Supervision ratios must be determined based on careful consideration of the following:

- The age, needs, abilities, and behaviour of the children participating.
- The competence, experience, and number of staff or volunteers involved, as well as the nature, environment, and duration of the activity. Risk assessments should also consider any known behavioural, medical, or additional support needs.

- Staff and volunteers must work in collaboration with the Safeguarding Team when planning activities to ensure that appropriate supervision arrangements are in place. This applies to all WBA environments, including The Hawthorns, the Academy, the Training Ground, the Sports Hall, and all other sites where WBA activities occur, including overseas.

Lone Working and One-To-One

Staff and volunteers must ensure that all interactions with children and young people are conducted in a safe, open, and transparent manner, and that their behaviour does not place themselves, children or young people at risk of harm or allegation. Responsibilities include:

- Always working in an open and transparent way and avoiding any conduct that could give rise to concern or misunderstanding.
- Not visiting children or young people in their homes or inviting children or young people into their own homes (or those of friends, colleagues, or family members), unless this is part of an authorised arrangement that has been risk assessed and formally agreed.
- Ensuring that any contact or meetings with children or young people outside of agreed activities only take place with the prior knowledge and approval of WBA.
- Using communication platforms appropriately, ensuring children and young people are of a suitable age to use them, and that communication is conducted within group settings rather than through private or one-to-one messaging.
- Obtaining appropriate parental or guardian consent for all relevant activities and communication methods.
- Not befriending or engaging with children or young people through personal social media accounts or private messaging platforms unless this has been formally risk assessed and approved by the Safeguarding Team in line with WBA policies.

Host Families

WBA recognises that some children and young people, particularly Academy players, may live with host families as part of their development. These arrangements require careful safeguarding oversight to ensure the welfare and safety of the child or young person. Where a child or young person lives with someone who is not a parent or close relative for 28 days or more, this may constitute a private fostering arrangement.

WBA will ensure that all host family arrangements are subject to appropriate safeguarding checks, monitoring, and support. The organisation will also ensure compliance with statutory requirements, including notification to the relevant local authority where applicable. These responsibilities are supported by WBA's Hosted Player Accommodation Procedures.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

WBA recognises that a child or young person's mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to their overall safety, development, and ability to thrive. Poor mental health can be both a safeguarding concern in itself and an indicator of other forms of harm or vulnerability. Children and young people involved in WBA activities may experience a range of pressures, including those related to performance, education, social environments, or personal circumstances, and it is essential that these are understood and responded to appropriately.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of signs that a child or young person may be experiencing emotional distress, including changes in behaviour, mood, or engagement. Concerns relating to mental health must be taken seriously and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures, ensuring appropriate support and, where necessary, referral to specialist services. Further guidance is provided within WBA's Mental Health Policy, which outlines the organisation's approach to promoting positive mental health, early intervention, and supporting children and young people in a safe and inclusive environment.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

WBA is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all children and young people feel safe, respected, and valued. We recognise that some children and young people may be more vulnerable due to factors such as disability, cultural background, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and we ensure that safeguarding practices are responsive to these needs.

Safeguarding is closely aligned with WBA's EDI Policy, which promotes fairness, respect, and inclusion across all activities. Staff and volunteers are expected to challenge discrimination, recognise additional vulnerabilities, and ensure that safeguarding practice is equitable and accessible to all.



Appendix

Appendix A – Relevant Documents, Guidance and Policies

Appendix B – Key Definitions

Appendix C – Types of Abuse

Appendix D – Signs and Indicators of Abuse

Appendix A – RELEVANT DOCUMENTS, GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

- Changing Room & Shower Guidance
- Complaints Procedure
- DBS Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Employment of U18's
- Equality and Diversity
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- Health & Safety
- Match Day procedures
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Photography and Filming Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism
- Safer Recruitment
- Supervision of Children and Young People
- Transport Policy
- Trips and Tours
- Whistleblowing
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Use of Video and Photos Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Low Level Concern Policy
- Missing Child Procedure
- Registration and Collection of Children Policy
- Responding to Concerns Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- U18s in Senior Squads
- Hosted Players Accommodation

Appendix B – KEY DEFINITIONS

- **Abuse** – A form of maltreatment of a child, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect, which causes harm or potential harm.
- **Adult at Risk** – A person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- **Child** – Any individual under the age of 18, regardless of their circumstances or level of independence.
- **Child Protection** – Part of safeguarding that refers specifically to actions taken to protect children who are suffering, or at risk of, significant harm.
- **Children's Social Care** – Statutory service for safeguarding and welfare of children, including investigating concerns and providing support.
- **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)** – The UK government body responsible for processing criminal record checks and maintaining lists of individuals barred from working with children or vulnerable groups.
- **Disclosure** – The process by which a child communicates that they are experiencing or have experienced abuse or harm.
- **Early Help** – Support provided to children and families at an early stage to prevent concerns from escalating into more serious safeguarding issues.
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** – The officer responsible for managing allegations against individuals who work with children.
- **Low-Level Concern** – Behaviour that may not meet the threshold for abuse but is inconsistent with professional standards and may indicate a risk.
- **Online Safeguarding** – Measures taken to protect children from harm when using digital technologies, including social media and online communication platforms.
- **Position of Trust** – A role in which an adult has authority, influence, or responsibility over a child, creating a power imbalance.
- **Private Fostering** – Where a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative for 28 days or more.
- **Regulated Activity** – Work that involves close or unsupervised contact with children and requires appropriate safeguarding checks.
- **Safeguarding** – The action taken to protect children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to promote their welfare.
- **Safeguarding Concern** – Any information or observation that suggests a child may be at risk of harm or in need of support or protection.
- **Significant Harm** – The threshold that justifies statutory intervention to protect a child from serious abuse or neglect.
- **Whistleblowing** – The process of reporting concerns about unsafe, illegal, or unethical practices within an organisation.

Appendix C – TYPES OF ABUSE

- **Bullying** – Repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, intimidates, or harms another child, either physically or emotionally.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** – Exploiting a child to engage in criminal activity, often through coercion, grooming, or control (e.g. County Lines).
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** – Exploiting a child through coercion, manipulation, or deception into sexual activity in exchange for something.
- **County Lines** – The use of children by criminal networks to transport drugs, money, or weapons across areas.
- **Cyberbullying** – Bullying behaviour carried out using digital devices or online platforms.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** – Abuse or harassment based on characteristics such as race, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Domestic Abuse** – Controlling, coercive, or violent behaviour between individuals in a relationship, which can impact children directly or indirectly.
- **Emotional Abuse** – The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that negatively impacts their emotional development and wellbeing.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** – The deliberate alteration or injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- **Grooming** – The process of building trust with a child to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them.
- **Hazing** – Initiation activities or rituals that risk the physical, emotional, or psychological wellbeing of a child.
- **Neglect** – The ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or emotional needs.
- **Online Abuse** – Abuse that takes place through digital technology, including grooming, exploitation, or harassment.
- **Peer-on-Peer Abuse** – Abuse that occurs between children, including physical, emotional, or sexual harm.
- **Physical Abuse** – The intentional use of physical force that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to a child.
- **Radicalisation and Extremism** – The process by which a child is influenced to adopt extreme views or become involved in harmful ideological activity.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Involving a child in sexual activity, whether through physical contact or non-contact acts, including online.

Appendix D – SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The presence of one or more of these indicators does not confirm abuse; however, they should be considered alongside other information and reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained injuries (bruises, burns, fractures)
- Frequent or repeated injuries
- Injuries inconsistent with explanations
- Poor hygiene, malnutrition, or inappropriate clothing
- Signs of self-harm

Behavioural Indicators

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or depression
- Aggressive or challenging behaviour
- Fear of specific individuals or environments
- Reluctance to go home or attend certain activities

Emotional Indicators

- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Excessive worry or fearfulness
- Emotional outbursts or distress
- Regression to earlier developmental behaviours
- Signs of trauma (e.g. hypervigilance)

Social Indicators

- Isolation from peers or reluctance to engage
- Poor relationships with peers or adults
- Changes in friendship groups
- Increased secrecy

Sexual Abuse Indicators

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Avoidance of certain individuals
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Unexplained gifts, money, or possessions
- Use of sexualised language

Exploitation Indicators

- Going missing or unexplained absences
- Association with older individuals or groups
- Unexplained money, gifts, or possessions
- Increased use of phones/social media in a secretive way

Online/Digital Indicators

- Excessive or secretive device use
- Distress after being online
- Contact with unknown individuals
- Sharing inappropriate images

Neglect Indicators

- Poor personal hygiene
- Persistent hunger or tiredness
- Lack of medical care
- Inadequate supervision


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