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West of Scotland Football Club SAFEGUARDING POLICY



sportscotland
the national agency for sport

Control Versions

Version 1.0 - Written by Andrew Gunn, Reviewed and approved by Brian Thomson (Committee Member) 16 April 2026.



West of Scotland Football Club - Safeguarding Policy Statement

This document should be read in conjunction with the SRU Safeguarding Policy

West of Scotland FC acknowledges its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all in West of Scotland Football Club from harm.

West of Scotland FC recognises that all children and young people have the right to participate in rugby union in a safe, enjoyable and positive environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect or poor practice.

West of Scotland FC confirms that it adheres to the Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Policy and the procedures, guidelines, and practices contained in that document and any successor policy. West of Scotland FC confirms that it will appoint a Safeguarding Officer ("CPO") at the club with at least one assistant safeguarding officer ("ACPO"). Safeguarding Officers and assistants were previously known as Child Protection Officers/Assistant Child Protection Officers.

Their details will be available within the clubhouse and on the club website. The CPO will undergo Child Protection training as directed by Scottish Rugby.

The safeguarding team is as follows:

- Safeguarding Officer - Andrew Gunn (07359599078)
- Assistant Safeguarding Officers - Adam Stahler (07725915426)/Kirsty Black (07770949571)

West of Scotland FC agrees that all allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to with Integrity, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect.

West of Scotland FC recognises that all children and young people have the right to expect that their participation in rugby union will be supported and delivered by suitably recruited, vetted and managed staff, whether they are volunteering or officiating.

West of Scotland will work collaboratively with Scottish Rugby and Disclosure Scotland to ensure that those undertaking a *Regulated Role* are members of the PVG Scheme and approved to undertake the role.

West of Scotland FC agrees that any tours, overseas or domestic, must comply with the relevant Scottish Rugby Regulations and Guidance relating to tours.

KEY CONTACTS

Matters in relation to the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at West of Scotland FC should, in the first instance, be reported to either of the Safeguarding Officer or Assistants.

Where there is an immediate concern for the safety of child(ren, young person(s) or vulnerable adult should be reported immediately to the appropriate regulatory authority, social work department or Police Scotland. After reporting, the Safeguarding Officer/Assistants should be notified to ensure West of Scotland FC fulfil their safeguarding responsibility.

If required, the SRU or other regulatory organisations may be contacted at any time should advice and support for any child protection matter be required by any CPO, child, parent, staff member or volunteer.

West of Scotland FC

The safeguarding team is as follows:

- Safeguarding Officer - Andrew Gunn (07359599078)
- Assistant Safeguarding Officers - Adam Stahler (07725915425)/Kirsty Black (07770949571)

Safeguarding Email: childprotectionwos@gmail.com

Rugby Development - westrugbydm@gmail.com

Scottish Rugby Union (SRU)

SRU Child Protection Team (0131 346 5000) (safeguarding@sru.org.uk)

Police Scotland

Call 101 for non-emergencies

Call 999 for emergencies or if a child is in danger.

Other Organisations

Childline - 0800 1111

Parent Line - 08000 28 22 33/ parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk

Children 1st - 0131 446 2300/ cfs@children1st.org.uk

Safeguarding in Sport - 0141 419 1150/ safeguardingsport@children1st.org.uk

NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

Police Scotland - *non-emergency* 101/ contactus@scotland.police.uk

Police Scotland - *emergency* 999

East Dunbartonshire Social Care

Active and Response Team (0141 777 3000)

Out of Hours Social Work Standby service (0300 343 1505)

Social Care Direct (0800 731 6969)

thinkuknow.co.uk

ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SRU Child Protection

<https://scottishrugby.org/community-game/safeguarding-3/>

Report a Concern (The 4 R's - Recognise, Respond, Report, Record)

<https://www.scottishrugby.org/safeguarding/report-a-concern>

SRU Advice for Children

<https://www.scottishrugby.org/safeguarding/advice-for-children>

SRU Advice For Parents

<https://www.scottishrugby.org/safeguarding/advice-for-parents>

SRU Advice for Clubs

<https://www.scottishrugby.org/safeguarding/advice-for-clubs>

Age Grade Law Variation

<https://scottishrugby.org/community-game/game-development/age-grade-law-variations-aglvs/>

Club Code of Conduct (Appendix I)

Parents Code of Conduct (Appendix II)

Players Code of Conduct (Appendix III)

CONCERNS

What is a Concern?

Concerns may arise when:

- A child or young person makes a direct disclosure
- Someone may observe bad practise, neglect or abuse
- There may be concerns about a child's behaviour, appearance, relationships
- A third party (sometimes another young person) may disclose information about another child
- An adult discloses abuse that happened during their childhood
- There may be concerns about a volunteer within your club

Responding to Concerns

General Child Welfare (not involving concerns of Child Abuse)

West of Scotland FC is committed to working with parents/carers whenever there are concerns about a child however; parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children.

Where the concern does not involve the possibility of abuse, the Safeguarding officer/assistants's should discuss these with the parents/carers.

For example, if a child seems withdrawn or there are general behaviour issues, the child may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement or other personal issues. Common sense is advised in these situations.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents which cause concern about the welfare of a child(ren), young persons or vulnerable adult, should be reported to the Safeguarding Team who will record this appropriately, including relevant agencies.

The Safeguarding officer/ assistants will inform the parents/carers if considered appropriate or seek advice from the SRU Lead Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general welfare of child(ren), young person(s) or vulnerable adults.

CONCERNS

Concerns about the Abuse of a Child

No club staff member or volunteer shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child has been abused.

False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day and reported to a Safeguarding officer/assistants immediately or, if unavailable, the appropriate regulatory body.

Any allegations or concern must be taken seriously and the SRU 4R's (Recognise, Respond, Report, Record) should be followed.

RECOGNISE

A change in the child's behaviour – e.g becoming disruptive or unreasonable during sessions.

- Becoming anxious, lack confidence or are withdrawn and stop communicating
- Begin bullying other children
- Display sexual behaviour or language inappropriate for their age
- Are often hungry, may steal food, always tired
- Have inadequate clothing, are dirty, poor personal hygiene
- Have unexplained cuts and bruises or bite marks
- Self-harming or eating disorder
- Reluctance to change clothes for sport/activity or receive medical treatment such as physio
- Seem afraid of parents or carers, don't want to go home
- Are frightened to say what's wrong

RESPOND

DO

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to what they say and don't show disbelief or disgust.
- Reassure them they are not to blame and were right to tell you.
- Avoid stopping them to go and get someone else – let them speak.
- Avoid asking too many questions, just gather basic questions, who, where, when.
- Reassure them they are not in any trouble.

DON'T

- Panic
- Show shock or distaste
- Probe for more information
- Give personal views / make negative comments / assumptions about what you have been told
- Approach any individual about whom the allegations are made.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret, be clear that this is important and you have to tell someone else.

CONCERNS

REPORT

Contact the Clubs Safeguarding officer/assistants immediately or, if there is immediate danger to the child, contact Police Scotland on 999.

Alternatively, contact Scottish Rugby Child Protection team for advice.

RECORD

As soon as possible, write down the following:

- The child's name, date of birth.
- When they made the disclosure (date/time/where).
- Whether the child told you about their concern or about someone else.
- Use the child's own words – don't try to edit or make it sound more polite.
- What the concern is.
- Description of any visible injuries, behaviours – don't examine the child.
- Details of any witnesses.
- What the child's view is – bear in mind the abuse may be something the child is not conscious of – it could be normal to them.

A Concern Form should be completed as soon as possible after your initial report to ensure that a formal written record of the disclosure and actions taken is maintained.

The completed Concern Form should be passed to the Safeguarding Officer/Assistants in the first instance, or if unavailable, to the SRU safeguarding team.

Electronic copies of the completed Concern Form should only be held (password protected) by the CPO, SRU or the authorities; and the reporter **MUST DELETE** any copies they hold once acknowledged.

SHARING CONCERNS OF ABUSE WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Any concerns regarding abuse should not be shared with the parents/carers of a child as this may place the child at further risk.

Any decision to inform the parents / carers will be made upon review by the Safeguarding Officer/Assistants/SRU and if required, after taking advice from the authorities.

All Concerns raised and recorded, must be treated confidentially.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF / VOLUNTEER

West of Scotland FC will ensure or take steps to ensure:

- concerns about the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer are dealt with in a timely, appropriate and proportionate manner.
- No member of staff/volunteer in receipt of information that causes concern about the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer towards children shall keep that information to himself or herself, or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.
- In the event of an investigation into the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer all actions will be informed by the principles of natural justice.

On receipt of a concern or complaint regarding an employee or volunteer:

- Employees and volunteers will be made aware of the nature of concern or complaint.
- Where the concern is about possible child abuse, advice will firstly be taken from the police as to what can be said to the employee or volunteer.
- An employee or volunteer will be given an opportunity to put forward their case.
- West of Scotland FC will act in good faith; ensure the matter is dealt with impartially and as quickly as possible in the circumstances.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF / VOLUNTEER

In all cases, where a concern is raised about the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer towards children, the welfare of the child will be the paramount consideration.

At any point in responding to concerns about the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer, advice may be sought from the police or social work services.

REPORT

Any concerns for the welfare of a child arising from the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer/Assistants as soon as possible, preferably on the day it occurs.

If the Safeguarding Officer/Assistants is unavailable, the concern should be raised with the Scottish Rugby Lead Officer for Safeguarding and Welfare.

Where the concern is about a Safeguarding Officer/Assistants, it should be reported to other members of the Safeguarding team or the Scottish Rugby Lead Officer for Child Protection and Welfare.

RECORD

Concerns must be recorded using Report a Concern Form as soon as possible.

Reporting the concerns should not be delayed by gathering information to complete the form or until a written record has been made.

All subsequent actions taken and reasons for decisions shall be recorded (in the order in which they happened) on the Significant Incident Form. This should be signed and dated by the Club Safeguarding Officer/Assistants or the person appointed to manage the response to the concern.

Where Performance Management Procedures / Disciplinary Procedures* are invoked, a written record will be made of all actions and reasons for decision. Guidance on the storage, sharing and retention of such records is contained in the relevant procedure.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF / VOLUNTEER

RESPOND

Once the concerns have been reported, the line Safeguarding Officer/Assistants will:

- Establish the basic facts.
- Conduct an initial assessment to clarify the nature and context of the concerns. It should determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused/harmed or is at risk of abuse or harm.
- Questioning of the child(ren) involved should be avoided where possible. If the assessment requires discussions with a child(ren), only basic, open ended, non-leading questions should be asked to verify factual information and be undertaken with parental consent.
- Under no circumstances should a child(ren) be interviewed or asked formal questions. This is for specially trained police officers and social workers only.
- Consult club officers and/or external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice at any time. This is important because they may hold other important information which, when considered alongside the current concerns, builds a significant picture of concern.
- Where the established facts support a concern about possible breaches of the club code of conduct/abuse, Safeguarding Officer/Assistants to contact SRU for further guidance
- Where the nature and seriousness of the information suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, this should be referred to the police before the member of staff/ volunteer is approached.
- Where the circumstances meet the referral criteria set out in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, the club must notify Scottish Rugby who will assist with the fulfilment of the club's legal duty to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland .
- Where the initial assessments supports concerns about poor practice/ or misconduct the matter will be referred to the Club Committee for review and action under the Clubs Disciplinary procedures and precautionary suspension will be considered in all cases where there is significant concern about the conduct of a member of staff/volunteer towards children. The welfare of children will be the paramount concern in such circumstances.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF / VOLUNTEER

RECORD

The Club Safeguarding Officer/Assistants will make a written record of the name and designation of the social worker or the police officer to whom the concerns were passed together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.

Referrals to the police/social work services will be confirmed in writing by the Club Safeguarding Officer/Assistants within 24 hours. A copy of the Significant Incident Form will be provided to the police/ social work services on request.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child(ren) or who may be at risk. The parents/carers of the child(ren) involved will be informed as soon as possible following advice from the police/social work services.

Advice will firstly be obtained from the police/social work services about informing the staff member or volunteer involved in the concerns. If the advice is to inform the staff member or volunteer, they will be told that information has been received which may suggest an allegation of abuse. As the matter will be sub judice (i.e. under judicial consideration) no details will be given unless advised by the police. All actions will ensure the best evidence is preserved for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the employee or volunteer.

West of Scotland FC will take all reasonable steps to support a member of staff/volunteer against whom an allegation of abuse has been made.

REPORTING A CONCERN FORM

This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving or observing information that causes concern about the welfare or protection of child(ren), young person(s) or vulnerable adult.

The form must be passed to Club Safeguarding Officer/Assistants/Scottish Rugby Lead Officer for Child Protection as soon as possible after completion; do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete all sections.

Please use language/words as they have been told to you.

Details of who the concern is about:	
Name of child/adult:	Date of birth (if know) or approx. age or age grade playing (P5/U16):
Address (if known)	Name of Club:
Postcode:	Name of School:
Tel No (if known):	Role at Club/School:
What is the concern: (including details of the person whose behaviour has raised concern)	
When and where did this incident occur/concern raised?	
Do you have any other comments?	
Your Details:	
Name:	Contact No.:
Club/School:	Email:
Club role:	Address:

APPENDIX I

West of Scotland FC Code of Conduct

Club Mission statement: "To be the Best Community Rugby Club within Scotland"

West of Scotland FC Code of Conduct

All Coaches of players should do following:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching players.
- Understand that most learning is achieved through doing.
- Be a positive role model - think what this implies.
- Keep winning and losing in perspective (Development is Key) - encourage players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.
- Respect all referees and the decisions they make, even if they appear to make a mistake, and ensure that the players recognise that they must do the same.
- Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner to all players, both during coaching sessions and matches.
- Provide rugby experiences which are matched to the players' ages and abilities, as well as their physical and behavioural development.
- Ensure all players are coached in a safe environment, with adequate first aid available. (One Coach at every age group First Aid trained).
- Have squad system that allows ALL PLAYERS to get a half game per week.
- Never allow a player to train or play when injured.
- Ensure good supervision of players, both on and off the field.
- Recognise that players should never be exposed to extremes of heat, cold or unacceptable risk of injury.
- Develop an awareness of nutrition as part of an overall education in lifestyle management.
- Recognise that it is illegal for players under 18 to drink alcohol and those under 16 to smoke, Coaches should actively discourage both.
- Ensure that their knowledge and coaching strategies are up to date and in line with SRU philosophy.
- All Coaches must be a member of Disclosure Scotland before actively coaching within the club.
- All Coaches complete SRU RugbyRight online coaching course.



APPENDIX II

West of Scotland Parent's Code of Conduct

Parents Should:

- Be familiar with the coaching and training programme in order that they can ensure their child is fully involved and the coaches are aware of their availability.
- Be familiar with the teaching and coaching methods used by observing the coaching and training sessions in which their child participates.
- Be aware that the Club/Coaches has a duty of care to ensure the safety of players at all times.
- Be involved with Club activities and share their expertise.
- Share concerns, if they have them, with Club.

Be familiar with the West of Scotland Coaches' Code contained within the club.

In particular be aware that:

- Coaches should recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching players.
- Coaches at all times should try to develop all of players within their Squads.
- Coaches to give all children equal game time so all player can develop.
- Encouraging players to behave with dignity in all circumstances
- Support coaches in instilling good values/behaviours.
- Remember that young people play rugby for their own enjoyment not that of their parents.
- Make sure all players get game time within Matches.
- Focus on the players' efforts, rather than winning or losing.
- Do not play injured players.
- Provide positive verbal feedback both in training and during the game.
- Always support the Club in their efforts to eradicate loud, coarse and abusive behaviour from the game.
- Always show appreciation of good play by all players both from their own Club and the opposition they play.
- Respect decisions made by the match officials, even if they appear to make a mistake, and encourage the players to do like wise.

APPENDIX III

West of Scotland's Player's Code of Conduct

Players should be encouraged to:

- Recognise and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents, match officials and administrators in providing the opportunity to play the game and enjoy the rugby environment.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to adults and team mates.
- Recognise that every player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of abuse.
- Understand that if an individual or group of players feel they are not being treated in a manner that is acceptable, then they should tell an adult at the Club or the club's Child Protection officer.
- Play because they want to do so, not to please coaches or parents.
- Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Be attentive at all training and coaching sessions.
- Work equally hard for themselves and their team - both will then benefit.
- Recognise good play by all players on their team and by their opponents.
- Be a sportsperson - win with dignity, lose with grace.
- Play to the IRB Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all referees' decisions even if they appear to make a mistake.
- Control their emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of team mates, opponents, coaches, match officials or spectators is not acceptable.
- Treat all players as they would like to be treated themselves. Do not interfere with, bully or take advantage of any player.

ENJOYMENT

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

INCLUSIVE

HONESTY