

## **‘Safe at SAFC’ Policy**

### **Executive Summary**

This policy makes explicit our promise of the promotion of good practice to value and safeguard children, vulnerable adults, staff and players to protect them from harm. The whole-club culture of vigilance at SAFC ensures that all are supported, listened to, and encouraged to speak out; where ALL staff accept their responsibility to act immediately on concerns, with the necessary level of intervention (including referrals to external agencies including the FA, the EFL and the relevant LA), to build the safest of spaces for all.

### **Policy Aim**

SAFC acknowledges their duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, vulnerable people, staff and players and is committed to ensuring that safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance and complies with EFL and PGAAC best practice requirements. The policy promotes and prioritises the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable people in all circumstances, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

We acknowledge that some groups, including those with Special Education Needs or disabilities, or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, and we fully accept the responsibility to take reasonable, appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. This policy ensures that all children and vulnerable people have a positive and enjoyable experience of football at SAFC in a safe environment in which they are protected from harm.

### **Definition of Terms**

The term ‘child’ and ‘young person’ applies to any person under the age of 18.

The term ‘vulnerable adult’ applies to a person aged 18 or over who is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

References to ‘parents’ should be read as parents, carers and legal guardians inclusively.

References to ‘staff’ should be read as staff and volunteers inclusively.

### **Applicability**

This policy (and accompanying ‘Safe at SAFC Guidance’) applies to everyone working on behalf of SAFC including senior managers and the board of Directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, Scouts, and players. The policy (and accompanying guidance) is widely promoted on the Club Website. It is issued to everyone involved in SAFC, at induction, and annually thereafter, along with KCSIE (Part One), the SAFC Code of Conduct and the EFL Guide to Safer Working Practice. Failure to comply with this policy will be addressed without delay and may result in the disciplinary procedures being invoked. Serious breaches will result in mandatory reporting to the applicable statutory body (Police, Local Authority, the FA, the EFL and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service).

### **Policy Purpose and Scope**

As part of our ‘Safe at SAFC’ policy, we will:

- prevent the employment or deployment of unsuitable individuals by ensuring that all necessary checks are made in line with Safer Recruitment throughout the staff selection process.

- ensure that robust safeguarding arrangements, guidance, processes, and procedures are in place to protect children and vulnerable adults at SAFC from harm, including the children of adults who use, or staff, our services.
- ensure that Safeguarding remains high on the agenda, reflected in communications, meetings and awareness raising at every level.
- ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding matters relating to children and vulnerable adults, including the recording of low-level concerns.
- provide effective management for staff through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff are familiar with this policy and follow it confidently and competently to ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse or harm.
- ensure that there are clear lines of reporting in place, including an appointed Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM) and Safeguarding representative on the Board: there is a clear process for reporting all incidents or disclosures of abuse (including peer on peer incidents and low-level concerns), and appropriate support is provided to individuals who raise or disclose a concern.
- direct any concerns about the conduct of adults representing SAFC to the DSO or SSM. Concerns about the DSO will be directed to the SSM; concerns about the SSM will be directed to the Chairman.
- ensure that all safeguarding information is detailed, securely stored, and accurately maintained for each player (where applicable) on 'My Concern' electronic case management system (ECMS), observing confidentiality and Information Sharing protocols in line with data protection legislation and data retention reschedules.
- provide children and their parents, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection, and awareness training in respect of this.
- share information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their parents via leaflets, posters, meetings, and one-to-one discussions.
- ensure that children and their parents know who the Board representative, SSM, DSO and Safeguarding Officers are and know how to contact them if they have a concern.
- ensure that children, parents, scholars, professional players, and staff have a way of sharing concerns confidentially with the DSO(s).

### **Legislation and Additional Guidance**

This policy is based on legislation and statutory guidance which seeks to protect children in England. A summary of this legal framework is available in 'Safe at SAFC Guidance'.

### **Policy Ratification and Review**

This policy (v2.1) was reviewed and approved by SAFC Board of Directors, and Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Partnership in April 2021. The updated version (v2.2) was adopted in August 2022. The Policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner if changes in legislation require it).