



# SAFC

Remaining safe at Sunderland AFC  
Season 2022 - 2023

**BOLD.  
CREATIVE.  
INDUSTRIOUS.**

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## SAFC Commitment

This guide, alongside our Safe at SAFC policy, helps us to safeguard children, adults at risk, staff and players, protecting 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, to build the safest of spaces for all.

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**BOLD.** OUR POSITIVITY, PERSONALITY AND ACTION WILL LEAD TO OUR SUCCESS.

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**CREATIVE.** OUR INNOVATIVE MINDS WILL MAXIMISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR POTENTIAL.

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**INDUSTRIOUS.** OUR TRADITION OF HARD WORK AND UNITY ARE CENTRAL TO OUR FUTURE.

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## Stadium of Light

Whether attending on match days, or for a conference, ceremony or special event, our staff at the Stadium of Light are focussed on making sure your time with us is as safe and enjoyable as possible.

We have safeguarding officers across the Club to ensure you are safe throughout your visit.

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## Academy of Light

With Category 1 status, the Academy is home to all the club's representative teams, from the youngest age groups U9 through to the U18, U21 and Senior Squad as well as the Sunderland Women's team. We develop young players in a challenging, safe, and supportive environment with a committed and experienced team of staff: working together to reinforce the Club values, we are bold, creative, and industrious.

We firmly believe in lifelong learning and the holistic individual development of every Academy player in a safe space where they are protected from harm and are encouraged to speak out about any concerns.

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## Foundation of Light

We work closely with our friends at the Foundation, and our Safeguarding Leads meet regularly.

We work together to ensure that a culture of vigilance is maintained across the entire community to ensure our children, young people and adults at risk are safe, supported and are encouraged to speak out about any concerns.

## Keeping Everyone Safe

Regardless of which site you are on, the Club has dedicated staff who have the appropriate qualifications and experience needed to carry out their role effectively. We work hard to make sure that staff continue to develop through an extensive training programme. This programme includes training for all staff on how to keep children and other vulnerable people safe from harm. We also share this learning with our young players and their families.

All staff or volunteers in roles that involve regular and direct contact with either children or adults at risk are subject to a criminal record check. Under 'Safer Recruitment' they must also satisfy several checks (including references and self-declarations) and complete Safeguarding Training before they can work with the Club.

## Respect

**Discrimination has absolutely no place in Football and has no place at SAFC or within our communities. We work closely with the PL, FA and the EFL to ensure that all people who access our facilities are treated fairly. We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation, or any other type of discriminatory behaviour. SAFC will pursue the strongest possible action against anyone involved in discriminatory behaviour.**

It is important that we ensure this is embraced by all, and that we wear our Badge with pride, from the classrooms and training grounds to the stands. We encourage all supporters to continue playing their part by reporting incidents to a matchday steward, the police or online via the Kick It Out reporting app.

## Harm and Abuse

**Abuse or harm can take place in person or online: it can happen over a long period of time or can be a one-off incident.**

Those with disabilities may be especially vulnerable because they can find it harder to understand, resist, avoid or report the abuse. All those involved with SAFC play a key role in keeping children and other vulnerable people safe; it is everyone's responsibility to work together to protect them from abuse or harm.

### Categories of Harm: *Physical*

When a child or vulnerable person is deliberately hurt or injured by someone else. It can also be a person being given medicine they do not need which may harm them or having inappropriate measures of restraint used on them.

### *Emotional*

When a child or vulnerable person is made to feel frightened, worthless or inadequate. It can be another child or an adult silencing, ignoring, constantly criticising, isolating, shouting at, threatening or making fun of them. It may involve serious bullying causing a child or vulnerable adult to feel frightened, intimidated, or in danger. It can also happen when children see or hear violent or aggressive situations that could upset them.

### *Sexual*

When a child or vulnerable person is influenced or encouraged to take part in a sexual activity, whether with their consent or not. This can be a physical act (like kissing or touching) or non-physical (like being made to watch or look at sexual images). Sexual harm may result from the action of an adult (man or woman) or another child. Sexual abuse also includes any form of 'grooming' to prepare a child or vulnerable person for abuse.

**Neglect**

When the basic needs of a child or vulnerable person are continually not met, and it impacts on their physical or emotional health. It is when someone fails to keep a child safe from harm or danger. Neglect is not being taken care of properly, such as inadequate food/diet, clothing and housing. It also includes not accessing medical care or treatment or being left alone, at risk, or without appropriate supervision. This includes exposing children to risk by ignoring safe practice guidelines. It can also happen when an adult becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child or keep them safe.

**Bullying**

Bullying is repeated behaviour, often over time, that intimidates, upsets, or hurts someone by name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, making threats, isolating or excluding them or by damaging their possessions. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

## Wider Safeguarding Issues

**Cyberbullying**

Using technology to bully someone. This takes place online and usually happens between children. When it is aimed at an adult it may be 'Cyber harassment' or 'Cyber stalking'.

**Bullying linked to any form of Discrimination**

Bullying linked to certain people or groups.. It may be because of ethnic origin, colour, nationality, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or disability. It could include treating someone unfairly, or making comments, insults and 'banter' related to their cultural group.

**Financial**

Taking money, goods or property without permission. This can include theft, fraud, exploitation or coercion to carry out a financial transaction and could apply to children or adults.

**Grooming**

When someone builds trust with a child (or their family) for the purposes of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know.

**Child Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation**

Where an individual or groups of people use an imbalance of power to force, to manipulate or trick a child or vulnerable adult into sexual or criminal activity. The child (or adult) may be exploited even if the activity appears consensual. It can happen once or can be repeated over time. When criminals exploit someone vulnerable to move or store drugs or money between areas in the UK it is called 'County Lines'.

### **Child-on-child abuse**

Children can be taken advantage of or harmed by other children. This abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, and/or coercive control, that takes place between children or within children's relationships. This includes 'upskirting', 'sexting' and 'hazing'(initiation).

### **Radicalisation**

The way a person comes to support the extreme views which can lead to terrorism. Anybody from any background can become radicalised. Children and/or adults at risk can be groomed to get involved in extremist activity.

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

Involves procedures to change or injure female genitalia for non-medical reasons which has no health benefits. The FGM Act makes it illegal to do this in the UK or to take girls who are British nationals (or permanent UK residents) abroad for FGM.

### **Poor practice**

Any unacceptable behaviour which is below expected standards. It is important to challenge and report poor practice even where there is a belief that someone meant well; If is not challenged it can lead to harm or abuse going unnoticed. It can occur when the needs of the child and/or adult at risk have not been given priority; this could be letting abusive or concerning practices go unreported, placing them in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations, failing to ensure their safety, ignoring health and safety guidelines, or giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals.

### **Non-recent abuse**

Any type of abuse that happened a period of time ago. For example, if an adult spoke about abuse that took place in their childhood. SAFC has procedures in place to deal with these kinds of cases.

### **Infatuations**

Vulnerable Groups may develop an infatuation with a member of Staff who works with them or someone they see regularly; this situation 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 must ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach. A member of Staff who becomes aware that a child or adult at risk may be infatuated with him/ her, or with a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Club DSO (or the Club SSM in their absence).

### **Domestic violence**

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged sixteen 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, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence.

### ***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.

### ***Forced Marriage***

A marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or children, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is 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.

### ***Private fostering***

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent or close relative where the child is to be cared for in that home for 28 days or more. Close relative is defined as “a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent”. A child who is Looked After by a local authority or placed in a children’s home, hospital or school is excluded from the definition. In a private fostering arrangement, the parent still holds Parental Responsibility and agrees the arrangement with the private foster carer. A child (as per definition above) placed with a host family for 28 days or more is in an arrangement and therefore Clubs with host families should inform and work with their local authority ensuring that they meet legislative and local procedural requirements.

## Safeguarding and Protecting

SAFC have a clear process for reporting and responding to all incidents or disclosures of abuse (including child-on-child incidents and low-level concerns), and appropriate support is provided to individuals who raise or disclose a concern. We take seriously all concerns and act to investigate/resolve them in the most appropriate way. Such concerns, along with details of any associated actions are confidentially stored on the Club ECMS. Where it is necessary to do so, the Club may deem it appropriate to refer the concern to external agencies including the DO, FA, EFL, the Police and/or the relevant LA.

SAFC safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and government guidance and complies with EFL and PGAAC best practice requirements (for more information and links to Our Safe at SAFC Policy and contacts, please click here).



## Contacts

SAFC DSO is supported by Deputy DSO's who are positioned across the Club to help keep children and adults at risk safe and act as the first point of contact for agency referrals.

Please use our Kairos app to 'report a welfare concern' or call us on **0191 551 5071** or **0737 740 0175**. Alternatively, you can email us at [safeguarding@safc.com](mailto:safeguarding@safc.com).

If you have a concern about the safety of a child or young person (aged under 18) then you should talk to someone immediately. If this is not possible via a member of Club staff, then you can contact Together for Children (Sunderland) on:

<b>0191 520 5560</b>	8.30am to 5.00pm Monday – Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday;
<b>0191 520 5552</b>	Out of Hours Team (evenings and weekends).

*If a child has come to significant harm or is in immediate serious danger, then, in the first instance, always call the police on 999.*

## Useful Definitions

### **Child**

A person under the age of 18.

### **Staff or Employee**

Defined as any member of the workforce, paid or unpaid.

### **Adult at Risk**

A person aged 18 or over who is unable to look after themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

### **CRC**

Criminal Records Checks.

### **DBS**

Disclosure & Barring Service.

### **DO**

Designated Officer for the Local Authority (formerly known as LADO).

### **DSO**

Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **ECMS**

Electronic Case Management System.

### **EFL**

English Football League.

### **FA**

Football Association.

### **ICRT**

Integrated Contact & Referral Team (Sunderland Social Services).

### **PGAAC**

Professional Game Academy Audit Company.

### **PL**

Premier League

### **SSCP**

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### **SSM**

Senior Safeguarding Manager.

### **TFC**

Together for Children (Children's Services in Sunderland).

## Additional Support

### **CEOP**

*Concerns about online abuse, exploitation or grooming.*

 [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)

### **Child Line**

*Confidential telephone advice for children.*

 0800 1111

 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **MIND**

*Mental Health advice and support.*

 [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **NHS**

*Self Help including easy read leaflets for children.*

 [web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp](http://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp)

### **NHS Mental Health advice**

 [www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression)

### **NSPCC**

*British Sign Language Helpline.*

 ISDN videophone: 0208 463 1148

 [www.nspcc.org.uk/accessibility](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/accessibility)


### **NSPCC Helpline**

 0808 800 5000

 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Papyrus Hopeline**

*Under 35s, prevention of young suicide.*

 0800 068 4141

 [www.papyrus-uk.org/papyrus-hopelineuk](http://www.papyrus-uk.org/papyrus-hopelineuk)

### **Samaritans**

 116 123

 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **Stonewall**

*Support and information about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and homophobia.*

 0800 050 2020

 [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

### **Stop it Now**

*Prevention of child sex abuse.*

 [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

### **The Mix**

*Under 25s.*

 0300 808 4994

 [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## Sport-Specific Support

### **Child Protection in Sport Unit**

A central point for sport organisations in relation to child protection in sport.

T 01662347278/7280,  
W [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

### **EFL**

W [www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding](http://www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding)

### **FA**

Safeguarding and Whistle-Blowing process (concerns about a colleague working/volunteering in youth football).

T 0800 169 1863, ask for The FA's safeguarding team  
E [safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding@TheFA.com)

### **Kick it Out**

W [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)

### **League Football Education**

W [www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk)

### **MIND**

W [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **NAPAC**

National Association for People Abused in Childhood.

T 0800 801 0331 Office – 0207 614 1801 (9am – 5pm)  
W [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

### **PFA**

Professional Footballer's Association - Independent Youth Advisory Service (available to all Academy Players, Trialists and their parents).

E [youthadvisory@thepfa.co.uk](mailto:youthadvisory@thepfa.co.uk)  
E 0750 000 0777  
T [wellbeing@thepfa.co.uk](mailto:wellbeing@thepfa.co.uk)  
W [www.thepfa.com/wellbeing](http://www.thepfa.com/wellbeing)

## Survivors of Abuse in Sport

If you are a survivor of child sexual abuse in sport, the FA have commissioned a dedicated NSPCC helpline for adults who were abused in childhood within the football industry from grassroots to Premier League.

If you would like to speak to somebody the free NSPCC helpline for guidance and support is available 24 hours a day: 0800 023 2642

## Legislation and Practice Guidance

### **This guide has been informed by the following:**

- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Education Act 2002
- EFL Safeguarding Standards
- EFL Guide to Safer Working Guidance
- EFL Youth Development Rules
- FA Safeguarding Rules and Regulations
- F.A. RESPECT Campaign
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Independent Review into Child Sexual Abuse in Football (1970-2005) Clive Sheldon QC 2021
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Private Fostering Regulations 2005
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- SEN Code of practice guidance 2015
- The Children Act (1989 and 2004)
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit guidance.
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- What to do if you are worried about a child being abused (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)



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