

# MERLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

LAST UPDATED: JULY 2024



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# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Merley Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity. We subscribe to The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

The key principles of The FA Safeguarding Children Policy are that:

- the child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- all children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief.
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Merley Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

Merley Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, club official or medical staff. Everyone that is involved in working with Children, must have a DBS Enhanced Criminal Record with Children's Barred List Checks, as well as a completed Safeguarding FA Course.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of Merley Football Club guidance will be sought from the FA. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via the DBS Process and that all suitability decisions will be made in accordance with legislation and in the best interests of children and young people.

Merley Football Club supports The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about an adult in a position of trust with football can 'whistle blow' by contacting The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863, by writing to The FA Case Manager at The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ, by emailing [Safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com) or alternatively by going direct to the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC. Merley Football Club encourages everyone to know about The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy and to utilise it if necessary.

Merley Football Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer in line with The FA's role profile and required completion of the Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officers Workshop. The post holder will be involved with Welfare Officer training provided by The FA and/or County FA. [The Club Welfare Officer is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person.](#) The Club Welfare Officer will liaise directly with the County FA (CFA) Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst club members.

The club Welfare Officer details can be found on the Club Website [www.merleyfc.com](http://www.merleyfc.com) and also further down.

If you are worried about a child, it is important that you report your concerns. No action is not an option:

1. If you are worried about a child, then you need to report your concerns to the Merley Welfare Officer.
2. If the issue is one of poor practice the Merley Welfare Officer will either:
  - deal with the matter themselves or
  - seek advice from the CFA Welfare Officer
3. If the concern is more serious, such as possible child abuse, then where possible, contact the CFA Welfare Officer first, then the Merley's Welfare Officer and immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.
4. If the child needs immediate medical treatment take them to a hospital or call an ambulance and tell them this is a child protection concern. Let the Merley Welfare Officer know what action you have taken, they in turn will inform the CFA Welfare Officer.
5. If you are not able to contact the Merley Welfare Officer, or the matter is clearly serious then you can:

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- contact your CFA Welfare Officer directly
- contact the Police or Children's Social Care
- call the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

It is vital that these steps are followed to ensure the safety of the children. Other points to be reminded of include:

1. Do not guarantee confidentiality to the child.
2. Take what the child says very seriously.
3. Typical signs of abuse include:
  - unexplained bruising or injuries
  - sexually explicit language/actions
  - sudden changes in behaviour e.g., withdrawn
  - something a child has said
  - a change observed over a long period of time / loss of weight for no apparent reason
4. Remember these signs may not constitute abuse, but if you are unsure, contact the Merley Welfare Officer.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact:

- Leanne Burgess (Merley Welfare Officer) / [welfare@merleyfc.com](mailto:welfare@merleyfc.com) / 07900 081001
- Kevin Pike (County Welfare Officer) / [safeguarding@dorsetfa.com](mailto:safeguarding@dorsetfa.com) / 07903 574657
- Justine Mosley (Deputy County Welfare Officer) / [safeguarding@dorsetfa.com](mailto:safeguarding@dorsetfa.com) / 07908 647052
- Police or Children's Social Care
- NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)