



ENGLAND  
FOOTBALL

# LINCOLNSHIRE FA

## SAFEGUARDING THRESHOLDS

GUIDANCE FOR CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS AND CLUB OFFICIALS  
WITH SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES



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# INTRODUCTION



This document is designed to support clubs to differentiate between the following:

- Serious Safeguarding Incident
- Low Level Concerns
- Poor Practice

Serious safeguarding incidents are rare, but can happen, so knowing what action to take in that situation is essential. Low level concerns and poor practice are more common and should be managed sensitively but efficiently. Often, low level concerns and poor practice are match related, and therefore will be investigated by the County FA Discipline Team, in line with the FA Discipline Process.

The Lincolnshire FA's safeguarding thresholds are in place to ensure that all children, young people, and vulnerable adults receive the appropriate level of protection and support to keep them safe from harm.

***The safeguarding thresholds are:***

1. In line with the FA and other Governing Bodies of the sport
2. Based on the FA's Safeguarding Children & Adults Policy & Procedures.
3. Assessed by safeguarding professionals based on severity of risk or harm
4. Considerate of the children's age, nature & frequency of risk, any additional vulnerability and the capacity of the club to abide by policy and procedure







# SERIOUS SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS

**IF YOU FEEL THAT A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM, CALL THE POLICE FIRST.**

## *What is a serious safeguarding incident?*

On the following page, all the categories of abuse are deemed serious safeguarding incidents.

Repeated poor practice, whilst not classed as a serious safeguarding incident in isolation, can become one, if conduct repeatedly falls below expectations. This may constitute not responding to warnings or interventions put in place by the club for example.

The County FA DSO is always available to consult if there is doubt over whether conduct is deemed repeated poor practice.

All serious safeguarding incidents must be referred to the County FA or directly to the FA ([safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)). Following a referral to the County FA, the DSO will complete an investigation, if necessary involving other agencies such as the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), the Police or Childrens Services, before a discussion with the FAs Safeguarding Case Management Unit.

# CATEGORIES OF ABUSE



**(ALWAYS REFER TO THE COUNTY FA SAFEGUARDING TEAM)**

*The following categories of abuse are the most prevalent categories in Lincolnshire and for Club Welfare Officers to be aware of:*



## PHYSICAL ABUSE

A child is intentionally physically hurt or injured by an adult, or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person. This can also be when a parent fabricates the symptoms or an actual illness in a child.



## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Persistent criticism, belittling or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person. This may also involve not giving the child opportunities to express their views leading to the child feeling frightened or in danger.



## SEXUAL ABUSE

### CONTACT

An adult or peer uses another individual to meet their own sexual needs. This involves inappropriate sexual contact and includes sexual contact between individuals in a Position of Trust role with u18s

### NON-CONTACT

An adult or peer uses another individual to meet their own sexual needs. Whilst there is no direct sexual contact, the victim may experience significant emotional harm.



## NEGLECT

A child's basic physical and/or psychological needs are consistently not met, or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised by their trusted adult/s.



## BULLYING

Persistent and/or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person, whether in person or online (see cyberbullying). This often results in pain and distress to the victim.



## CYBERBULLYING

The use of technology to deliberately upset someone, via the form of derogatory abusive comments, videos or images on technology-based platforms.

### Grooming

Child Sexual Exploitation

### Extremism

Child Criminal Exploitation

### Domestic Abuse

Honour Based Violence

### Forced Marriage

County Lines









# LOW LEVEL CONCERNS & POOR PRACTICE



## WHAT IS A LOW-LEVEL CONCERN?

A low-level concern is a behaviour which falls below the standard expected by a club as set out in their codes of conduct. Whilst the behaviour may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful, it does set a poor example, and if it were to continue, may put a child or vulnerable adult in danger or lead to harm

Allowing low-level concerns to continue unchallenged may result in an environment and/or culture developing in which abuse may be able to take place and grow. It normalises behaviour which is unacceptable and should not be condoned.

Learning from survivors of non-recent sexual abuse in football has shown that often the abuse started as a low-level concern. Make sure you take action!

### *Examples of low-level concerns:*

The list below is not an exhaustive one, but it should give an idea of the type of behaviour which constitutes a low-level concern. These are initially managed at club level, normally by the Club Welfare Officer, who can seek advice of the County DSO at any time.

Context is always key, and should always be considered, along with whether the incident is in isolation, or whether it relates to any previous concerns within a contextual safeguarding approach.

- Lack of respect for others, such as; match officials, coaches, players, managers and spectators
- Failing to accept a match official's decision, regardless of their age
- Engaging in, or tolerating, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour
- Having a win at all costs mentality above player welfare, and failing to be gracious in defeat
- Having favourites and not treating all children fairly and equitably
- Coaching on a one-to-one basis with no other adult supervision or presence
- Failure to provide adequate adult supervision for group coaching sessions
- Smoking or drinking alcohol during coaching sessions and/or regulated activity with children
- Inappropriate use of social media

- Failure to challenge low-level concerns made by others and/or record concerns and accidents effectively
- Not informing parent/carer of medical incidents and/or not referring to medical professionals where necessary

*\*Some of the above may result in disciplinary action, conducted by the County FA Discipline Team*





# CLUB CODES OF CONDUCT



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All clubs should have a code of conduct which reflects best practice by clearly stating the acceptable behaviours that the club wishes to promote and are fundamental to its values.

## ***Codes of Conduct should:***

- Clearly set out the positive behaviour which is expected
- Reflect club expectations of members' behaviour
- Cross-reference with club disciplinary processes
- Not just be a list of prohibited behaviours
- Make clear the rights of volunteers  
E.g. Access to training, and support in reporting low-level concerns

## ***It is also advised that clubs have strong policies for the following:***

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Complaints Procedure

Breaches of club policy and complaints made to the club, should be addressed via the club complaints procedure. This includes the investigation and management of action. The County FA can provide advice to all parties on these matters, if necessary, but the process is led and determined by the club.

### WHAT THE COUNTY FA CAN DO

Provide advice to all participants involved in affiliated football  
Liaise with external agencies on behalf of club and participants when there are child protection implications  
Be a critical friend to clubs on welfare and safeguarding matters  
Provide training & support for participants that is relevant to club and/or county needs

### WHAT THE COUNTY FA CANNOT DO

Make decisions around whether breaches of club policy have occurred  
Implement consequences for breaches of club policy (unless investigated through official discipline process)  
Stop processes that are in line with a clubs constitutional rights









# PROCESS FOR INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE LINCOLNSHIRE FA



## SCMT – SAFEGUARDING CASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

### *Safeguarding Contacts:*

**Referring Safeguarding Concerns:** [safeguarding@lincolnshirefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@lincolnshirefa.com)

**Lincolnshire County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer:** [ben.pearce@lincolnshirefa.com](mailto:ben.pearce@lincolnshirefa.com)  
or [safeguarding@lincolnshirefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@lincolnshirefa.com)



# LINCOLNSHIRE FA SAFEGUARDING TEAM



## **\*VACANCY\***

Board Safeguarding  
Champion



## **NICK HANSON**

Senior  
Safeguarding Lead



## **BEN PEARCE**

Designated  
Safeguarding Officer



## **CHRIS FUNNELL**

Deputy Designated  
Safeguarding Officer

***Should you have any concerns for the welfare or safety of any person under 18 or a vulnerable adult, please report to one of the following:***

Lincolnshire FA Safeguarding Team: 01522 596580 (Option 2)  
safeguarding@lincolnshirefa.com

FA/NSPCC 24-hour helpline: 0808 800 5000 (Deaf User text phone 0800 056 0566)

If the person is at immediate risk of harm please call 999 as soon as possible







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