



## **CPD Clydach FC**

### **Safeguarding FAQs**

#### **Scenario based guidance for coaches, parents and volunteers**

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##### **1. A Coach is constantly shouting at children**

###### **Scenario**

A coach regularly shouts at players during training and matches. Children appear upset and some are reluctant to attend.

###### **Is this a safeguarding concern?**

Potentially yes.

While coaching involves instruction and discipline, persistent shouting, humiliation, intimidation, aggressive criticism or singling out children may constitute poor practice or emotional harm.

###### **What should happen?**

- Concerns should be raised with the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Specific incidents should be recorded.
- The behaviour should be reviewed objectively.
- Support, mentoring or intervention may be required.

###### **What should not happen?**

- Parents confronting the coach aggressively in front of children.
- Coaches dismissing concerns as "just old-school coaching."
- Assuming a child will simply get used to it.

**Key Principle:** Children should be challenged and developed, not frightened or humiliated.

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##### **2. A child arrives at or leaves football without adult supervision**

###### **Scenario**

A child regularly arrives at training or matches without a parent or responsible adult, leaves the venue alone after activities, or remains uncollected at the end of a session.

###### **Is this acceptable?**

This depends on the child's age, maturity, the circumstances involved and whether appropriate arrangements have been agreed with parents or carers.

The club should always understand:

- Who is responsible for the child before and after football activities.



- How the child travels to and from the venue.
- Whether parents/carers are aware of and have agreed the arrangements.
- Whether the arrangements are appropriate for the child's age and circumstances.

#### **What should coaches or club officials do?**

- Where a child arrives or leaves without adult supervision, the club should:
- Clarify arrangements with parents or carers.
- Ensure responsibilities for drop-off and collection are understood.
- Record any concerns or recurring issues.
- Consider whether a safeguarding risk assessment is required.
- Monitor the situation if concerns continue.

#### **When does this become a safeguarding concern?**

The situation may require further safeguarding consideration if:

- The child is frequently unsupervised.
- Parents or carers cannot be contacted.
- The child appears vulnerable, distressed or unsafe.
- There are concerns regarding neglect or welfare.
- The club is unclear who is responsible for the child.

#### **What if nobody arrives to collect a child?**

A child must not be left alone at the venue.

The club should follow its Uncollected Child Procedure, which may include:

- Attempting to contact parents or emergency contacts.
- Keeping the child supervised by appropriate adults.
- Recording actions taken.

Escalating concerns where necessary.

#### **Coaches should never:**

- Send a child home without understanding the agreed arrangements.
- Assume another parent is responsible for the child.
- Leave a child unsupervised whilst waiting for collection.
- Take a child home themselves unless parental consent has been obtained and appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

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### **3. A Youth Player is asked to play Senior Football**

#### **Scenario**

A talented Youth player is invited to train or play with the senior team.

#### **Is this allowed?**



Yes, subject to governing body rules and club safeguards.

**Additional safeguarding considerations include:**

- Physical welfare.
- Emotional maturity.
- Adult environment.
- Travel arrangements.
- Changing room arrangements.
- Supervision.

**Good practice**

- Parents informed and supportive.
- Safeguarding risk assessment completed.
- Appropriate supervision identified.
- Clear arrangements for changing facilities.

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#### **4. A Youth Player needs to use adult changing rooms**

**Scenario**

An Under-16 player is involved with the senior team and changing rooms contain adults.

**What are the safeguarding considerations?**

Children and adults should not routinely change together.

The club should consider:

- Separate changing facilities.
- Different changing times.
- Alternative arrangements.
- Parent/carer attendance.

**What about showers?**

Young players should not shower alongside adult players.

Clubs should implement arrangements that maintain privacy and dignity for everyone.

**What if separate facilities are unavailable?**

A risk assessment should be undertaken and alternative arrangements considered.

**Key Principle:** Convenience should never override safeguarding.

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## **5. Coaches have created a WhatsApp group with players**

### **Scenario**

Coaches have a WhatsApp group containing children under 18.

### **Is this acceptable?**

Communication arrangements should be carefully managed.

### **Good practice includes:**

- Parents included where appropriate.
- Clear club communication policy.
- Football-related communication only.
- Messages sent at appropriate times.

### **Poor practice includes:**

- Private messaging children.
- Personal conversations.
- Sharing inappropriate content.
- Contact outside football purposes.

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## **6. A Coach regularly messages one particular player**

### **Scenario**

A coach frequently messages one player directly.

### **Is this a concern?**

Potentially.

### **Questions to consider:**

- Why is direct contact necessary?
- Could communication be through parents?
- Are boundaries being maintained?
- Would the coach be comfortable with messages being reviewed?

### **Good safeguarding advice**

Avoid unnecessary one-to-one communication between adults and children.



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## **7. Parents are arguing on a team WhatsApp group**

### **Scenario**

Parents are criticising players, coaches and families online.

### **Is this safeguarding?**

Potentially.

Online behaviour can impact children's welfare.

### **The club should:**

- Remind members of codes of conduct.
- Intervene where necessary.
- Address online bullying promptly.
- Escalate concerns where children are being targeted.

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## **8. A Child reports bullying by team mates**

### **Scenario**

A player says they dread training because teammates constantly mock them.

### **What should happen?**

- Listen carefully.
- Record concerns.
- Inform the safeguarding officer through the incident reporting form
- Speak with relevant individuals appropriately.
- Support the child throughout.

### **Should it be dismissed as "banter"?**

No.

What adults call banter can feel very different to children.

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## **9. A Parent films training every week**

### **Scenario**

One parent records large portions of training.



### **Is this acceptable?**

Potentially, but the club has clear photography and filming guidance, along with consent via TeamFeePay agreements

### **Considerations include:**

- Consent arrangements.
  - Social media sharing.
  - Other children appearing in footage.
  - Any restrictions for vulnerable children.
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## **10. A Coach wants to use their personal social media account**

### **Scenario**

A coach follows players on Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok.

### **Is this good practice?**

Generally no.

### **Risks include:**

- Boundary issues.
- Perception concerns.
- Unsupervised communication.
- Potential allegations.

### **Best practice**

Maintain professional separation between coaching roles and personal social media activity.

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## **11. A Child appears withdrawn and upset**

### **Scenario**

A normally engaged player becomes withdrawn, emotional and reluctant to participate.

### **What should coaches do?**

- Notice and record changes.
- Speak appropriately to the child.
- Share concerns with the safeguarding officer.
- Continue monitoring.



**Coaches should not:**

- Investigate.
  - Diagnose problems.
  - Contact external agencies independently without following procedures.
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**12. A Parent makes a safeguarding allegation against a coach**

**Scenario**

A parent alleges inappropriate behaviour by a coach.

**What should happen?**

- Take the concern seriously.
- Record it accurately.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Refer immediately through safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**The club should not:**

- Conduct informal verdicts.
  - Discuss allegations publicly.
  - Presume guilt or innocence.
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**13. Nobody is sure whether something is a safeguarding concern**

**Scenario**

A volunteer says, "It's probably nothing, but something doesn't feel right."

**What should they do?**

Report it.

Most serious safeguarding cases begin with somebody noticing a small concern and speaking up.

**Remember**

You do not need evidence.

You do not need proof.

You do not need to investigate.



You only need a genuine concern.

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## **14. A Coach is also the parent of a player**

### **Scenario**

A coach's child plays within the team they coach. Other parents feel that the child receives preferential treatment, while the coach believes they are treating all players fairly.

### **Is this a safeguarding concern?**

Not necessarily.

Many grassroots teams rely on parent-coaches and most manage this role professionally. However, the situation can create actual or perceived conflicts of interest that, if not managed properly, can impact children's welfare, trust and enjoyment.

### **What risks can arise?**

Examples include:

- Selection decisions involving the coach's child.
- Playing time allocations.
- Disciplinary decisions.
- Team captain appointments.
- Academy or representative nominations.
- Complaints involving the coach's child.
- Disputes between players.

Even where no favouritism exists, the perception of unfairness can damage team culture.

### **What should clubs do?**

Good practice includes:

- Having more than one coach involved in decision-making.
- Using objective criteria where possible.
- Being transparent about selection processes.
- Ensuring concerns can be raised independently.
- Recording significant decisions where appropriate.

### **What if a complaint involves the coach's own child?**

The coach should ordinarily step back from the investigation or decision-making process.

The matter should be managed by:



- Another coach.
- The Club Safeguarding Officer.
- A committee member.
- An independent individual where appropriate.

### **Why is this important?**

It protects:

- The child involved.
- The coach.
- Other players.
- The integrity of the club's decision-making.

The aim is not to exclude parent-coaches from decisions, but to ensure decisions are fair, transparent and can withstand scrutiny.

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## **15. A Coach's child is involved in a safeguarding Concern**

### **Scenario**

A safeguarding concern is raised involving a coach's child, either as the child raising a concern or being the subject of an allegation.

### **What should happen?**

The coach-parent should not lead or influence the management of the concern.

### **Why?**

The coach has two competing roles:

1. Parent protecting their child.
2. Club official responsible for managing the issue fairly.

This can create a real or perceived conflict of interest.

### **Best Practice**

The club should appoint another appropriate individual to manage the safeguarding process, such as:

- Club Safeguarding Officer
- Committee Chair
- Independent club officer
- County/Area FA safeguarding representative where required



### **What should the coach-parent do?**

They should:

- Continue supporting their child as a parent
- Cooperate fully with any process
- Avoid influencing witnesses
- Avoid making decisions on behalf of the club
- Maintain confidentiality

### **What should they avoid?**

- Investigating the matter themselves
- Speaking to children involved
- Making disciplinary recommendations
- Determining outcomes
- Sharing information with other parents

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## **16. A Coach's child is accused of bullying another player**

### **Scenario**

A player alleges that the coach's child has been bullying them at training.

### **What should happen?**

The issue should be treated exactly as it would for any other player.

The parent-coach should:

- Declare the conflict of interest.
- Step away from handling the complaint.
- Allow another suitable club official to manage the matter.

### **What if the coach believes the allegation is unfair?**

They are entitled to support their child as a parent, but should not be involved in making club decisions about the case.

### **Key Principle**

A coach cannot usually act as both:

- An impartial decision maker, and the parent of a child directly involved.

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## **17. Inappropriate images, videos or content shared in a group involving young players**

### **Scenario**



A coach, volunteer, parent or player shares inappropriate images, videos, memes, jokes or messages in a WhatsApp group, social media group or online platform that includes children or young people.

### **Is this a safeguarding concern?**

Potentially yes.

Any online group involving young players should contain age-appropriate, respectful and football-related content only.

### **What should happen?**

- Remove the content where possible.
- Preserve evidence if required (e.g. screenshots).
- Report the matter to the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Consider whether any child has been upset, targeted or placed at risk.
- Involve parents where appropriate.

### **What if it was shared accidentally?**

The club should still assess:

- What was shared.
- Who received it.
- The age of those involved.

Any potential impact on children.

An accidental mistake may still require intervention, education or disciplinary action.

### **When should concerns be escalated immediately?**

- Immediate safeguarding advice should be sought if the content:
- Involves bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Contains sexually inappropriate material.
- Includes threats, intimidation or abusive behaviour.
- Targets a child or vulnerable individual.
- Could place a child at risk of harm.

### **Coaches, Volunteers and Parents Should Never:**

- Share inappropriate, offensive or adult content in groups involving children.
- Use humour or "banter" that could embarrass or upset a young player.
- Assume deleting a message removes the safeguarding concern.
- Communicate with children through unofficial or private online channels.