



## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



### PURPOSE & AIMS

The purpose of Horwich RMI AFC safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our club is safe and protected from harm.

This policy is written and reviewed with reference to England Football Association's child Safeguarding policy. This guiding principle is widely regarded as an exceptional Strategy that is thoroughly endorsed by Sport England and the NSPCC.

The club will always work to

- Protect children and at our club from maltreatment
- Prevent impairment of our children and young peoples help and development
- Assist in ensuring that children and young people at our club grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Undertake that role so as to enable children and young people at our club to have the best outcomes.

This policy will give clear direction to coaches, volunteers, visitors, the committee and parents about expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at our club.

Our club fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children who are registered players at Horwich RMI AFC. The elements of our policy are vigilance, prevention, protection and support.

We recognise that our safeguarding responsibilities to our players stretch beyond the designated club hours and have a responsibility for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who are identified as potentially being at risk of abuse and/or neglect outside of the club setting.

This policy applies to all players, coaches, parents, volunteers, visitors and the committee.



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### OUR ETHOS

The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Our club will establish and maintain an ethos where players feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children at our club will be able to talk freely to any coach or volunteer at our club if they are worried or concerned about something.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. We recognise that adults at our club play a particularly important role as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. All coaches and volunteers are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

When concerned about the welfare of a child, club members must always act in the best interests of the child.

All adults, the committee and regular visitors will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information. We will not make promises to any child and we will not keep secrets. Every child will know what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose.

At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other clubs and agencies.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Horwich RMI AFC coaches have completed the FA's "Safeguarding Children Workshop" and all committee members have completed the FA's "Safeguarding For Committee Members" online course. Using the FA Whole Game system, the club committee ensures that all safeguarding qualifications across the club are valid and organises the renewal of any expired certifications.

It is the responsibility of every member of our club to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of all of the players at this club. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can train and develop.



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### The Committee

The Committee of Horwich RMI AFC is accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and compliance with it. Although our club takes collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our players, there has been established a Designated Safeguarding Team who oversee safeguarding across the club and act as a point of contact for any welfare or safeguarding concerns.

Paul Sumner	Club Secretary and Vice Chairman
Julie Thompson	Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
Mike Fish	Youth Development & Discipline Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Team will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via the club website and has been written in line with Football Association, Sport England and guidance.
- Coaches and volunteers are aware of the Designated Safeguarding Team.
- All coaches and volunteers receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of this policy and the code of conduct;
- All adults undertake appropriate child protection/safeguarding training that is updated in the correct time period;
- They remedy without delay any weakness in regard to safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of the club;
- Safer recruitment practices are followed so that: \*All coaches have valid CRC checks, FA Safeguarding Certification, are at least FA Level 1 qualified and have provided at least 1 validated reference. \* All volunteers have valid CRC checks. At least one adult leading a team has a valid First Aid certification



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The Chairman

At Horwich RMI AFC the Club Chairman and Welfare Officer are responsible for:

- Identifying adults from the committee or team to be Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- Ensuring that club meetings always contain at least one Safeguarding Officer to deal with any issues that may arise.
- Ensuring that the policies and procedures adopted and approved by the committee, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all adults;
- Ensuring that all adults and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing procedures;
- Liaise with the Chris Doherty; [chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com](mailto:chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com); in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against an adult associated with the club.

The Designated Safeguarding Team

The Designated Safeguarding Team currently includes 3 members of the committee who take over-arching responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the club. The team will carry out their role in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the England Football Association's child Safeguarding policy.

The team will provide advice and support to other adults on child welfare and child protection matters. Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given immediately to a Safeguarding Officer who will complete the necessary follow-up actions.

A member of the Safeguarding Team will always be available during club hours for adults in the club to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

If a Safeguarding Officer is not available in person, it will be ensured that they are available via telephone and any other relevant media. The club will liaise with the FA, Children's Services, the police and other agencies where necessary, and make referrals of suspected abuse to Children's Services.

The Designated Safeguarding Team will maintain records and ensure that they are transferred confidentially and stored securely. The team is responsible for ensuring that all coaches and volunteers are aware of this policy and the procedures they need to follow. They will ensure that all adults, volunteers and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction.



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### TRAINING & INDUCTION

When new coaches, volunteers or committee members join the club they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given access to this policy along with the code of conduct, and be made aware of who our Designated Safeguarding Officers are.

All adults are expected to read these key documents and fully understand their responsibility. They will also be directed to the incident sheets that adults use to record concerns about the welfare of players.

Every new coach or volunteer will be fully CRC checked and the club will arrange for all new coaches working with all U18 to receive the FA safeguarding training during their induction of joining the club. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record concerns and the remit of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Team.

The training will also include information about whistle-blowing in respect of concerns about another adult's behaviour and suitability to work with children. All regular visitors or temporary adults will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of whom our Safeguarding Team are and what the recording and reporting system is.



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### Specific Safeguarding Issues:

All coaches, volunteers and committee should have an awareness of specific safeguarding issues, some of which are listed below. Adults should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and inappropriate use of social media put children in danger.

All adults should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Adults should be clear as to the club's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse, discipline and bullying. Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example, information for clubs can be found on the NSPCC websites.

### Other specific safeguarding issues include

- Child missing from home or care
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Domestic violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Gangs and youth violence
- Mental health
- Sexting
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking



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### PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CONCERNS

All adults follow the club's procedures. It is not the responsibility of the club to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All adults, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of players will be recorded in writing and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Team. It is the Designated Safeguarding Team who will support any discussion with parents.

Identifying children and young people who may be suffering significant harm:

Coaches and other adults in club are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between adults, players, parents, carers and members of the public are critical in ensuring concerns are addressed in a manner that displays respect, confidence and trust and these positive relationships can also lead to disclosures of abuse being made that may otherwise have remained hidden.

### Definitions

As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday. Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

Health includes physical and mental health;

Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.





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Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to

- provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.





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Coaches, Volunteers & Committee Members must immediately report:

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. use of sexualised language, overly aggressive reactions)
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present)

### Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from players, parents or other members of the public. The club recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly all club members will handle disclosures with sensitivity.

Such information cannot remain confidential and club members will immediately communicate what they have been told to the Designated Safeguarding Team ensuring their concerns are followed up in writing on the designated form.

Club members will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to a Designated Safeguarding Officer in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Coaches/Volunteers will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to repeat what they have said another adult
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgments regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child



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- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- reassure and support the person as far as possible
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate
- complete a blank incident form.

### Guidance

All staff must report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. For these reasons, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the Safeguarding Team to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporary records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

The club must recognise that children are also vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Abuse perpetrated by children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously and as a club we must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to peer on peer abuse.

It is not the responsibility of coaches, volunteers or visitors to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All of these adults, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Team should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern at the club. Any member concerns or feedback from a disclosure must be reported immediately to the team without delay.

Following receipt of any information raising concern, the Safeguarding Team will consider what action to take and seek advice from, or make a referral to, Children's Services Social Care Referral and Assessment (West Bolton, 01942 634625 this numbers for the referral and assessment team are office hours only - 9am-5pm. If you have a concern outside these times you can contact Bolton Emergency Duty Team. Tel: 01204 337777. Or alternatively discuss your concerns with the NSPPC:



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Tel: (Free phone) 0808 800 5000 E-mail: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) 01204 337729 or the police as required.

They will also liaise with Chris Doherty; [chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com](mailto:chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com); . All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

Any member of the club who does not feel that concerns about a child have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Chairman.

If still they do not feel the situation has been addressed appropriately at this point, they should contact Children's Services directly with their concerns.

If a child is ever deemed to be in immediate danger or has been the victim of a violent or traumatic event or crime immediately preceding or following on from training or a match then the 999/112 emergency services must be contacted.

### SAFER CLUB PRACTICE

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or alongside our players are competent, confident and safe to do so.

All coaches and volunteers will be provided with a copy of our code of conduct at induction. They will be expected to know the Code of Conduct and carry out their duties in accordance with this advice. There will be occasion when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident, is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. However, at all times the agreed policy for contact must be adhered to.

Coaches, visitors, volunteers and committee members will always be visible to other adults and will never be solely responsible for the coaching of a team or match. Situations where players and club members may be alone off the pitch, e.g in changing rooms or cars must be avoided.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. This advice can be found in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People' (October 2015).



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All coaches and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary or legal action.

### MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COACHES & VOLUNTEERS

Horwich RMI AFC aims to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being, development and opportunities for the players at the club. It is recognised that sometimes the behaviour of adults at the club may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. However, allegations may be genuine and the club recognises that there are some adults in society who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

All possible steps will be taken to safeguard children and to ensure that the coaches and volunteers at the club are safe to work with children. If an allegation is made or information is received about any adult who coaches or assists at the club which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the person receiving the information should inform the Designated Safeguarding Team immediately.

This includes concerns relating to professional footballs club staff, staff from other grassroots clubs, FA members and staff at training complexes. Should an allegation be made against the Chairman, this will be reported to the Welfare Officer.

### Key Contact Details

Paul Sumner	Club Secretary and Vice Chairman
Julie Thompson	Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
Mike Fish	Youth Development & Discipline Officer

Chris Doherty; [chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com](mailto:chris.doherty@lancashirefa.com);

NSPCC –0808 800 5000

Bolton West Children's Services - 01942 634625

Police non –emergency contact 101