

Old Wilsonians Football Club

Safeguarding Policy (Children & Adults at Risk)

Version: 2025/26 • Next review: 30 June 2026

This policy integrates safeguarding for children and young people (under 18) and adults at risk, and aligns with The FA's current safeguarding framework, policies, regulations and guidance. It supersedes earlier OWFC safeguarding documents and should be read alongside the club's Codes of Conduct and Equality Policy.

Club Welfare Officer	James Sparrow Contact details are published on the club website and clubhouse notices.
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1) Policy Statement & Scope

Old Wilsonians Football Club (OWFC) commits to creating and maintaining a safe, positive and inclusive environment for children and young people (U18s) and adults at risk. OWFC adopts Football's Safeguarding Children Policy, the Grassroots' Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures, the Safeguarding Children Regulations, and Adult Welfare & Safeguarding in Affiliated Football and the Safeguarding Adults Regulations.

Scope: This policy applies to all officials, volunteers, coaches, parents/carers, players, match officials and visitors in all OWFC football activities and settings (training, matches, travel, events and online spaces).

2) Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount; safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; football must be safe, positive and inclusive.
- All concerns are taken seriously and managed proportionately with confidentiality and information-sharing on a need-to-know basis.
- Adult safeguarding follows the six principles (empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, accountability) and Making Safeguarding Personal, including mental capacity considerations.

3) Roles & Responsibilities

- **Club Committee:** Ensures implementation, resources, oversight and assurance against FA safeguarding framework; receives regular safeguarding reports.
- **Club Welfare Officer (CWO):** James Sparrow. Leads on safeguarding; maintains in-date qualifications (FA-accepted Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List; Safeguarding Children Course; Welfare Officers Course); first point of contact for concerns; liaises with County FA.
- **Managers/Coaches/Assistants working with U18s:** Hold FA-accepted Enhanced DBS (Children's Barred List) and in-date Safeguarding Children Course; complete First Aid; and additional modules if England Football Accredited.
- **Open-age teams with 16/17-year-old players:** Apply the same requirements as youth football (DBS & Safeguarding Children). Player Welfare in Open-Age Football recommended.
- **Adults at risk contexts (e.g., disability football):** Relevant officials complete Safeguarding Adults Course; apply person-centred, proportionate practice.

4) Safer Recruitment & DBS

OWFC follows FA safer recruitment: clear role descriptions; ID verification; application and interview/meeting; two references; supervised trial (for coaching roles); and structured induction with safeguarding expectations.

DBS eligibility: anyone aged 16+ in an eligible role working (potentially unsupervised) with U18s must hold an FA-accepted **Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List** before unsupervised involvement.

DBS cycle & process: 3-year renewal or sooner if role changes; initiated/managed via the FA Club Portal / First Advantage system; status tracked by the CWO/committee.

5) Education & Training Requirements

OWFC maintains a live training register aligned to The FA 2025/26 matrix. Minimums include:

- **Club Welfare Officer:** Safeguarding Children Course + Welfare Officers Course + FA-accepted Enhanced DBS (children's barred list).
- **Managers/Coaches/Assistants (youth or open-age with U18s):** Safeguarding Children Course + FA-accepted Enhanced DBS + First Aid in Football; additional role modules if Accredited.
- **Committee (Chair/Secretary/Treasurer):** Safeguarding for Committee Members course (youth clubs).

- **Open-age player welfare:** Player Welfare in Open-Age Football (recommended).
- **Adults at Risk contexts:** Safeguarding Adults Course (free online).

6) Safer Working Practice (Digital, Photography & Filming, Changing Facilities, Trips/Transport/Ratios)

Digital & Online Communications

- Use club-approved channels; publish admin/moderation responsibilities; retain auditability.
- No private 1-to-1 messaging with U18s by team officials – use groups and include parents/carers as appropriate.
- Protect personal data and images; respond to harmful content swiftly and escalate where needed.

Photography & Filming

- Consent for U18s; avoid pairing images with identifying information; provide opt-out at events.
- No images in changing rooms/showers; manage professional/media photographers through clear briefs; store images securely.

Changing Rooms & Showering

- Where facilities are shared by adults and children, provide separate changing/showering/toilet areas; adult officials must not change or shower at the same time as children.
- For mixed-gender activity, separate facilities must be available; supervision outside changing rooms; prohibit mobile phones/cameras in these areas.

Trips, Transport & Ratios

- Use written parental/carer consent, medical info and emergency contacts; complete risk assessments for trips/tournaments.
- Follow FA guidance on adult-to-child ratios; plan pickup protocols; never leave a child alone after activity; record late collections.

7) Recognising & Responding to Concerns (Children & Adults at Risk)

OWFC encourages early reporting of low-level concerns. If there is immediate danger, call emergency services. Otherwise:

- Report to the CWO promptly; complete a factual incident/concern record; keep information secure.
- Follow FA reporting pathways and referral form; escalate poor practice vs. suspected abuse appropriately (inside/outside football settings).
- Adults at risk: seek consent where possible, consider mental capacity, take proportionate action and liaise with statutory agencies via County FA where required.

8) Whistleblowing, Complaints & Disciplinary

OWFC supports whistleblowing. Concerns may be raised to the CWO or County FA. Serious or repeated breaches may be referred under The FA's Safeguarding Regulations and handled under FA disciplinary procedures.

9) Monitoring, Data, and Annual Review

- The Committee monitors DBS currency, training compliance, incident logs, and actions; submits returns required by County FA/Accreditation.

- Data is managed in accordance with data-protection law and FA guidance; access is restricted to those who need to know.
- This policy is reviewed annually or sooner after an incident or FA/legislative change. Version: 2025/26.

10) Appendices (Operational Checklists)

A. Safer Recruitment: role description; advertise fairly; application & ID; interview/meeting; references; eligibility & FA DBS; induction; probation; supervision & support.

B. Matchday & Training: registers; medical/emergency info; ratios; supervision plans; changing/showering plan; communications protocol; risk assessment.

C. Digital & Media: channel governance; no 1-to-1 with U18s; content standards; consent and image storage; incident response plan.

D. Trips/Transport: permissions; itinerary & contacts; accommodation plan; safeguarding briefing; emergency procedures; incident logging.

11) References (FA Source Documents)

Football's Safeguarding Children Policy (The FA).

Grassroots Football – Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures (The FA).

Safeguarding Children Regulations (The FA).

Adult Welfare & Safeguarding in Affiliated Football (The FA).

Safeguarding Adults Regulations (The FA).

Safer recruitment & DBS: Eligibility, process and Club Portal guidance (The FA).

Safeguarding in the Digital World (The FA).

Photography & Filming Children – Guidance 8.3 (The FA).

Changing Rooms & Showering – Guidance 8.4 (The FA).

Section 11 – Complete downloads directory (The FA).

This integrated policy supersedes previous OWFC Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults policies and will be published on the club website.