Swindon Town FC Community Foundation

Swindon Town FC **Community Foundation**
Football in the Community

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www.STFCfoundation.com

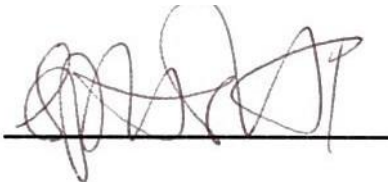
Swindon Town FC Community Foundation

Anti-Bullying Policy

Latest review: November 2026

Date of next review: November 2027

This policy and set of procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner should any major incident, organisational or legislative change arise.

Signed 

Shane Hewlett (Senior Safeguarding Manager and Head of Foundation)

Signed 

Kirsteen Fraser (Trustee)

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1. Statement of Intent

This Foundation is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club and Community Foundation. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* Club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Swindon Town FC Community Foundation Safeguarding lead or Lead Safeguarding Trustee Lead.

2. What is Bullying?

- Bullying is the use of aggression to hurt another person.
- Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
- Bullying can be Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, and tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures).
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, or gestures.
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- When one child bullies another this can be referred to as child-on-child abuse.
- It can take place in the real world or online

3. Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. The Club and Community Foundation have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy:

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what

they should do if bullying arises.

- As a club, we take bullying seriously. Players and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying.

4. The Football Association Anti-Bullying Policy for Football Clubs Recommended Guidelines

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confident
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- Have possessions go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Or in more extreme cases, if a child:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Runs away
- Attempts or threatens suicide.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

5. Procedures for Responding to Incidents of Bullying

- Incidents of bullying should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Shane Hewlett or SSM Kirsteen Fraser or contact the County Football Association Child Protection Officer (CFA CPO)
- With parents remind of players' code of conduct.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the SWCPP and CFA CPO FA /EFL for advice and logged on the Swindon Town FC My Concern system.
- Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the situation and mediate with those concerned.
- If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

6. Recommended Swindon Town FC Community Foundation Actions

If the Club/Community Foundation decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem
2. If this fails or is not appropriate a small panel (made up of Safeguarding DSO, club welfare officer, Trustees, (SSM) committee members) should meet with the parents/carers and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed upon by all as a true account
3. The same three persons should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed The Football Association Anti-Bullying Policy for Football Clubs Recommended Guidelines
4. If the bullying has in their view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues.

Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time

5. In some cases, the parent/carers of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they can do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated
6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of Reported to be Bullying Anyone within the Club/Community Foundation

- The CFA CPO/ SWCPP should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA‟s Child Protection and Best Practice awareness training may be recommended
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or SWCPP/ Social services

7. Definitions of Abuse (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023)

Keeping children safe in Education 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: A form of abuse which 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.

Emotional abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although it may occur alone.

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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Neglect: 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
Specific safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth-produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

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All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth-produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Child on child Abuse: All staff should be clear as to the Foundation's policy and procedures concerning child abuse. Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors, so schools and colleges must provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Football is for everyone, it belongs to and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether as a player, official, staff member, volunteer or spectator. Swindon Town FC Community Foundation recognises that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion is vital to our success.

We want our staff, coaches, volunteers and participants to reflect the diversity of the communities that we serve and influence. We aim to be a place where people can be free to be themselves no matter what their identity or background. We will ensure that equality is embedded in all of our activities, policies and decisions.

To report incidents and allegations of discriminatory actions or behaviour, our equality, diversity and inclusion policy is available at www.stfcfoundation.com