

BETLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Opening Statement from our Chairperson

**“Child protection in today’s society is a very high profile subject and its importance is recognised within our Football Club.
With the emergence this season of our highly successful junior team, which has coincided with the creation of our Club Constitution, we feel it absolutely necessary to fully embrace the subject of Child protection. This will ensure anyone connected with Betley Football Club can be confident that we have adopting a meaningful Child Protection Policy and that it is actively being followed in practise. The future of Betley Football Club rests with its Youth development programme and I fully endorse the measures being put in place to ensure our club can progress and realise its full potential”**

Chair

Please Print

The registered person elected by the Football Club will complete a CRB disclosure and will comply with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee. They will ensure that all members of the football club working and looking after children in the club are able to put the procedures into practice.

Child Protection Procedures

Most of the knocks, scrapes and bruises that children suffer as part of their young lives can be easily explained - accidents do happen! However, in a number of cases these and more serious injuries are inflicted deliberately by parents, guardians or other children and adults. Other examples of abuse are severe physical and emotional neglect or sexual abuse - these may be less noticeable but are just as damaging.

Everyone has a duty to ensure the protection and well being of children and this includes football club members. These guidelines have been written to ensure that you know and understand the procedures to follow in the case of suspected child abuse.

Any person wishing to take photographs of any Betley Football Club member must be a registered member of a recognised photographic or media agency / company and approval must always be sought from the Committee before using any pictures.

Definitions of Abuse

Child abuse is behaviour to a child, which deliberately causes or is likely to cause significant harm. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child.

The four main types of abuse to children are neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Discrimination, harassment and bullying are also abusive and can have harmful consequences both physically and emotionally.

All forms of abuse are damaging and people who have been abused often say that the emotional impact can be harder to recover from than the physical effects.

Contrary to popular belief, only a very small minority of cases of child abuse involve a total stranger. It is far more likely to be carried out by someone known to the child, even trusted - such as a parent, another relative or family friend.

Abuse happens in all walks of life and *all* children can be abused. Nevertheless, children growing up in violent households or where parents abuse substances - drugs and alcohol - are particularly at risk.

1. Physical Abuse

All physically injured children under the age of 17 years where the nature of the injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred, or where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted (or knowingly not prevented), by any person having custody, charge or care of the child. This includes children to whom it is suspected poisonous substances have been administered.

2. Neglect

Children under the age of 17 years who have been persistently or severely neglected physically, for example, by exposure to dangers of different kinds, including cold and starvation and including non-organic failure to thrive which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

3. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is observed in children whose behaviour and emotional development has been severely affected, where medical and social assessment finds evidence of either persistent or severe neglect or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. Emotional abuse is difficult to pinpoint but may involve the following:

- persistent and severe verbal abuse and lack of affection.
- being denied access to their children, family and friends.
- not being allowed the opportunity for self-expression.

4. Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of any child under the age of 16 years, in sexual activities within the family or extended family, or activity, which involves a person known to a child.

- Children who have experienced attempted or actual intercourse or other inappropriate genital or oral contact with adults, for example, fondling, mutual masturbation.
- exposure to illegal or otherwise inappropriate sexual activities, for example involvement in pornographic photography or exposure to sexually explicit material.

Grave Concern

Children under the age of 17 years where there is a possibility that ill treatment, serious neglect or sexual abuse has taken place or may take place (this might involve concern about unborn children).

Children under the age of 17 years who are in a household with or which is regularly visited by a parent or another person who has physically or sexually abused a child and are considered at risk of abuse because of this adult.

Diagnosis of any abuse is difficult; especially where there are no physical signs and behavioural signs are confusing and erratic. However, it is important to remember that a child who is being abused to any degree is unlikely to be a happy child with normal patterns of development, and the emotionally abused child often has health and development problems.

Knowing the reasons why it takes place and having a clear strategy for dealing with the problems when they arise, can minimise the risks and distress for everyone involved.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms can only be seen as indicators and are not conclusive proof one way or the other - however if in doubt consult with other members of the football club.

- Repeated injuries - bruising, cuts, burns etc., especially when the explanation does not seem consistent with the injury.
- Poorly clothed - dirty, ill kept, inappropriate (e.g. not warm in winter).
- Poor Health - illness for which no medical help was sought.
- Changes in behaviour - sudden withdrawal, aggression, depression.
- Chronic Misery - unhappy child, rarely joyous.
- Detached child - not wanted to be involved, few friends, isolated.
- Sexually explicit behaviour - showing knowledge inappropriate for the age of the child.
- Self-inflicted wounds.
- Unusual fear of adults.
- Too ready to be over-friendly to strangers.

If you become aware of any of these signs and symptoms, or there are consistent worries over a particular child, which seem too minor to report immediately, the following guidelines are useful.

Drink / Drugs Policy

Betley Football Club has a duty to safeguard the welfare of children at all times and reserves the right to refuse the release of a child if they believe it would not be in the child's best interest to do so. Examples of this are parents / guardians / carers who are obviously incapable due to the influence of drink or drugs.

If this situation arises Football Club members: -

1. Refuse to release the child from their care.
2. Attempt to contact other known carers of the child (e.g. another parent, grandparents, childminder, etc.) and have the child collected.
3. If number 2 is not possible, contact the Social Services Duty Officer or the Police.

Bullying

If you witness an act of bullying by one child on another you should intervene at once. If a child seems to be a persistent problem, it may be necessary to speak to their parents. Tact will be required in this situation, and you must be sure of the facts. Discuss your action with club members and keep a note of incidents in your diary. If a child reports that they have been bullied you should always take it seriously. Children should be interviewed separately in a quiet space. Sometimes it is possible to initiate a group discussion of the issues.

Reporting Guidelines

1. Keep a regular written diary of any small incidents or concerns about physical health or behaviour that you observe whilst keeping identities confidential. (This is to protect you as much as the child because there may well be an accusation that a child was injured whilst attending the scheme).
2. Discuss the child with other team officials, find out if your observations are confirmed.
3. Check with any other professionals you may know who are concerned with the child, e.g. youth leaders, teachers other parents etc.,
4. If a child tells you of abuse, ensure that you respond by making the time and space available to listen straight away. Reassure the child that they did the right thing to tell you, and reassure the child about any fears. However, do not make any promises about keeping the issue a secret.
5. Listen, but do not probe or ask for detail, as they may be questioned at a later stage.
6. If you feel the child is 'at risk' you must telephone Social Services, NSPCC Helpline immediately.
7. If you are unsure about what steps to take contact the Health and Sport Development Manager immediately on 01270 537240.