

APPENDIX 2

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – GUIDANCE FOR CLUB OFFICIALS INCLUDING COACHES AND CLUB WELFARE OFFICERS

- Your club must have completed a safeguarding & Covid-19 risk assessment and briefed you on your responsibilities.
- You are responsible for continuing to ensure the environment is safe and for implementing your club's safeguarding children policy and procedures.
- Coaches working with children must have an in-date FA DBS Check and should have done some FA safeguarding training.
- You must ensure the ratio of coach to different age groups of children is appropriate. See FA safeguarding **guidance note 5.5**, which covers the ratios of adults to children. There must be a minimum of two FA-DBS-Checked adults present at any one time.
- It is essential that parents/carers give informed consent for their child(ren) to participate in your football session. When requesting consent, you have the ideal opportunity to be clear about what is expected of the children and their parents/carers in line with this guidance.
- Ensure you retain a written record of parent/ carer consent. The club may use a form such as the one in FA safeguarding **guidance note 8.2** to gather any relevant information from parents/carers.
- Any children with additional medical or disability needs must be discussed with parents/carers to ensure you, or as the parents/carers, they can provide effective support to facilitate their involvement and appropriately update your risk assessments.

LISTENING TO CHILDREN

While many families have coped well during lockdown, others may not have and for some children the experience will have been very difficult. You may be one of the first people outside the family unit that a child has met in recent times. It's important you know that some children may be struggling for various reasons, including:

- Lacking confidence, as they have felt cut off from their friends;

- Being confused and stressed about how to behave because of social distancing;
- They or someone they care about may have been or still be unwell;
- They may still be grieving because someone they love has died;
- Hearing that people from BAME communities may be more vulnerable to Covid-19;
- They may have been neglected emotionally and/or physically – through lack of food and/or care;
- Children with learning disabilities may find it particularly confusing, as their routine has changed.

You may also have seen media coverage on the increase in:

- Domestic violence – significantly impacting children emotionally and/or physically in households where this has happened;
- Online grooming of children;
- Cyberbullying.

We're sharing this because of your important role in safeguarding. If you are worried about a child as they return to football, it's vital you report your concerns. Doing nothing is not an option.

Please check-in with the children you are coaching/working with, and ask them how they've been and how they're doing. There are five ways to report your concerns if you are worried about a child as they return to football:

- To your club or league Welfare Officer;
- To your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer. Click **here** for a list of County FA contacts;
- By emailing The FA Safeguarding Team at **safeguarding@TheFA.com**;
- If urgent and you cannot contact your club, league or County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, you should call the NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 5000;
- If it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the Police on 999.

The NSPCC has produced a great film which reminds us all how best to respond if a child discloses to you. It really is worth taking the two minutes it requires to watch. You can watch the film **here**.