



# SAFEGUARDING OFFICER GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

## HOW CAN I SIGN UP TO BECOME A SAFEGUARDING OFFICER?

To be appointed as a Safeguarding Officer, an individual must have a current and valid DBS check in place via the FAW and have attended the FAW Safeguarding Award which can be viewed and booked via [www.fawcourses.com](http://www.fawcourses.com) You must also be registered as safeguarding officer for the club on the comet system. In order to complete registration on comet, please email the FAW safeguarding team on [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk) with your full name, club, comet ID number and state that you would like to complete registration as safeguarding officer. We will then upload your safeguarding award and provide you with safeguarding user access and this will enable you to see the DBS information for personnel who are registered with your club.

## DO I HAVE TO ATTEND SAFEGUARDING TRAINING OFFERED BY THE FAW TRUST OR IS OTHER SAFEGUARDING TRAINING ACCEPTABLE?

It is preferred that all safeguarding officers complete the FAW Safeguarding award as this is football specific, however we do accept the NSPCC Time to Listen Course. If you have attended this course, please upload the certificate to your COMET profile and email FAW safeguarding to confirm you have done so.

## WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS SAFEGUARDING OFFICER?

The Safeguarding Officer Code of Conduct can be found on our website and this underlines your key responsibilities. All useful documents that will help you to fulfil the role are also on our website, such as the FAW Safeguarding Policy, Mini Football Regulations, Social Media Policy, Codes of Conduct, Anti-bullying Policy etc. For further guidance and support, the FAW safeguarding team can be contacted on [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk) or 02920 435 830.

## CAN A CLUB HAVE MORE THAN ONE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER?

Yes, as long as an individual has a current and valid DBS check via the FAW and has completed the necessary safeguarding training, they are eligible to be a Safeguarding Officer. The priority with this role is to ensure it is carried out effectively so if you feel it may help you as a club to have more than one officer this is perfectly acceptable and encouraged.

## CHANGING CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

If a club is changing Safeguarding Officer, then they must notify the FAW know as soon as possible so that we can update our records. This is important in case we ever need to contact the club regarding safeguarding matters. We can then terminate the registration of the outgoing Safeguarding Officer on COMET and ensure a new Safeguarding Officer is registered and in place to take the role. It is also advisable to let your League Safeguarding Officer know as well so that they can assist the club if there is a transition period or if the new individual hasn't yet sat the Safeguarding Award in order to formally be able to take on the role. **A junior club cannot operate without a safeguarding officer in place.**





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## WHAT IS THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO SUBMIT DBS APPLICATIONS FOR MY CLUB?

Safeguarding officers can sign up to the DBS online system as the registered verifier. Clubs can obtain access to the online system by forwarding the following details to [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk):

- Name, Club, Date of Birth, Comet ID number, Address, contact number and email address.

Please note that a club can only have one set of login details but this can be shared amongst essential personnel i.e. if there is more than one Club Safeguarding Officer.

If there is a change in Club Safeguarding Officer, we must also change over the verifier details on the DBS online system. *\*For more information on the DBS process, please refer to the FAW DBS process document below.*

## WHAT IF ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS ALREADY HAS A DBS CHECK THROUGH WORK OR ANOTHER SPORT?

If a DBS check is carried outside of the Welsh Football environment through work or another sport, then these are only acceptable if the individual is signed up to the DBS Update Service. If this is the case, to enable us to check the certificate on the update service, the individual needs to provide us their full name, date of birth, certificate reference number and consent to carry out the check. This information must be emailed to [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk).

## THE COACH HAS APPLIED FOR A DBS CHECK, BUT IT'S NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED, CAN THEY COACH IN THE MEANTIME?

If a coach has applied for a DBS check, they can continue to coach whilst waiting for it to be completed providing they are supervised at all times by an individual with a current and valid DBS check via the FAW and who has been Confirmed on COMET.

Please note, this is only a temporary measure though whilst they are waiting for their check to go through. It cannot be used as an excuse to coach without a check. If they have not submitted a DBS application or if they have received their certificate back from the DBS but haven't submitted it to the FAW if required, then they are unable to be involved in junior football related activity.

## WE HAVE A VOLUNTEER COME OVER FROM ANOTHER CLUB, DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A NEW DBS APPLICATION?

DBS checks carried out by FAW affiliated clubs are transferrable to any other FAW affiliated club.

## AS SAFEGUARDING OFFICER, DO I NEED TO SEE A COACHES DBS CERTIFICATE?

No, as Safeguarding Officer your role would be to assist in ensuring an individual submits their DBS certificate to the FAW as and when required. The club does not have a right to view the





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certificate but can do so with the consent of the individual. The individual has the right to complete the process in a confidential manner between themselves and the FAW as they have ownership of their own data.

## DOES THE INDIVIDUAL NEED TO SEND IN THEIR DBS CERTIFICATE?

All volunteers who have submitted via a paper DBS application form MUST send in their certificate to enable the FAW Safeguarding Team to complete the process and issue clearance for junior football. If the applicant has applied through the online DBS system and has received a 'NO MATCH' status, they are not required to send in their certificate as the FAW can view the outcome of the DBS application online and send out a clearance letter.

Please note that any application that changes to 'INPOST' are required to send the DBS certificate into the FAW as soon as possible. Failure to do so will result in a non-compliance suspension being issued against that individual. \*Please note that if an individual is required to send in their DBS certificate, the FAW Safeguarding Team can only accept the original document. *Please refer to the FAW DBS process document for more information.*

## OUR CLUB TRAIN AT A PRIVATE FACILITY OUTSIDE OF OUR CLUB VENUE. CAN THE FACILITY PROVIDER REQUEST TO SEE MY COACHES DBS CERTIFICATES?

Yes, whilst the FAW have already issued the coaches with clearance for junior football, the facility owner/manager has the right to ask to see the DBS certificate in line with their own safeguarding policy. The coaches can say no to this request; however the facility can then prevent the club/coach from using the facility.

## DO INDIVIDUALS STILL RECEIVE FAW NUMBERS?

No, the FAW no longer issue FAW numbers due to a change in system. The COMET system now generates a COMET ID number, therefore in dealings with the FAW and FAW Trust individuals should make reference to this number.

## DO INDIVIDUALS STILL REQUIRE AN FAW SAFEGUARDING SCHEME CARD?

No, the FAW safeguarding Team no longer issue safeguarding lanyards as digital registration cards are now generated through COMET once an individual has registered with the club. This registration card will be emailed to the individual and will be accessible via smartphone or tablet that can be provided if the individual is asked to produce it at training/fixtures. The registration card has a QR code on and this will confirm that an individual has a current and valid DBS check.

## HOW DO I DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS?

Please refer to the Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures document in the Safeguarding Kit Bag.





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The correct process must be followed and it is essential to remember that all decisions are communicated in writing and individuals are offered a right of appeal to the Area Association.

## **A PARENT IS CONCERNED THAT A COACH IS NOT PLAYING THEIR CHILD IN SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL (5-11 YEARS OF AGE). WHAT SHALL I DO?**

Please refer to our Small Sided Football Regulations; all children should be afforded equal playing time as far as reasonably possible. Small Sided football is supposed to be about enjoyment and developing skills, rather than winning.

If a coach is not following the values of the Small Sided Football Regulations the Club Safeguarding Officer is advised to sit down with the coach and remind them of these values to ensure they are followed going forward. Failure to take this on board would then require the club to take further action as appropriate.

## **A PARENT IS CONCERNED THAT A COACH IS NOT PLAYING THEIR CHILD AT JUNIOR LEVEL (12-16 YEARS OF AGE). WHAT SHALL I DO?**

From the ages of 12 - 16 we would also encourage creating an environment of enjoyment and development but understand there is an element of competition involved through these ages. At this age, if a player isn't getting the playing time or enjoyment from the game they would like then we would recommend the Club Safeguarding Officer speaking to the coaches (whether with the parents and the player, or whatever may work best for mediating) in the first instance. If there doesn't seem to be a way to improve the situation then it may be advised to look for a new club or team whereby the players ability and game time will be better managed.

## **WHAT IF WE HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A COACH?**

We advise the club to implement a Coach's Code of Conduct and this can be found on our website. This document can be amended and shaped to suit the requirements and expectations of the club and ensure that these are communicated effectively to all coaches. If the attitude and behaviour of a coach is of a concern, the club can refer to the code of conduct and this will enable the club to take any necessary action. If the concern is of a serious nature, this must be reported to the FAW as soon as possible to enable the FAW Safeguarding Team to investigate this further. If you have immediate concerns about the safety of a child, please contact the Police or Social Services. Child welfare must always be the paramount consideration.

## **WHAT IF WE HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A PARENT/SPECTATOR?**

In line with the Small Sided Football Regulations, there is a requirement for all spectators to contribute to a positive match day culture. Further information on this can be found within the Regulations, and should there be a failure to adhere to these measures then we would advise that the Club Committee convene a meeting with the individual(s) concerned to discuss





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acceptable behaviour going forward, making reference to the Parent & Spectator Code of Conduct that is available in the Kit Bag.

## WHAT DO WE DO IF THERE IS A COMPLAINT OF BULLYING WITHIN A TEAM?

The club is advised to implement an anti-bullying policy outlining that bullying is not accepted at the club. All individuals at the club are expected to follow these guidelines - when there are concerns in relation to this policy they must be investigated fully and appropriate action to be taken against any individuals where poor conduct has been identified. The Players Code of Conduct may be helpful in this situation, and again, this can be found in the Safeguarding Kitbag.

## AN INDIVIDUAL IS TAKING PHOTOS AT A CHILD'S GAME. IS THIS ALLOWED?

There is no legislation to stop individuals from taking photos on public land. Our main advice is to be aware of the individual and if at any point there is concern, take appropriate and proportionate action such as asking the individual (politely in the first instance!) their reasons for taking photos and why they're there and what they intend to do with these photos. If still concerned, then raise your concerns with the local council as well as the club. On Private land, teams can ask those who own the land to implement a photography policy and this will enable the club to prevent anyone taking photos.

## THE CLUB WANT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If the club is unhappy with an incident or issue, they must first raise this with matter their junior league, ensuring to include as much evidence/detail as possible. The incident referral form can be found on the FAW website and would be useful for this process. The issue should then be investigated by the league in the first instance or the Area Association if it is not able to be dealt with at league level. The FAW Safeguarding Team would then deal with the most serious cases whereby Statutory bodies may need to be involved given the seriousness of the case in order to take appropriate action.

## SHOULD MY CLUB IMPLEMENT A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY?

The FAW advises that all clubs Implement a Social Media and Communications Policy with the purpose of protecting all involved. The best way to safeguard clubs and individuals volunteering within the club from using social media inappropriately is to educate them on the use of social media and implement appropriate expectations surrounding it. A copy of the FAW Best Practice Guidelines for Social Media can be found on our website in the Kit Bag.

## CAN THE CLUB PUT NAMES ON THE BACK OF SHIRTS?

Whilst there are no rules stating that players should not have the names on the back of their shirt, from a safeguarding and best practice perspective, the FAW do advise against this as it will instantly make a child identifiable. Making a child identifiable could potentially make





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them vulnerable. If the club decides that this is something they wish to do, the FAW advise that all parents and players should be made aware of any risks involved, offering them the opportunity to come to an informed decision. If they wish to put names on the back of shirts, written consent must be obtained from all players and parents before proceeding.

## CAN A PLAYER WEAR GLASSES WHEN PLAYING/TRAINING?

It is the decision of the referee i.e. they must ensure that there is no dangerous equipment on the field of play and we would strongly recommend that children wear specific sports goggles.

However, we recognise this may be an issue for children playing in grassroots football. Therefore we encourage referees officiating in junior football to be tolerant over glasses and to use a common sense approach.

However the individual referee must show concern for all players and if they feel there is something dangerous in the glasses i.e. sharp edges, etc, then in order to protect players and also the wearer him/herself they have the authority to say the glasses can't be worn.

## CAN A PUB SPONSOR THE TEAM KIT?

If the pub serves food as a restaurant and is a family friendly establishment, then they may sponsor a children's football team. However, if the venue is a nightclub, adults only pub or relates to a specific alcohol brand then this would not be allowed.

## WHAT DO WE DO IF WE HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT HEADING IN SMALL SIDED AND JUNIOR FOOTBALL?

Please refer to the Small Sided Football Regulations which details the protocol to be followed for training and matches.

## WHAT ARE THE SUPERVISION RATIOS FOR COACHES TO CHILDREN?

<u>Age of Child/Young Person</u>	<u>Number of Adults</u>	<u>Number of Children/ Young People</u>
<u>0 – 2</u>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<u>2 – 3</u>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<u>4 – 8</u>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<u>9 – 12</u>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
<u>13 – 18</u>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>





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## PLAYING TIME GUIDELINES

It is recommended that a child plays no more than once every 24 hours and that they do not play/train for more hours per week than their age, however this is to be monitored on a case by case basis and must be assessed with common sense and best practice and player welfare must be the paramount consideration. For further information on small sided football, please contact the FAW Trust.

## HOW DO I OBTAIN INFORMATION ON COACH EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS AND VALIDITY?

All Coaching Courses and Education, including the Safeguarding Award, is managed by the FAW Trust. If you have a qualification query you need to contact the FAW Trust on 01633 282911, [info@welshfootballtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@welshfootballtrust.org.uk), or via their FAW Courses website at: <https://www.fawcourses.com/contactus>

## RELEVANT INFORMATION ON THE FAW DBS PROCESS AND THE COMET SYSTEM

As you are aware, any individual that comes into contact with children is required to complete a DBS check and receive clearance from the Football Association of Wales to be involved in junior football related activity. An individual must not engage in junior football until they have completed the DBS process.

Clubs have the option to complete DBS checks online or through paper applications. DBS checks are free of charge for all volunteers and £44 for paid staff.

\* Please note that the FAW are encouraging clubs to complete DBS checks through the DBS online portal as it is a much more efficient process. If a club would like to sign up to the DBS online system, the club safeguarding officer must have a valid DBS check in place and email [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk) with the following details to be registered as the club verifier:

- Full Name
- Club
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Contact number
- Email Address
- Do you consent to us sharing your club, name and email address with individuals who may need ID verification for their DBS check to be processed?

The safeguarding department will then forward these details to the Welsh Sports Association who will then get in contact with the safeguarding officer and provide them with login details and a guidance document.





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A club can only have one set of login details and if at any point the club would like to change their registered verifier, they must email the safeguarding department to inform us of this change.

## **DBS ONLINE PROCESS**

Once the club verifier has verified the application and submitted this on the online system, the application will either come back as 'INPOST' or 'NO MATCH'. Ninety percent of applications are completed in less than a week, however, please note that some applications will stay on stage 4 of 5 of the process for up to 60 days. This stage is conducted by the police force and therefore we cannot escalate the application within this time frame. If there are applications that do go over this time frame, please contact Complete Background Screening on 01443 799 900. Those applications that come back with following outcome:

- **'No Match' Status:** The registered verifier will receive an email confirming the check has been completed and the applications has come back as 'No Match'. This individual is not required to send their DBS certificate into the FAW as the certificate has come back clear and therefore the individual is cleared for junior related activity. The Safeguarding department receive a weekly list of completed DBS checks and will upload this to the COMET system as soon as possible. The DBS check will be valid for three years.
- **'In Post' Status –** The registered verifier will receive notification that the check has been completed, however the certificate requires a risk assessment as the system has flagged up that there is content. The individual must send the DBS certificate (original Document) into the FAW Safeguarding Team for and await a clearance. Please forward a copy of the certificate to [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk). Once received, we will carry out a risk assessment. Failure to provide with FAW the DBS certificate will result in a non-compliance suspension until they send the required document in. The individual has the right not to send in their DBS certificate to the FAW, however the FAW Safeguarding team cannot issue clearance for junior football. If any restrictions are put upon the individual, the FAW Safeguarding Team will get in contact with the individual and the club safeguarding officer.

## **DBS PROCESS AND THE COMET SYSTEM**

Please note that all clubs have the responsibility to register club personnel on the COMET system and tag them to the club within their role. The club COMET champion can assist with this and information on how to search for or create an individual COMET profile and submit a registration can be found on the COMET section of the FAW website. From the 2020- 2021 season, registration of all personnel on the COMET system will be compulsory.

Once the FAW Safeguarding Team receives notification of an online DBS check that has come back clear, we will locate the individuals COMET profile and log the DBS information under





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the 'Safeguarding and Licences' tab. Registered safeguarding officers who have received safeguarding user access will be able to see the DBS information and DBS expiry date of volunteers who are tagged to the club.

Those who send in their DBS certificate will be uploaded to COMET and returned to the individual with a clearance letter stating their COMET ID number.

An individual will receive notification that a DBS has expired on the COMET system and if this is before the end of the season, a registration will be terminated.

The club have the responsibility to submit a new DBS application for the individual before a DBS expires to enable the FAW Safeguarding team to update COMET with the new DBS information.

## **REGISTRATION ON THE COMET SYSTEM**

Once an individual's registration has been submitted on the COMET system, the FAW Trust will check the necessary qualification for their role have been completed and are valid. The FAW Safeguarding Team will then check if the individual has completed the DBS process and confirm the registration.

Upon confirmation of this registration, the individual will receive a digital registration card via email, and this will confirm that they have met the requirements to undertake their role within the club.

Please note that the FAW Safeguarding Team are no longer issue safeguarding cards due to the COMET system generating digital registration cards.

## **REGISTRATION OF SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS ON THE COMET SYSTEM**

The club cannot add the safeguarding award for their Safeguarding Officer. In the process of registering the safeguarding officer, please email [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk) the full name, date of birth and COMET ID number of the individual. The Safeguarding Team will then add the safeguarding award and confirm the registration, providing they have DBS clearance.

For Safeguarding User access on the DBS COMET System, please set the individual up as a COMET user for the club. We will then go onto user access details and update the user access to safeguarding access for the club. The Safeguarding Officer will then be able to see DBS information for all volunteers who are tagged to the club.

*If you have any queries regarding the DBS process, please contact the FAW Safeguarding Team on [safeguarding@faw.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@faw.co.uk) or 02920 435 830.*

