



Ballymena United Youth Academy **Safeguarding Policy**

Ballymena United Youth Academy Child Welfare Mission Statement

“The welfare of children and young people is paramount to Ballymena United Youth Academy. We endeavour to provide an environment which values and protects all children and young people, in all aspects and at every level of football in Northern Ireland, regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. It is the policy and commitment of Ballymena United Youth Academy to protect children and young people involved in football from inappropriate behaviour and all types of abuse.”

Club Statement

Football is an every-day activity for many children/young people and makes a significant contribution to their well-being and development. Ballymena United Youth Academy (Club) has a duty to safeguard children/young people from inappropriate behaviour/abuse within our sport. We also have a role in recognising and responding to concerns that a child/young person may be being harmed within another setting, such as the family home. By encouraging all clubs/centres to implement the above guidelines, we believe that everyone in children's football will benefit – children/young people, parents/guardians and coaches/volunteers.

The Wider Picture

Children/young people can be subjected to many forms of unacceptable treatment by adults or indeed by their own peers, which we may never consider being abuse, but none the less the impact of such ill treatment is wide-ranging and impossible to quantify. At a personal level, such ill treatment can completely destroy a child's/young person's sense of worth attacking their self-confidence and self-esteem. At its worst, some children/young people can feel that their situation, which if it goes unchallenged, is so hopeless that suicide is their only option.

Background Checks

Volunteers involved with Ballymena United Youth Academy are required to complete an Access Ni Check, if appropriate for their role, on appointment and thereafter every three years. This check will be completed through the governing body of the Irish Football Association. This and the reporting of concerns about the welfare of children is a requirement on the Club and the individuals involved with it of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and the Northern Ireland Children's Order 1995. Failure to complete this check will bar individuals from volunteering with the Club. Individuals are duty bound to inform the club of any new convictions between these checks or any allegations made against them of alleged inappropriate behaviour by them towards children and young people.



Contact details for the Club Child Protection Officer are:-

Name: Billy Eagleson

Email Address: billy.eagleson@gmail.com

Contact Telephone Number: 07724263212

Guidance on reporting concerns or allegation involving a child

If, whilst acting as a volunteer for Ballymena United Youth Academy if a child or young person tells you that they have felt uncomfortable at a match or training or share a concern with you, or you feel uncomfortable about something you have seen or heard yourself you have a duty to pass to act on this information or your concerns. In all cases use the Club Safeguarding/Incident Report Form, included in this document and inform the Club Child Protection Officer directly as soon as possible.

What to do if a child makes an allegation that they have been abused

- Remain outwardly calm and reassuring to the child
- If possible, secure privacy for your conversation with the child (along with another adult if possible)
- Be clear immediately that you cannot keep this conversation a secret
- Listen, do not ask questions. Soon afterwards make factual, detailed notes.
- Inform the Child Welfare Officer who will decide how to pass this information on to the relevant authorities (Social Service Gateway Teams or PSNI)

What to do if someone voices concern to you about a child being abused now

- Remain calm and listen sympathetically
- Acknowledge the difficulty of talking about such concerns
- Be clear immediately that you must pass on this information to the Child Protection Officer
- Complete the Club Safeguarding/Incident report form
- Pass this as promptly as possible to the Child Protection Officer



What to do if the behaviour or attitude of someone towards a child causes you concern

- Write a clear description of what you saw/heard
- Inform the Child Protection Officer as quickly as possible, giving both the individual's and child's details.
- If it is the behaviour of a fellow Youth Academy coach or volunteer that causes you concern, challenge the person's behaviour if appropriate, make a written record and pass on to the Child Protection Officer
- Any allegations of improper conduct or behaviour towards a child by a club coach/volunteer will be dealt with by the Youth Academy Committee on a case by case basis
- If the child needs urgent treatment or is in danger, ring the police immediately

Reviewed May 2021