

VERWOOD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Play Phase Safeguards (U5–U6 Activity)

Additional safeguards for children aged 4–5 years

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Review due	Annually, or following any significant incident or change in FA guidance
Policy owner	Club Welfare Officer / Club Secretary (as applicable)

1. PURPOSE

Verwood Town Football Club runs football activity for children aged 4 and 5 (Play Phase). The FA requires specific additional safeguards for this age group, over and above the club's standard youth safeguarding requirements. This protocol sets those safeguards out.

2. REGISTRATION

Every child attending a Play Phase session must be formally registered before or at their first session. The registration form must capture:

- Child's full name and date of birth
- Parent/carer name and contact number (must be present at every session)
- Emergency contact details
- Any medical conditions, allergies or specific care needs
- Any specific safeguarding concerns or court orders the club needs to be aware of

Attendance must be recorded at every session. No child may attend without being on the register.

3. PARENTAL SUPERVISION

A parent or carer must remain on site for the entirety of every Play Phase session. Children aged 4–5 must not be left at the session without a parent or carer present.

Managers should communicate this requirement clearly to parents before the first session and as a standing reminder at the start of each season.

4. INTIMATE CARE

Children aged 4–5 may require support with intimate care needs (e.g., toileting). VTFC's approach to this is:

- Intimate care must always be provided by the child's own parent or carer, not a coach or club volunteer
- Toilet facilities at the venue must be communicated to parents/carers at the start of every session
- Coaches must never assist a child with intimate care
- If a child has a specific care need that requires adult assistance, the club should discuss this individually with the parent/carer and, if necessary, with the Club Welfare Officer

5. SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT

A safeguarding risk assessment must be completed before the Play Phase programme begins each season and reviewed:

- At the start of each new season
- When a new venue is used
- Following any incident

The risk assessment should cover: venue safety, toilet and handwashing facilities, supervision ratios, emergency procedures and any site-specific risks. The Club Welfare Officer must sign off the risk assessment before the first session of each season.

6. SUPERVISION RATIOS

The recommended supervision ratio for Play Phase activity is 1 adult to 6 children (1:6). Given that parents/carers must remain on site, total adult supervision will be higher than this in practice. At least two club adults (coaches or helpers) must be present at every Play Phase session.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

At the start of every Play Phase session, the lead coach must:

- Confirm parents know where the toilet and handwashing facilities are located
- Confirm parents have the Club Welfare Officer's contact details
- Confirm attendance has been recorded

8. SAFEGUARDING DECLARATION

In line with The FA's Safeguarding Declaration for Youth Football (Play Phase), VTFC commits to:

- Completing a specific safeguarding risk assessment for all Play Phase activity
- Maintaining a formal registration process for each session
- Proactively communicating the availability of toilets and handwashing facilities
- Requiring parents/carers to supervise their child including any intimate care needs

Key Contacts

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