

VERWOOD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures

Protecting every player at Verwood Town Football Club

Version	Version 2.0 – April 2026
Date of issue	April 2026
Review due	Annually, or following any significant incident or change in FA guidance
Policy owner	Club Welfare Officer / Club Secretary (as applicable)

1. COMMITMENT

Verwood Town Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care, and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club activity. We subscribe to The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children, young people and their parents/carers is essential
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility — not just the Club Welfare Officer's

3. SAFER RECRUITMENT

Verwood Town Football Club follows The FA's Responsible Recruitment guidelines for all volunteers, coaches and officials. Before appointment, all new volunteers must:

- Complete a volunteer application form
- Provide two references, which will be followed up before the volunteer has any unsupervised contact with children
- Undergo an FA-accepted Enhanced DBS Check with Barring List (where eligible under current FA policy)
- Complete The FA's Safeguarding Children course
- Complete the FA Player Welfare Course (for open-age team officials from 2024/25, learn.EnglandFootball.com) Coaches are encouraged (though not required for recruitment) to hold the FA Introduction to First Aid in Football (IFAiF) — VTFC will support the cost

Important: *Volunteers must not have unsupervised contact with children until a satisfactory DBS check and Safeguarding Children course certificate have been confirmed. See the Helper, Coach & Manager Application Procedure for full details.*

4. CLUB WELFARE OFFICER

Verwood Town Football Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with The FA's role profile. The CWO is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person.

The CWO will liaise directly with the Dorset FA Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They play a proactive role in increasing awareness of safeguarding, poor practice and abuse across the club.

If a concern is about the Club Welfare Officer: concerns should be reported directly to the Club Chairperson or the Dorset FA Designated Safeguarding Officer — not to the CWO.

5. ANTI-BULLYING

Verwood Town Football Club acknowledges and endorses The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at this club. Refer to the club's Anti-Bullying Policy for full guidance.

6. CODES OF CONDUCT

Respect codes of conduct for players, parents/spectators, officials and coaches have been implemented by Verwood Town Football Club. In order to validate these codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct, and acknowledges the possibility of sanctions which may be implemented by the County FA in more serious circumstances.

7. REPORTING CONCERNS

Important: *Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you are worried about a child, you must report your concern. Non-action is not an option.*

7.1 Step-by-step reporting procedure

1. If you are worried about a child, report your concern to the Club Welfare Officer immediately.
2. If the issue is one of poor practice, the CWO will either deal with the matter or seek advice from the Dorset FA Welfare Officer.
3. If the concern is more serious (possible abuse), contact the Dorset FA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care if needed.
4. If the child needs immediate medical treatment, call an ambulance (999) and tell them this is a child protection concern. Inform the CWO of the action taken.
5. If you cannot contact the CWO or the matter is clearly serious, contact the Dorset FA Welfare Officer directly, The FA Safeguarding Team, the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC.

7.2 If the concern is about the CWO

Report directly to the Club Chairperson or the Dorset FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.

8. DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding responsibilities extend to the online world. Verwood Town Football Club expects all coaches, managers and officials to follow these guidelines:

- **No 1-to-1 messaging with under-18 players.** All communication with players must be through group chats that include at least two adults and (where possible) parents or carers.
- **WhatsApp groups** must have at least two adult admins. Groups should be closed at the end of each season and membership reviewed.
- **Social media** use must comply with the club's Social Media Policy.
- **Online exploitation:** if you suspect a child is being groomed or exploited online, report this to the CWO and to the NCA-CEOP via ceop.police.uk.
- Cyberbullying is bullying — refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy.

9. WHISTLEBLOWING

Verwood Town Football Club supports The FA's Whistleblowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about an adult in a position of trust can report this to:

- The FA Safeguarding Team: 0800 169 1863 or safeguarding@thefa.com
- The Police or Children's Social Care
- The NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

See also the club's standalone Whistleblowing Policy.

10. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Club Committee and updated in line with changes to FA guidance.

Key Contacts	
Club Welfare Officer	Clare Nixon – welfare@vtyfc.co.uk / 07758 246452
Dorset FA Safeguarding	safeguarding@dorsetfa.com / 01202 688270
FA Safeguarding	safeguarding@thefa.com / 0800 169 1863
NSPCC (24/7)	0808 800 5000 or text 88858
Dorset Children's Advice	01305 228866
CEOP (online exploitation)	ceop.police.uk