

Vale of Leithen FC

Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy

Website-ready edition prepared for the new club website

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If a child or young person is in immediate danger or at risk of immediate harm, contact Police Scotland or emergency services straight away, then inform the club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer.

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1. Introduction and overarching aim

Our vision

Children flourish because we put their safety, wellbeing, rights and enjoyment at the heart of every level of Scottish football.

Our mission

To make football a safe and fun environment where children's rights are championed by everyone.

2. Definitions

Child: For the purposes of this policy, children, child, young person and young people refer to anyone under the age of 18.

Adult: Any individual aged 18 and over, or any individual under 18 who is in a position of trust.

Child abuse: Any act or omission that harms a child or young person. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect, and may happen in person or online.

Safeguarding: Proactive action to make sure children and young people are safe from harm and that risks are minimised as far as possible.

Child protection: Action taken in response to a specific concern that a child or young person is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse.

3. Children's wellbeing in Scotland

The policy is aligned with Scotland's GIRFEC approach and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. Children and young people should be supported to be:

Safe	Healthy	Achieving	Nurtured
Active	Respected	Responsible	Included

A wellbeing concern exists where a child's wellbeing is, or is at risk of being, adversely affected. This can range from family bereavement or poverty-related factors through to harmful or abusive behaviour. Concerns must be responded to in line with the club's reporting procedure.

4. Risks to children's wellbeing in football

- Poor practice, bullying, emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse.
- Online abuse, unwanted contact and misuse of images or communication platforms.
- Peer-on-peer harm, including bullying, harassment and child-on-child abuse.
- Additional vulnerability for children with disabilities, additional care needs, minority ethnic backgrounds, or those involved at elite levels of the game.
- Misuse of power by adults in positions of trust.

5. Everyone's responsibility and reporting

Safeguarding, promoting and protecting the wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. No concern should be ignored, minimised, or kept to yourself.

- Recognise the concern.
- Take action to make sure the child is safe if there is an immediate risk of harm.
- Record what you have seen, heard or been told as soon as possible.
- Report the concern to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer on the same day, or as soon as practically possible.

Immediate reporting contacts

Officer	Rob Wilson
Email	wilson84@gmail.com
Phone	07751 580665
Emergency	If immediate harm is suspected, contact Police Scotland or emergency services first.

6. Policy statement and values

Vale of Leithen FC is committed to ensuring that every child who takes part in football, in any capacity, can do so in an enjoyable and safe environment that promotes inclusion and protects them from harm, poor practice, exploitation, bullying or abuse.

Accountable We accept responsibility and take ownership of the wellbeing and protection of children in our game.	Inclusive Football is for everyone. We celebrate difference and treat everyone fairly, with dignity and respect.
Approachable We are visible, accessible, open and caring, and we listen to children's voices.	Empowering We strive for the best outcomes for children and support them to express their views.

7. Standards for staff and volunteers

Every member of staff and volunteer is expected to sign up to the club's standards of behaviour, expectations and requirements. On and off the pitch they will:

- Make football a fun and enjoyable experience where everyone is involved.
- Show respect to everyone involved in the game.
- Encourage children and young people to be respectful to others.
- Lead by example and challenge offensive, insulting or abusive behaviour.
- Be gracious in both victory and defeat.

When working with children and young people they will:

- Treat all children equally with respect, dignity, honesty, sensitivity and fairness.
- Put the wellbeing of the child before winning or performance goals.
- Promote and protect children's rights.
- Listen to and act on concerns raised by children and young people.
- Allow children and young people to be involved in decisions that affect them.

8. Procedures

Appointment and selection

- The club will recruit staff and volunteers appropriately and in a way that reflects the wellbeing and protection values.
- Roles involving regulated work with children will require the relevant PVG checks.
- References, self-declaration and policy sign-up will be completed before appointment is confirmed.
- Induction, training, probation and ongoing suitability reviews form part of safer recruitment.

Responding to concerns

All concerns must follow the same basic process:

- **Recognise**
- **Record**
- **Report**
- **Respond**

If a child or young person discloses abuse, staff and volunteers should stay calm, listen, take them seriously, reassure them, avoid leading questions, make a factual record, and report the matter without delay.

No member of staff or volunteer should investigate abuse themselves or try to manage the matter alone.

Case review

The club may carry out a case review where there are lessons to be learned from how a concern was handled. Reviews consider whether procedures were followed, whether the response was effective, and what changes may be needed to improve future practice.

9. Practice notes summary

Anti-bullying: Bullying behaviour is never acceptable and must always be challenged and reported.

Behaviour: Children must never be subjected to harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading treatment.

Celebration, photography and filming: Images and video can be used positively but consent, privacy and safe practice must be in place.

Communication and social media: Communication with children and young people must be open, necessary, proportionate and never abusive or inappropriate.

Health: First aid, injuries and medical conditions must be managed safely, respectfully and with appropriate consent.

Planning and organisation: Appropriate ratios, collection arrangements, changing room practice and supervision must be planned in advance.

Prevention planning: Risk assessment is a core part of delivering any football activity safely.

Relationships: Adults are in positions of trust and must never abuse that trust.

Travel and trips away: Transport, accommodation, supervision and parental communication must be carefully planned.

10. Staff and volunteer sign-up

Name	
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Position held	
Team	
Date	
Witnessed by	
Signature	

I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy, including the Policy Statement, Procedures and associated Practice Notes. I understand that any breach will be taken seriously and responded to in line with the relevant procedures.

Review note: the source material states that this policy should be reviewed in line with legislative change, after significant safeguarding issues, and in all other circumstances at least every three years.