Matchday Safeguarding Plan

Exmouth Town Football Club

Implementation Date	**01/08/2026**
Signed Off By	**Martin Young**
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1. Purpose of the plan: Introduction and approach

The matchday safeguarding plan compliments the existing safeguarding policies and procedures held by the Club. The Safeguarding Plan applies to all matchdays and summarises the arrangements specifically relating to safeguarding. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that effective Club specific processes and procedures are agreed and implemented to safeguard all those involved in the match day event, whether as staff, participant, spectator, or player. It is important to have procedures in place to ensure there is a clear, effective, and consistent response for dealing with concerns of possible abuse and harm to children and adults at risk.

It is anticipated that Clubs may use this document and amend it to appropriately reflect their Club practices.

2. Strategic and Tactical planning

A club may not have the resources to invest in a member of staff dedicated to the safeguarding officer for stadium operations. Where this is the case, it remains essential and a matter of good practice to ensure that staff with the requisite level of capacity, skills, knowledge, and experience of safeguarding matters are on duty in both the strategic and operational safeguarding roles to oversee and manage the delivery of the event. If the role of Club Welfare /Safeguarding officer is undertaken by the match day Safety Officer, then the process and procedures for dealing with both a safeguarding and safety issue occurring at the same time must be clear to all involved and the safety officer must have an appropriate deputy on duty to which safeguarding matters can be delegated as and when needed. The deployment of suitably qualified staff and volunteers builds

and ensures a higher quality of leadership and enables more robust supervision and support for staff employed in other key roles. In addition, the safeguarding lead appointed to the event is afforded the opportunity to champion positive safeguarding activity throughout the wider workforce and ensure the appropriate response to any presenting safeguarding issues.

3. Safety Officer Briefing

On the day of the event, it is accepted as good practice for the appointed Safety Officer to deliver a verbal briefing to all Head Stewards and key staff. The verbal briefing may also be supplemented by a visual presentation. It is essential that the dedicated safeguarding officer/coordinator or (appointed Club Welfare /Safeguarding officer for the match day) not only attends the meeting but is introduced to any person(s) attending the stadium for the first time or are representatives of the visiting club.

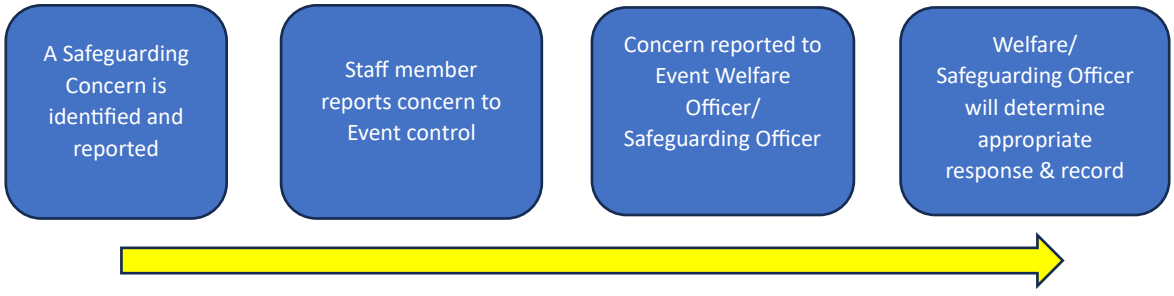
4. Match Day Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer

The Matchday Safeguarding Officer will be based between the Control Room and the footprint of the stadium and will be available via radio. (or outline where they will be on a matchday and how they may be contacted).

Matchday Safety Officer: N/A

Matchday Welfare /Safeguarding Officer: Martin Young
07526362941
Exmouthtownwelfare@gmail.com

5. Venue Reporting Structure



IMPORTANT – ALL REPORTS MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY. IF NECESSARY, TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK.

A safeguarding concern is identified or reported.

- Steward reports concern to Control Room (may not have a control room)
- Concern reported to the Matchday Club Welfare /Safeguarding Officer who will determine the appropriate response.

Report any safeguarding disclosure or concern to the Matchday Club Welfare /Safeguarding Officer via the control channel. If the Matchday Safeguarding Officer is not available, then report to your supervisor/line manager. Matchday Safeguarding Officer will co-ordinate the recording and further reporting of any issues/incidents.

6. Managing Safeguarding concerns and incidents

Remember – IT IS NOT the responsibility of Staff to decide if abuse has taken place, but IT IS everybody's responsibility to act on any concerns.

If the victim needs urgent medical treatment, the person raising the concern needs to contact the medical team or emergency services immediately – not the Matchday Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer. The medical team or emergency services should be advised there is a potential Safeguarding issue. The Matchday Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer should then be informed.

7. Unaccompanied Children

The age limit for unaccompanied minors is 16 years old. No child under the age of 14 should be granted access to the stadium without a responsible adult who is over the age of 18. This is consistent with the NSPCC guidelines which states that children under the age of 14 are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency.

Multiple junior tickets can be sold if all the group are 14 years and over. A responsible adult is required to accompany any child under the age of 14.

The home club should always inform away teams in advance of ticket sales of the age requirement to attend matches at their stadia without an adult. Best practice would also be to display this clearly upon the Club website.

8. Children within hospitality

Where children or young people are being hosted within our hospitality suites it is essential that the following code of conduct is enforced:
Children or young people:

- Must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or adult entrusted by the parent/guardian.
- should not be lifted above balcony railings.
- should remain seated on the balconies i.e., no running or jumping.
- should not be served alcohol; and
- should not be left alone without other adults within the party.

9. Mascots and Ball Persons

The Club will only allow children to be match day mascots or ball persons once parental consent has been obtained. A signed image/photography consent form is also required before any images are published in the Club's match day programme.

No photographs of mascots or ball persons featured in Club or Club publications will be accompanied by personal information about the child, such as their full name, school, home address or local sports team.

Whilst at (ground name), mascots and ball persons are always accompanied by at least 2 members of staff who have a valid DBS check. Staff who are responsible for mascots and ball persons on a match day are also required to have in date Safeguarding training.

It would be good practice for child mascots to arrive at the ground already changed into the clothing/kit that they will be required to wear in their duty whilst covered in outer clothing such as a tracksuit. Having arrived ready will prevent the need to use changing facilities and may deconflict the issue of separate boys and girls changing facilities.

10. Searching of Children (under 18s)

Searching of U18's
To ensure the safety and security for all club activities all children (Under 18) may be subject to the club's search process. Children may be asked to self-search as the preferred method. However, should the club suspect that the child may be concealing a prohibited item. A physical search outside of clothing may take place as described below.

The decision to conduct searches of U18's will be made by the Safety Officer. Protocols and the process of searching children should promote mutual respect to and from all parties. Someone is deemed a child up to their 18th birthday.

The basics:
Stewards should always identify themselves and provide proof that they are an authorised event steward with the Club. Good practice is to have two stewards present for the search, who should both give their name and job title.

Where possible consent will be sought from their parent/carer before a Steward or Security member of the same sex who is being observed by another Steward searches the child.

Thereafter stewards should:
1. Explain the reason for the search.
2. Ask the child for permission to undertake the search, explain that the person has a right to refuse, but doing so can lead to non-admittance; if an adult is present with the child, obtain their permission to conduct the search.
3. Ask the child if they are carrying anything which may be dangerous, prohibited or that they plan to use to celebrate during the match.
4. Ask if anyone else has asked them to carry anything into the ground for them.
5. Explain what they think they may find in the search.
6. Only search people of the same gender as themselves.
7. Follow the correct Stadium procedure when finding unauthorised items and explain these procedures to the people involved.
8. Keep people only for as long as necessary.

Searching:
Stewards should not need to touch the child during the search, as the procedure is to guide the child or young person to demonstrate that they are not carrying/hiding any dangerous or prohibited items.
1. Ask the child to empty and turn out their pockets.
2. Ask the child to take off any outer jacket(s) and pass them over to the other steward for searching.
3. Ask the child to roll up their trousers to the knees and roll down their socks.
4. If wearing trousers, ask them to pull out the shirt at the waist and visually ensure there is nothing in the trouser belt area.
5. Request that they replace all clothing before moving on.

11. Dealing with behavioural issues (including ejections):

Stewards must show maximum tolerance when dealing with children and vulnerable adults. Physical restraint must only be used as the very last resort, and only then to prevent the child or adult at risk from harming themselves, or harming others. It should never be used to move a child or adult at risk from one position to another, even in the rare event of a steward needing to separate two fighting children, minimum force may only be used.

If a child or adult at risk behaviour is extreme and could cause actual or potential harm, he or she should be taken to a place of safety within the stadium complex as dictated by the Ground Safety Officer. The place of safety must be suitable and have toilet facilities and a telephone. Parents/carers must be contacted immediately and asked to collect the person from the stadium as soon as possible. The person must be released into the care of an appropriate adult, even if this means waiting until after the end of the match. The person must be accompanied by at least two

stewards throughout the procedure. If the person is female, at least one of the stewards must be female.

Ejection of child or young person:
If a child or young person(s) behaviour is extreme this does not prevent an ejection taking place to ensure the safety of others. If a child or young person is violent the police should be involved.

Ejection of a child:
Extreme, or dangerous behaviour will not be tolerated at Exmouth Town Football club Southern Road

Example of Extreme, or dangerous behaviour (Not an exhaustive list).

- Attempting to enter game with pyrotechnics, weapons or other prohibited articles.
- Using prohibited items whilst in the stadia.
- Throwing items which could cause injury or damage to others. (Coins, Vaps, bottles, drinks etc)
- Being violent, or threatening violence.
- Chanting hate, racial, homophobic, misogynistic or tragedy chanting or goading.

(Remember someone seen or heard doing the above maybe committing a criminal offence, the Club should contact their local police in those circumstances. If Urgent attendance is required, then call 999).

Exmouth Town Football Club allows supporters aged 16 years to enter Southern Road unaccompanied.
If a child is aged 16 years or over and they have travelled to the stadium by their own means and unaccompanied then it is reasonable to eject them if their behaviour is extreme. It may be the case that if a child is removed from one area of the stadium to eject them and their behaviour improves, they may be taken to a place of safety. The police must be contacted if a child has been ejected due to extreme behaviour.
In all instances of a child being ejected and not taken to a place of safety stewards should try to establish the child's name, address, and Parent/carer's contact details. The child should also be asked if they have attended the stadium with a parent/carer or other appropriate adult. This information should be given to Match Control and recorded.
The child should be told it is not club policy to eject children unless there are extreme circumstances and for their welfare they are advised to remain outside the stadium until an appropriate adult can be contacted. The child will also be advised that if their behaviour improves, they will be taken to a place of safety until the appropriate adult arrives.
The ejected child should be monitored by stewards and CCTV (if possible) whilst outside the stadium. Checks should be made to establish the child's identity and appropriate adult from their match day ticket.
If a child appears intoxicated, or vulnerable through any other means then the police should be called. If medical attention required, then call an Ambulance.

12. Lost/Missing children

Football stadiums are very big and busy places. It can be extra confusing because for some because often areas can look similar. Please make sure you:

- always keep anyone you are responsible for close by.

• have a meeting point organised, on arrival in case you get separated (this can easily happen).
• show them who the staff are (say hello to us!) and tell them that they should go to a member of staff of they are lost or worried.

Lost and/or missing children will be managed by stewards as per Club standard operating procedure. The Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer should be notified if the circumstances of the child being lost and/or missing raise a potential safeguarding concern.
Some examples of this might be:
• If the parent/carer is intoxicated and the child has been lost due to the actions of the parent/carer,
• If a child is lost, U12 and no contact details for parents,
• If a child is lost and in need of urgent medical attention.

13. Weather Conditions

Through the football season visitors are likely to experience all weather types:
• Early and late season may mean high temperatures and strong sunshine
• Mid-winter games, especially at night, may mean sub-zero temperatures, rain, wind, and snow.
• Frost and ice underfoot may also be an extra hazard for those carrying or walking with small children.

Be very careful in cold and wet and windy conditions.
Babies and very small children can become very cold very quickly, even at times of the year where adults feel that it is warm outside. Remember you may be walking with or carrying or your child and keeping warm through activity whereas they will more than likely be inactive.

They are also unlikely to tell you that they are cold until it's too late. Don't forget – unusually quiet with bright red (and cold) skin doesn't necessarily mean they are warm and happy; this could be a sign of hypothermia.

If you do choose to bring your child to a match, remember to clothe them with layers, at least one more than you are likely to be wearing and they should really have an outer coat, hat, and gloves.

Check the weather forecast before you leave and be prepared for it to be colder or wetter than predicted. If in doubt they should wear extra clothes – you can always take a layer off!

Wind and gate safety:
Many stadiums and their parameters have heavy gates which are often metal in design. These pose a potential risk to staff and members of the public in gusty conditions. The risk of a free-swinging gate may pose significant risk of injury.

Always ensure all gates are securely closed, or securely restrained whilst open to prevent injury.

14. Noise

Football matches are noisy events! The noise levels go up and down throughout a match.
Small children have thinner skulls and more sensitive hearing and thus are more prone to hearing damage than adults.

Whilst long term damage from the noise at football grounds is unlikely, the peak sounds can reach the same levels experienced in a nightclub.

Ear defenders, plugs or muffs may help to protect their hearing and earmuffs may also help to keep them a little bit warmer; Ear defenders are the most suitable for protecting hearing and should have a protection level of SNR=27dB, which means they reduce the volume level by up to 27 decibels; they should be tested, and CE approved against the European Standard EN352-1:1993

Some people may also find the cheering, singing, and chanting in some parts of the stadium a little frightening.

You may also find some spectators occasionally using language that is inappropriate for children and young people to hear.

Where the Club has a Family Stand for families this lessons such concerns.

15. Ball danger

Footballs are hard.
If they hit you, then they can hurt and even cause injury. In many of the lower areas of the spectator seating there is a risk of being hit by a ball from the pitch. This is even more so behind the goals or near the corner flags.

During the warmup there are multiple balls on the pitch and may come from any angle. Please ensure that you and your child stay alert to the possibility of a football heading your way whenever you are sat in your seat.

16. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Exmouth Town Football Club takes all cases of violence towards guests extremely seriously and will work with its partner agencies including the police, local authority and others – (not exhaustive) to take robust action, support those that are vulnerable and provide guests with a safe and enjoyable experience.
Due to age, size or other vulnerabilities, women and girls are often more at risk. The stadium and its staff should be particularly vigilant to the threat posed towards this spectator group during events. **All reports and allegations should be taken seriously and acted upon. Those reporting**

incidents should not be challenged. ALL incidents should be reported to the Safety Officer and Club Welfare/ Safeguarding Officer for action.
We will seek to provide immediate safeguards to all vulnerable persons, take positive action, support prosecutions where appropriate and train its staff to recognise the risks to women, girls and young person's whilst at public events and venues.

17. Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse or Poor Practice

All Stewards should immediately report any observations, allegation or suspicions of abuse or poor practice by another professional to the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer who will ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report.

Any statement made by the child should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts. Any opinion, interpretation or judgement should be clearly stated as this, keeping any questions to a minimum and they should be of an open format. No suggestion of who the perpetrator was or how any concern or incident happened should be suggested.
Poor practice represents unsafe working practice and is a cause for concern and staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice.

Where poor practice is considered to have occurred, in the first instance, staff should discuss with their Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer. An incident report will then be required to be completed on CPOMs. An internal investigation will be followed, and all relevant information will be assessed and reviewed by the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer to make a decision about any poor practice that is alleged to have happened.

If you have concerns regarding the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer, the Board Safeguarding Champion should be contacted as appropriate. If the concerns are also with the Senior Safeguarding Manager or the individual considers all routes taken have been ineffective whistleblowing procedures are in place for such concerns to be raised. Please see Club or FA Whistleblowing Policy.

Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. In these cases, the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer will first seek the advice of the County Football Association Designated Safeguarding Children Officer (CFA DSO), Children's Social Care, a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Police.

In any case of suspected abuse, as soon as the Local Authority or the Police have been informed, the Club must provide a report to the CFA DSO, inform the Club's Board Safeguarding Champion. Any external local authority provision will naturally take the lead on any case.
Providing it is appropriate to do so the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer will maintain constant dialogue with all parties involved with the allegation until such time as the matter has reached a reasonable outcome, taking the lead from the external agency. Escalation to inform board level will take place at the Club Welfare / Safeguarding Officer earliest opportunity.
Staff should not assume that someone else will pass on information that they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

The Club Whistleblowing Policy is available on our website should any member of staff wish to escalate their concerns beyond the safeguarding structure.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.