

STRIVE25

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Policy owner: Strive25 Nick Adkins

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nick Adkins

Contact: nadkins@strive25.co.uk

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Our Commitment

Strive25 is committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable football environment in which every child and young person can participate, develop and strive to achieve their potential.

The welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of **everyone involved in Strive25**, not solely the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We will take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent abuse, neglect, bullying, exploitation and inappropriate behaviour and will respond promptly and appropriately whenever a concern is raised.

Our approach is informed by the safeguarding framework of The Football Association (The FA), relevant legislation and government guidance, and recognised safeguarding practice in sport. The FA states that everyone involved in football has a role in safeguarding and that concerns about children should be reported through the appropriate safeguarding channels.

Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- all Strive25 coaches
- Parents/ guardians
- Players

It applies to all activities delivered by Strive25, including:

- football coaching sessions
- individual coaching
- small-group sessions
- communication connected to coaching
- social media and digital activity relating to participants

For this policy, a **child or young person means anyone under 18 years of age.**

Principles

Strive25 will:

1. Put the safety and welfare of children first.
2. Treat every child with dignity and respect.
3. Listen to children and take their concerns seriously.
4. Provide an environment where children feel safe to speak.
5. Promote equality, inclusion and respect.
6. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
7. Recruit and supervise adults appropriately.
8. Respond promptly and professionally to safeguarding concerns.
9. Record concerns accurately and securely.
10. Work with parents, carers, The FA, County FA, police, children's social care and other appropriate agencies where necessary.
11. Regularly review our safeguarding provision.

What We Mean by Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting children and adults from harm and promoting their welfare.

This includes protection from:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect
- bullying
- discrimination
- exploitation
- grooming
- inappropriate relationships
- online abuse
- harmful or inappropriate behaviour by adults or other children

Safeguarding also includes creating an environment where children can participate in sport safely, confidently and positively.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Strive25 will appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

The DSL will:

- act as the primary safeguarding contact
- receive and record concerns
- provide advice to coaches
- make referrals where appropriate
- maintain safeguarding records
- ensure safeguarding procedures are understood
- keep relevant training up to date

- liaise with The FA, County FA and statutory agencies when appropriate
- review safeguarding arrangements regularly

Safeguarding Training

All coaches and adults working directly with children will undertake appropriate safeguarding training for their role. This will include relevant England Football / FA safeguarding education.

The FA currently provides a Safeguarding Children Course covering safer working practices, recognising poor practice and low-level concerns, and understanding how to report concerns.

Training records will be maintained by Strive25.

Training will be refreshed in accordance with the requirements of The FA, the relevant County FA and/or the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

DBS and Safer Recruitment

Strive25 will take reasonable steps to ensure that adults working with children are appropriately recruited and checked.

Depending on the role and frequency of activity, this may include:

- application/interview
- identity verification
- references
- safeguarding training
- appropriate DBS check
- checking relevant qualifications
- assessment of suitability for the role
- induction
- ongoing supervision and development

DBS eligibility depends on the duties and circumstances of the role rather than simply the job title. Government guidance specifically identifies children's sports coaches whose duties include teaching, training or instructing children as potentially eligible for an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check where the legal criteria for regulated activity are met.

Strive25 will therefore determine the appropriate level of DBS check for each role rather than assuming that the same check applies to everyone.

A DBS check will not, by itself, be treated as proof that someone is suitable to work with children.

Professional Boundaries

Coaches must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with participants.

Coaches will not:

- engage in sexualised or inappropriate conversations with children
- form inappropriate personal relationships with participants
- use humiliating, degrading or threatening language
- engage in unnecessary physical contact
- privately meet children outside agreed coaching arrangements
- communicate with children through inappropriate personal accounts
- encourage secrecy
- give inappropriate gifts or favours
- transport children alone unless this has been specifically authorised and appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- use their position to exert inappropriate influence over a child

Coaches should use professional, transparent and appropriate communication.

All communication will be directed to the parent / guardian of the child via an agreed online platform.

Physical Contact

Football coaching can involve appropriate physical contact, for example when:

- demonstrating movement
- assisting with an injury
- preventing an immediate danger
- providing appropriate support

Physical contact must always be:

- necessary
- proportionate
- appropriate to the situation
- respectful
- explained where reasonably possible

Coaches should avoid unnecessary physical contact.

If a child indicates that they do not want physical contact, this should be respected unless immediate safety requires intervention.

Changing Rooms, Toilets and Personal Care

Strive25 will take reasonable steps to protect privacy and dignity.

Coaches should not enter changing areas unnecessarily.

Where a coach needs to enter a changing area for safeguarding or welfare reasons, they should follow appropriate procedures and, wherever possible, ensure another responsible adult is present.

Coaches should not assist children with personal care unless this is necessary, appropriate and specifically agreed as part of the child's needs and safeguarding arrangements.

One-to-One Coaching

Where individual coaching takes place, Strive25 will take additional precautions.

Where possible:

- sessions should take place in an open or observable environment
- parents/guardians should know the location and timing
- parents/guardians should be present
- communication should remain professional
- parents/guardians should be informed of relevant arrangements
- unnecessary closed-door or isolated environments should be avoided
- appropriate records of attendance should be maintained

Photography, Video and Social Media

Strive25 recognises the benefits of photography and video for coaching, learning and promotion but will use images responsibly.

Before using identifiable images or video of children for promotional or public purposes, appropriate consent will be obtained.

Images must:

- be appropriate
- reflect the activity positively
- avoid identifying unnecessary personal information
- be stored securely
- only be used for the agreed purpose

Coaches must not take or share inappropriate photographs or videos of children.

Children must never be pressured to participate in photography or filming.

Digital Communication

Digital communication is part of modern coaching and must be managed appropriately.

Coaches should:

- use professional communication channels
- keep messages relevant to football or welfare
- maintain appropriate boundaries
- avoid unnecessary private conversations
- avoid communicating late at night unless genuinely necessary
- involve parents/guardians where appropriate
- retain appropriate records where a safeguarding concern arises

Social media interaction with participants must remain professional.

Bullying and Discrimination

Strive25 has zero tolerance for bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

This includes behaviour relating to:

- race
- ethnicity
- religion or belief
- disability
- sex
- gender
- sexual orientation
- age
- pregnancy or maternity
- gender reassignment
- any other protected characteristic

Bullying can be:

- physical
- verbal
- social
- psychological
- online

Concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Children will be encouraged to report concerns to a coach, DSL or trusted adult.

Recognising a Safeguarding Concern

A safeguarding concern may arise because:

- a child tells you something
- you observe something
- another child reports something
- a parent/guardian raises a concern
- another adult raises a concern
- you notice a change in behaviour
- you observe inappropriate behaviour by an adult
- you become concerned about online activity
- an incident occurs during a session

A concern does **not** need to be proven before it is reported.

The role of the coach is to recognise, respond, record and report, **not investigate**.

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

If you have a safeguarding concern:

Step 1 – Make the child safe

If there is an immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

Step 2 – Report internally

Inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Step 3 – Record

Make an accurate, factual record including:

- date
- time
- location
- people involved
- what was observed or disclosed
- exact words where possible
- actions taken
- who was informed

Step 4 – Refer where appropriate

The DSL will determine the appropriate referral route.

For football-related safeguarding concerns, The FA states that concerns can be referred directly to The FA safeguarding team.

If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police or appropriate children's social care/emergency service.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be shared only with people who need the information to protect the child or respond appropriately to the concern.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information indicates that a child may be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding records will be:

- factual
- accurate
- securely stored
- accessible only to appropriate individuals
- retained in accordance with relevant legal and organisational requirements

Allegations Against a Coach or Adult

Any allegation or concern about an adult working for Strive25 Coaching will be treated seriously.

The DSL will ensure the concern is appropriately recorded and referred.

Where necessary, the matter may be referred to:

- The FA / County FA
- police
- children's social care
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- other relevant safeguarding agencies

Appropriate action will be taken to protect children while ensuring that allegations are handled fairly and appropriately.

Low-Level Concerns and Poor Practice

Strive25 recognises that safeguarding concerns are not limited to obvious abuse.

Examples of poor practice may include:

- repeatedly shouting at children
- inappropriate language
- unnecessary physical contact
- favouritism
- inappropriate messaging
- humiliating players
- ignoring a child's welfare
- repeatedly breaching professional boundaries

Such concerns should be reported to the DSL.

Early reporting can prevent poor practice from escalating.

Health, Safety and Emergency Procedures

Safeguarding operates alongside health and safety.

Before activities, Strive25 will consider:

- venue suitability
- pitch condition
- weather
- equipment
- goal safety
- emergency access
- first aid provision
- participant medical needs
- supervision

- collection arrangements
- lost or missing child procedures

A risk assessment will be completed and reviewed for relevant activities

Equality, Inclusion and Additional Needs

Every child should be able to participate safely and feel valued.

Strive25 will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate and will consider additional safeguarding risks associated with disability, communication needs, medical needs or other individual circumstances.

Children will not be excluded or treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic or additional need.

Parents and Carers

Parents and guardians are important partners in safeguarding.

Strive25 will provide parents/guardians with clear information about:

- who is coaching their child
- how to contact the business
- safeguarding arrangements
- emergency procedures
- communication arrangements
- behaviour expectations
- photography/video arrangements
- how to raise concerns

Parents / guardians must also be present, contactable and on site during the training session in case of an emergency.

Safeguarding Culture

Strive25 aims to create a culture where:

- children feel listened to
- adults feel confident reporting concerns
- questions are welcomed
- mistakes are discussed constructively
- inappropriate behaviour is challenged
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is not simply a document.

It is demonstrated through everyday behaviour.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation changes
- FA guidance changes
- an incident identifies a weakness
- the business expands
- new activities are introduced
- new staff or coaches join

The review will consider whether policies and procedures remain effective and appropriate.

The FA Safeguarding Team

Email: safeguarding@thefa.com

The FA advises that safeguarding concerns can be referred directly to its safeguarding team, through a club, league or County FA safeguarding officer.

Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

Declaration

Strive25 is committed to continuously improving its safeguarding practice.

All adults working for or on behalf of Strive25 Coaching are expected to understand this policy and act in accordance with it.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Signed: 

Name: Nick Adkins

Role: Owner, Coach

Date: 13.08.2026

Next review: 13.08.2027