



**PROTECT  
THE DREAM**

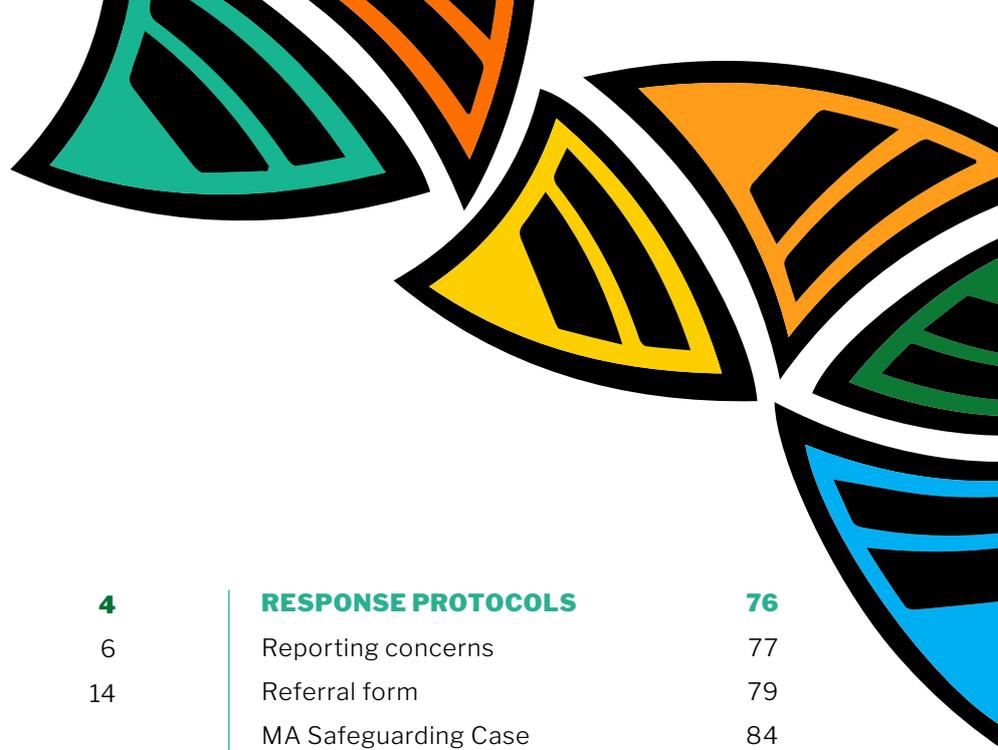
**CAF SAFEGUARDING**

# CAF Safeguarding Toolkit



2025





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# Introduction

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# Foreword

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**The launch of the first-ever CAF Safeguarding Toolkit marks a historic step in our collective journey to ensure that football in Africa is not only competitive and dynamic, but also safe, inclusive, and protective for all.**

This milestone initiative, championed under the visionary leadership of the CAF President, Dr Patrice Motsepe, reflects his unwavering commitment to building a football ecosystem in Africa that prioritizes not only excellence on the pitch but also integrity, respect, and the protection of every individual involved in the game. His leadership has consistently emphasized that true progress in African football must be anchored in strong governance, accountability, and care for our people — values that are at the heart of CAF’s vision of making African football globally competitive and sustainable.

This toolkit has been developed to provide practical and actionable support to our Member Associations, Zonal Unions, and partners in integrating safeguarding principles across all levels of their structures. It offers a range of tools, templates, and good practices to help create safe football environments, raise awareness, and ensure that all participants — particularly children and vulnerable individuals — are protected and respected.

The **CAF Safeguarding Toolkit** is not just a document; it represents a collective responsibility and a long-term commitment to fostering a culture of safety and integrity within African football. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to all who contributed to this effort — from CAF departments to Member Associations and safeguarding experts — for their collaboration and dedication.

Together, let us ensure that football in Africa continues to inspire, empower, and protect — remaining a source of pride and hope for generations to come.



# Safeguarding in African football

Safeguarding is a term used to describe measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, to live free from harassment, abuse, and exploitation.

Everyone in football has the right to protection from harassment, abuse and exploitation – be it physical, emotional or, sexual, neglect or bullying. When members of our African football family, such as players, coaches, officials, volunteers or staff members, are subjected to or engage in, abusive behaviour or misconduct, it undermines CAF’s mission to “Protect the Dream” and is inconsistent with promoting the integrity of football and the values of safe sport.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all member associations of the Confédération Africaine de Football to ensure that their staff, members, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, vulnerable persons or communities, or expose them to harassment, abuse, or exploitation.

The Confédération Africaine de Football and its member associations have a moral and legal responsibilities to ensure that every individual, regardless of age, gender, ability, race, religion, or sexual orientation, can participate in safely in football in Africa.

Safeguarding in football is comprised of two parts:

## Prevention Guidance

A proactive approach aimed at preventing harassment, abuse or exploitation of children, young and vulnerable people. This involves creating safe environments and promoting practices that protect against harassment, abuse, or exploitation.

## Response Protocols

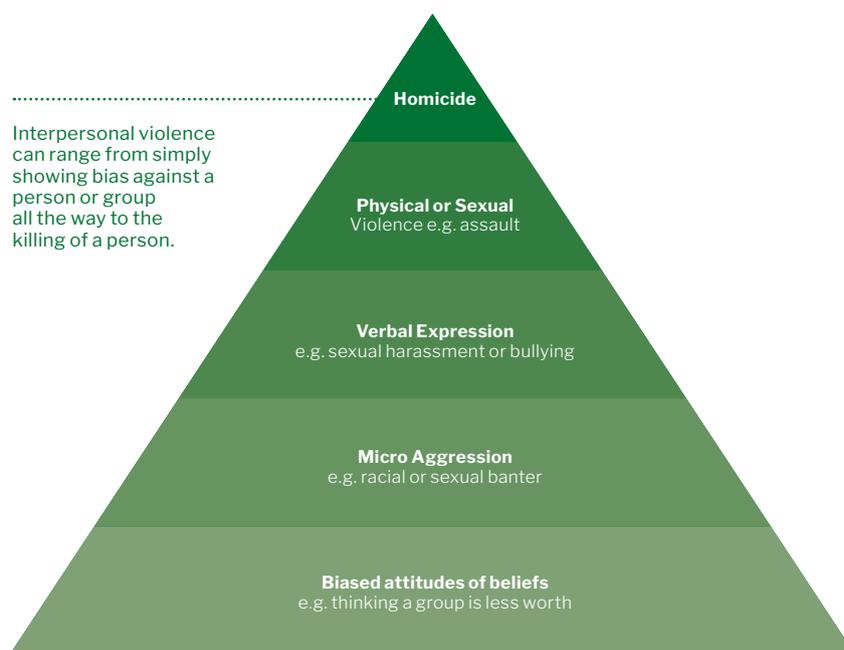
A reactive response to situations where a child, young and vulnerable person is at risk of, or has experienced, harassment, abuse, or exploitation.

Young people in Africa love to play football and many have a dream of playing football professionally and representing their country on the global stage. Others simply love the game and dream of playing football socially with their friends most weeks. Some dream of being football coach, referee or administrator. It is a dream shared by boys and girls, men and women. It is also a dream share by people with disabilities, people from

different social and ethnic backgrounds, people with different sexual orientations and gender identities.

Simply put, football is the dream for many Africans, a dream that is often shattered by physical, psychological (emotional), and sexual abuse perpetrated by others in the sport. Perpetrated by people in positions of power over others. People who cause harm to others through abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and bullying.

The term used to describe different forms of harassment, abuse and exploitation is inter-personal violence. Interpersonal violence involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals. Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological (also called emotional violence), and it may involve deprivation and neglect.



Hierarchy of Inter-Personal Violence



Whilst empirical research in Africa into interpersonal violence in football is limited, there have been many reported cases of such harm being perpetrated by football officials, coaches, fake agents, players, parents, and fans. **The most serious cases of inter-personal violence in African football leading to lifetime bans from the sport and in some cases criminal prosecutions leading to imprisonment.**

Everyone in African football has a responsibility to behave with integrity and exercise a duty of care to protect children, young, women and vulnerable persons from inter-personal violence. **We all have a duty to protect the dream of others in our sport.**

Member associations of the Confédération Africaine de Football should lead actions to safeguard everyone who participates in football in their jurisdiction. This includes:

- Appointing a designated **safeguarding officer**
- Adopting a **safeguarding policy**
- Implementing **prevention guidance** proactively stop acts of inter-personal violence
- Implementing **response measures** to allow the reporting and management of raised concerns

Safeguarding participants in football from inter-personal violence, and their protecting dreams, has become a priority for Africa. For safeguarding to be effectively rolled out across the continent their needs to be localisation, implementing safeguarding policies, prevention guidance, and response protocols whilst taking into account local contexts such a language, legislation, child protection services, and cultures.

**In Africa the human rights of vulnerable groups are protected by charters of the Africa Union which have been adopted by most African nations. These include the African Charter on the Rights and Wellbeing of the Child, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa.**

# Safeguarding Challenges

**Africa is the world's youngest continent around 60% of its population is under 25, and by 2030, young Africans are expected to make up 42% of the global youth population.**

Yet Africa experiences similar safeguarding challenges to other parts of the World, but there are some issues that bring particular challenges:

- Africa has some of the highest levels of extreme poverty in the world, with 23 of the world's 28 poorest countries. This can result in a lack of resources for protection systems, policing and the legal system.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) is a significant issue in many African countries, with some of the highest rates in the world.
- Many societies give men dominant power and often leading to unequal and discriminatory treatment of women and girls in football.
- Like other parts of the world, Africa is experiencing increasing abuse of referees at matches and online.
- There has been a rise over the years of football academies in Africa with the development of young players to play professionally overseas. Most football academies are unregulated and there have been significant reports of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse at football academies in Africa including exploitation by fake agents.
- Every year, hundreds of thousands of African children are smuggled across borders including promising young footballers who are trafficked by fake agents making false promises of fame, riches, and an escape route from a cycle of poverty.

Online abuse of African footballers is rising, with over half of players at major tournaments like the Euros and AFCON facing racist or homophobic attacks. Globally, threats and harassment are increasing, often linked to betting and social media.



# African Culture

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Culture plays a significant role in shaping attitudes, behaviours, and practices related to safeguarding children and vulnerable persons in football across Africa. The continent is rich in cultural diversity, and various cultural norms and values can either support or hinder effective safeguarding. The following are some of the ways that culture impacts safeguarding in football within African contexts:

## Respect for Authority and Hierarchy

In many African cultures, there is a strong emphasis on respecting authority figures, such as coaches, managers, or senior players. This can create challenges in safeguarding if children or vulnerable persons are reluctant to report abuse or exploitation due to fear of disrespecting people in positions of power and possibly facing retaliation.

Coaches, managers, or senior players are seen as authority figures and children and vulnerable persons are often conditioned to obey them without question, which can potentially lead to the misuse of power if proper safeguarding mechanisms are not in place.

## Taboos Surrounding Abuse and Violence

Cultural taboos surrounding discussions of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can make it difficult for children and vulnerable persons to come forward and report incidents. In many African societies, talking openly about sexual matters is discouraged, and victims of sexual abuse may face stigma, shame, or blame, making it hard for them to speak out.

In some communities, physical punishment is seen as an acceptable or even necessary way to discipline children. This attitude may extend to the football environment, where harsh physical discipline by coaches or senior players could be seen as normal rather than abusive.

## Gender Roles and Discrimination

Traditional gender roles can influence how boys and girls, men and women, are treated within football. In some regions, boys are given more opportunities to participate in football, while girls face barriers due to cultural beliefs that football is not appropriate for them. This unequal access can limit the safeguarding attention given to girls in football, making them more vulnerable to abuse.

Cultural norms that subordinate women and girls can make female players especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation or harassment by male coaches, staff, or teammates. In some cases, the exploitation may be normalized or dismissed due to a culture of silence around gender-based violence.





### Community and Family Dynamics

In many African communities, extended families and communities play a central role in child-rearing. While this communal support system can be beneficial, it can also complicate safeguarding efforts if families or communities are unwilling to report or address abuse due to fears of damaging relationships or reputations.

In some areas, there is a mistrust of formal institutions, such as law enforcement or child protection agencies. Families may prefer to handle safeguarding issues privately within the community, which can result in cases of abuse going unreported or unresolved.



### Poverty and Economic Pressures

In some regions, football is seen as a pathway out of poverty for talented young players. This can lead to situations where families or communities tolerate exploitation or mistreatment of children by agents, coaches, or clubs in the hope that the child's success will bring financial rewards. In extreme cases, children may be trafficked or exploited for profit.

The economic hope that football offers can create immense pressure on young players to succeed, sometimes at the expense of their well-being. Parents or communities may overlook safeguarding concerns, such as excessive training demands or emotional abuse, in the pursuit of a child's potential football career.



### **Traditional Beliefs and Practices**

In some African settings, traditional healers or spiritual practices may be incorporated into the football. While these practices are part of cultural heritage, they can sometimes involve rituals that may expose children to safeguarding risks, especially if practices are not subject to appropriate safeguarding oversight.

Cultural beliefs that emphasize resilience and toughness can lead to an environment where emotional or physical abuse is seen as a way to “toughen up” young players. Coaches may feel justified in using harsh methods, believing they are helping to prepare children for the competitive nature of professional football.



### **Lack of Awareness**

There may be limited understanding of what safeguarding entails in some football environments in Africa, both at the grassroots and the professional level. Cultural norms may not recognize certain behaviours as abusive, such as emotional manipulation, psychological pressure, or inappropriate online interactions.

Safeguarding training and policies often originate from Western models, which may not fully account for cultural differences in African contexts. Without adaptation, these models may not resonate with local communities, limiting their effectiveness. Safeguarding training needs to be culturally relevant and sensitive to local norms while maintaining international child protection standards. Safeguarding training also needs to be delivered in local languages and there is a dearth of safeguarding training resources in local African languages.



### **Challenges in Policy Implementation**

In some countries, existing legal frameworks for protecting children and vulnerable individuals require stronger enforcement measures.

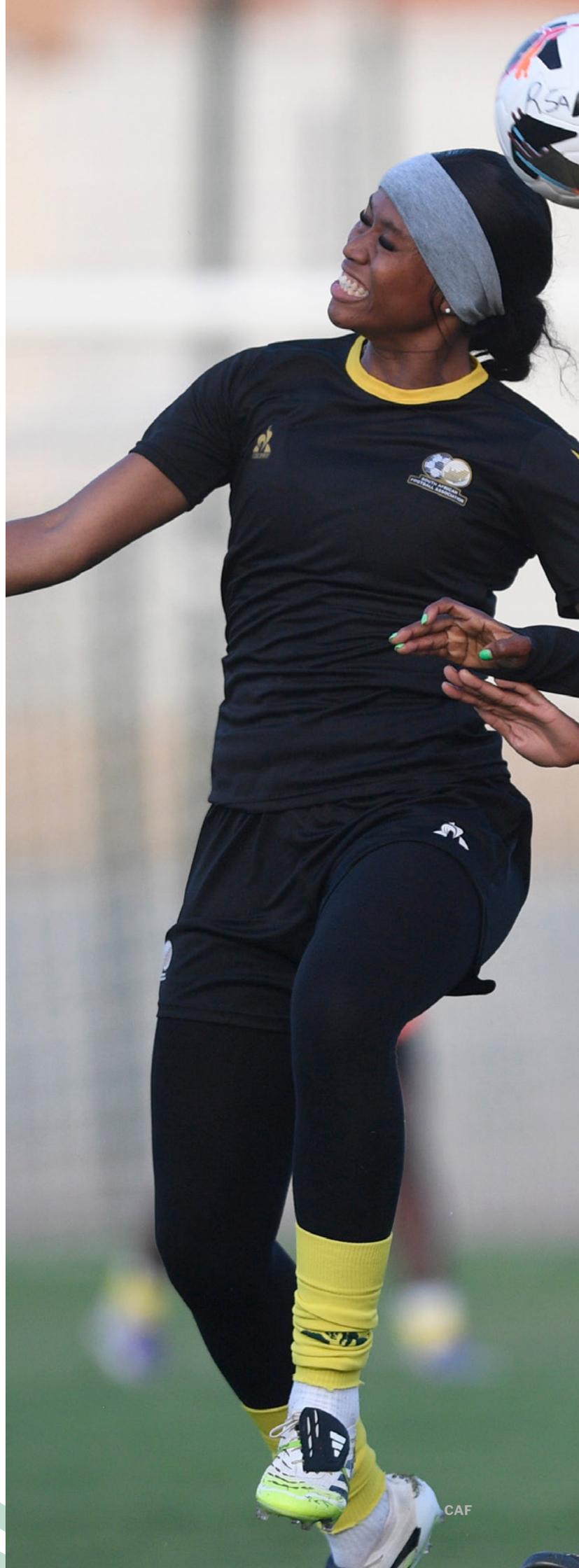
Even when laws exist, cultural attitudes toward children, women and people with disabilities can hinder the implementation of safeguarding policies in football.

A lack of integrity in sports organisations, law enforcement, or legal systems can undermine safeguarding efforts. Cultural norms that prioritize loyalty or protect the reputations of powerful individuals may lead to cover-ups of abuse or prevent victims from seeking justice.

## Potential for Positive Cultural Influence

Many African cultures emphasize the collective responsibility of caring for others especially children. This communal approach can be a strength in safeguarding, as community members may be more vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm if safeguarding messages align with cultural values.

Football can provide opportunities for inclusion and empowerment, particularly for marginalized groups, such as girls or children with disabilities. By promoting equal participation and fair treatment, football can challenge harmful cultural norms and create a safer environment for all children.





## Safeguarding in Football in Africa

By understanding and working within the cultural context, member associations can develop more effective safeguarding systems that protect children and vulnerable adults while respecting and utilizing the strengths of African cultural values.

### Member Associations should consider:

- Developing safeguarding policies that respect local cultures while protecting children's and vulnerable person's rights. These policies should be designed in collaboration with the football community to ensure buy-in and effectiveness.
- Delivering campaigns that raise awareness about abuse, exploitation, and human rights, especially children's rights, incorporating local languages and cultural references. Educating local football communities on the importance of safeguarding in football.
- Work with traditional, religious, and community leaders to champion safeguarding and address cultural taboos related to abuse and violence. Their influence can help shift cultural norms that may otherwise impede efforts to protect children and vulnerable persons.
- Provide safeguarding training that is culturally appropriate and accessible, with a focus on local realities. This can include training on recognizing abuse, reporting mechanisms, and creating safe spaces for children and vulnerable persons in football.
- Advocate for stronger legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that safeguarding policies are upheld, even in challenging environments.
- Equip children and other vulnerable groups with knowledge about their rights, how to stay safe, and how to report concerns. Safeguarding initiatives focused on children, women, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, can help break cultural barriers that prevent children from speaking out.

# Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse

Everyone participating in football should be able to recognise the signs and indicators of interpersonal violence and know how to respond to these signs. This includes management, coaching staff and others working in football but should also include the players themselves and their parents/carers.

It is not the responsibility of individuals within football to determine whether or not someone is a victim of interpersonal violence, but they do have a duty of care to report their concerns. This can be a designated safeguarding officer, a police officer or a social worker.

It is not an individual's responsibility to approach either an affected person (the child or adult experiencing interpersonal violence) nor the alleged perpetrator.

Every club, academy and association in football in Africa should have a designated safeguarding officer(s) who is responsible for managing raised concerns of inter-personal violence.

**A club, academy or association designated safeguarding officer should be trained and have an understanding of the different forms of interpersonal violence. They act as a first point of contact for any person in football who has a concern about the welfare and protection of a child or other vulnerable person. They assist clubs, academies and associations to create a safe and friendly football environments and are responsible for disseminating information on safeguarding.**



## Safeguarding concerns may arise as a result of:

- A disclosure from a child or vulnerable person.
- Direct or reported observation of possible interpersonal violence, suspicious behaviour or poor practice.
- Significant or multiple changes in a child's or adult's behaviour, appearance, attitude, or relationships.
- Reports from external agencies or individuals.

Children and other vulnerable persons may not find it easy to disclose their concerns, and this may be exasperated by intersectionality. There may be language barriers, or a person may have difficulty in communicating due to a disability.

The majority of reports will be made by adults who have concerns about a child, or a vulnerable adult. This usually relates to observed changes in behaviour or appearance.

## It cannot be assumed that abuse will be easy to identify as children and vulnerable adults can:

- Be bruised easily in everyday life while practicing, for example falling whilst practicing football
- Be moody and unpredictable, especially during adolescence
- Experience changes in behaviour as a result of external situations



## Indicators of abuse might include:

- Unexplained injuries such as burns, bruises or cuts which are on areas of the child's or an adult's body which are not normally prone to injury through playing
- Inconsistent reasons for a physical injury
- The child or vulnerable adult disclosing a concern which suggests an abusive act
- Another person, such as a parent, coach or teammate, raising concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's wellbeing
- A child's inappropriate sexual awareness or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Fearing or displaying a lack of trust in certain adults
- An excessive fear of making mistakes
- Difficulties making friends, or being prevented from doing so or socializing
- A sudden weight loss or gain, or variations in eating patterns that may identify an eating disorder.

While the above list contains a number of indicators this is not a complete list and there may be other signs that are observed. Further, if a child or vulnerable adult is exhibiting any one of the above it should not be considered proof that they are being abused, however if there are multiple signs being displayed there could be cause for concern.

It is important to remember it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred. Your responsibility is to report any concerns that you have.



### Responding to a Disclosure: DOs

If a child or adult indicates that they are being harmed, or information is received that gives rise to concern that a child or adult is being harmed, the person receiving the information should:

- Stay calm and ensure the child or adult is safe and feels safe
- Listen carefully to what is being said, allowing the child or adult to continue at their own pace
- Explain that it is likely that the information will have to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Reassure the child or adult that they have done the right thing in sharing the information
- Show and tell the child or adult that what he/she says is being taken seriously and recognise any difficulties inherent in interpreting what they said
- Tell the child or adult what will be done next and with whom the information will be shared

- Record in writing what was said using the child or adult's words as soon as possible. Record dates and times; any names mentioned; to whom the information was given; information should be noted as given as facts, hearsay or opinion; record should be signed and dated as a record.

If the child or adult indicates that they do not wish others to be informed about the allegations, carefully and tactfully explain the reasons why it may be in their best interests that the matter is referred to an appropriate person or department such as child welfare, law enforcement or an association's designated safeguarding officer.

Receiving a disclosure places great responsibility on the person to whom the disclosure is made. If there is any uncertainty in what actions to be taken, consult with an appropriate person or organisation (child welfare, law enforcement or an association's designated safeguarding officer).



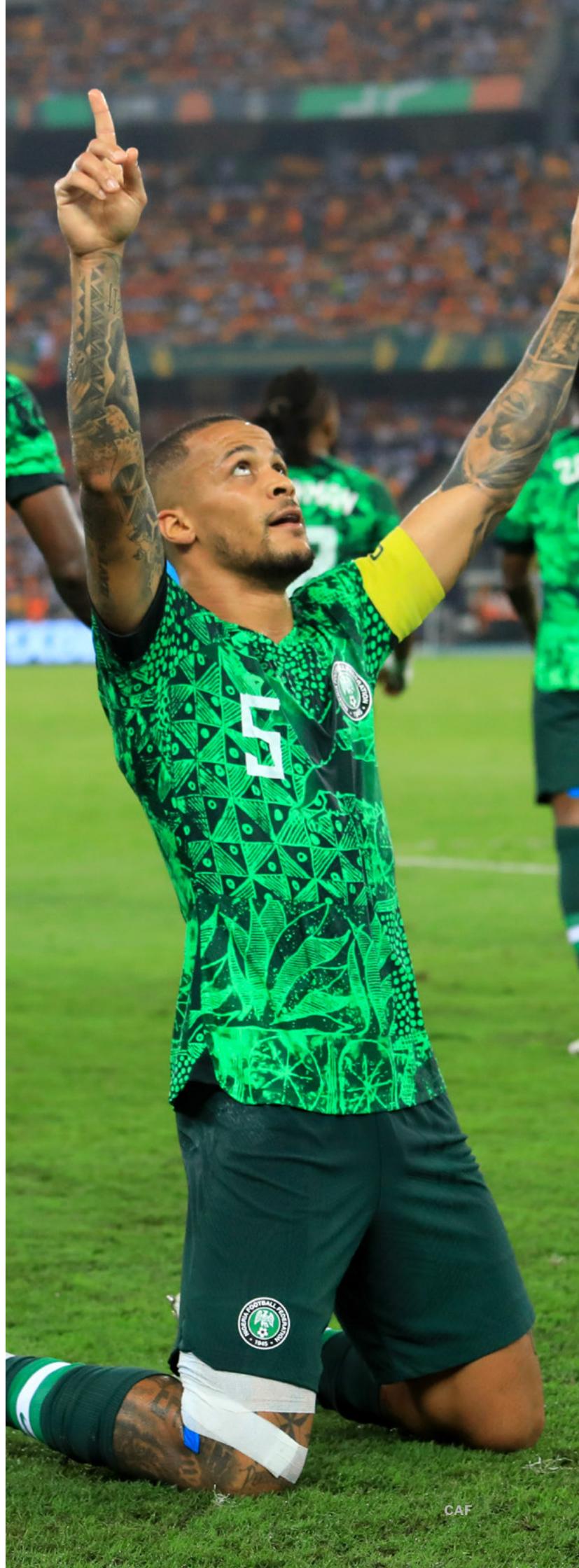
### Actions to avoid: DON'T

- Dismissing the concern (irrespective of whether you believe what you are being told or not, you should always report the disclosure, untrue disclosures even when the person is anonymous are rare)
- Panicking
- Allowing shock or distaste to show
- Probing for more information than is offered
- Making promises that cannot be kept such as promising not to tell anyone
- Speculating or making assumptions
- Approaching the person who is the subject of the allegation or suspicion (this may put the child or adult at risk or jeopardise a criminal investigation)
- Conduct a personal investigation of the case
- Making negative comments about the accused person.

## Glossary of Terms

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This glossary of terms provides definitions of interpersonal violence, abuse, and harassment in football in Africa. There are four main types of interpersonal violence, abuse and harassment, namely physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. These types of interpersonal violence, abuse and harassment can present themselves in different forms. We have identified some of the most prevalent forms of interpersonal violence, abuse and harassment and defined them here.

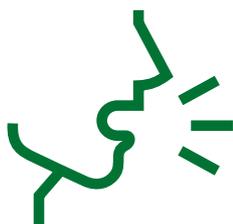


# Inter-Personal Violence

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**Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status, and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited, and coercive. Harassment and abuse often results from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power, or authority by an individual against another person.**

The means and methods by which harassment and abuse are carried out include - contact, non-contact, verbal and via electronic communications. It may involve deliberate acts as well as failure to act and omissions or may take different forms including grooming, trafficking, financial abuse or hazing which are defined as follows:



## Types of Interpersonal Violence

**Physical abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child or vulnerable adult and includes any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. It mainly involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping” “punching”) children or vulnerable adults with the hand or with an implement – a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, scratching, pinching, biting or burning them or breaking their bones.

**Psychological abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. It is also sometimes called emotional abuse, and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development or a vulnerable adult’s long-term wellbeing. Psychological abuse may involve deliberately telling a child or vulnerable adult that he/she is worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her, or “making fun” of what he/she says or how he/she communicates. Emotional abuse often occurs as a pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-physical behaviour within a power-differentiated relationship. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s or vulnerable adult’s peers.

**Sexual abuse** is the inducement or coercion of a child or vulnerable adult to engage in any unlawful sexual activity. It occurs when adults exploit children or vulnerable adults sexually for their own gratification. It may involve physical contact, such as assault by penetration (for example, rape) or non-penetrative acts, such as kissing, rubbing and touching children’s private body parts. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve contact; examples include involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse by gaining their trust (including via social media). In the majority of cases, the perpetrator is a person the child or vulnerable adult knows and trusts with sexual abuse often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. Sexual abuse may also include sexual harassment. Victims of child sexual abuse can equally be both boys and girls. Statistics show that boys are as likely to be sexually abused as girls and perpetrators can be both male and female.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child or vulnerable adult’s basic needs when those responsible for their care have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter, that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child or vulnerable adult’s health or a child’s development. It also includes failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to danger.



## Forms of interpersonal violence

This list outlines some of the common forms of abuse found in football that can feature physical, psychological, sexual abuse or neglect or be combination of them.

**Bullying** (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. It can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.

**Financial Abuse** is the misappropriation of financial resources or abusive use of financial control, in the context of a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Adults at risk, families living in poverty, women in unequal relationships and older persons can be at risk of financial abuse. In sport, families are often financially exploited by fake agents promising a sporting career overseas for their children.

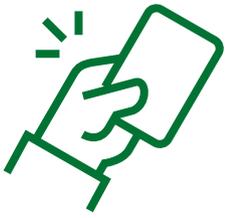
**Grooming** is when a person builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited, or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Children and vulnerable adults can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - a family member, friend or professional.

**Hazing** is known to occur in many different types of social groups, including sports teams as a way of initiating a new person when they join the group or want to be socially accepted by their peers. This may involve harmful or humiliating actions that can lead to physical, sexual, or psychological harm.

**Peer abuse** describes incidents when a child or young person is exploited, bullied, cyber-bullied and/or harmed by another person or group of similar age.

**Sexual harassment** encompasses a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviour and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating.

**Trafficking** is where people, men, women or children, are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often moved away from their homes and forced to work in the sex trade. Trafficking is a common occurrence in Africa where vulnerable adults and children are persuaded to migrate with the promise of a better future and then are exploited. Trafficking through sport is common and is usually associated with financial abuse.



## Other terms often used in Safeguarding in Football

**Safe Football** refers to a physically and psychologically safe and supportive football environment where participants can thrive and experience the full benefits of participation in the sport.

**Safeguarding** refers to all initiative-taking measures to both prevent and appropriately respond to concerns related to harassment, abuse, and exploitation in football as well as the promotion of holistic approaches to player welfare.

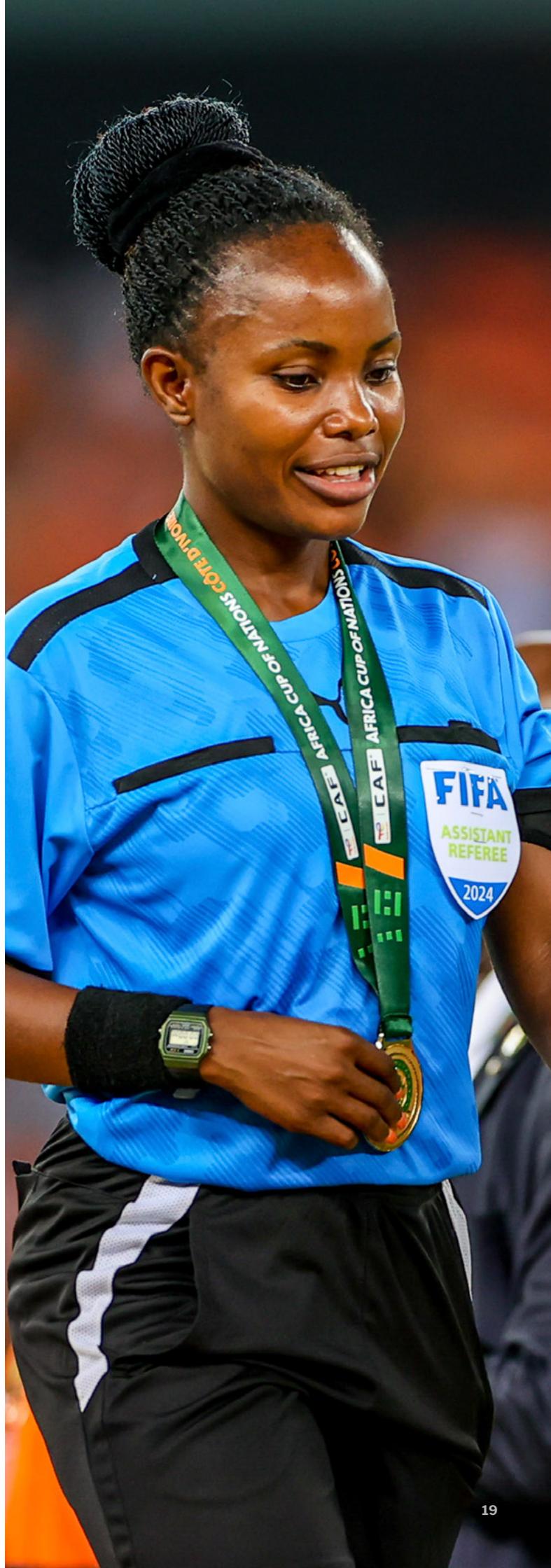
**Children** refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

**Young Person** refers to a child aged 15 – 17 years transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

**Adult at Risk** refers to any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of services by reason of a disability, age or illness, and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him- or herself.

**Vulnerable Adult** refers to any person aged 18 or over who is unable to protect him- or herself against significant harassment, abuse, or exploitation as a result of their athletic ability, race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth.

**Poor Practice** is behaviour or in-action which may not always be immediately harmful, but which falls below expected standards and needs to be addressed. Acts of harassment and abuse are more likely to occur in sporting environments where poor practice exists and where harmful behaviour is not challenged. Poor practice may lead to suspicions about an individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended, such as being alone with a child or excessive or inappropriate touching. Poor practice can lead to a sporting environment that enables harassment and abuse to occur. Poor practice should always be addressed to ensure participants in sport can continue to enjoy a safe, inclusive and positive experience.



# Safeguarding policy

All member associations of the Confédération Africaine de Football should have a safeguarding policy which has been adopted by the highest level of governance in the association.



A model safeguarding policy is included in this toolkit, but we caution about simply using this policy document without consulting key stakeholders in football and protective services. The development of safeguarding policies and procedures should not be a “tick box” exercise. The aim of a safeguarding policy is to provide a framework for developing a culture of safeguarding across football within the association’s jurisdiction.

Development of the policy should be commissioned by the association’s senior leadership and be led by the designated safeguarding officer. An internal safeguarding working group should be formed to support the designated safeguarding officer in the development of the policy document. An external safeguarding working group or external advisers such as a safeguarding consultant, an NGO working in the area of child rights and protections or the ministry responsible for social welfare and child rights being suitable external advisers.

The most important part of the process of developing a safeguarding policy is that the highest levels of governance within an association i.e., Senior Management Team and The Board of Directors, owns the policy and supports policy implementation by providing the necessary financial and human resources.

The CAF Model member association safeguarding policy provides a framework for the development of a safeguarding policy, but we recommend that member associations also consider safeguarding policies that have been adopted by other member associations in Africa and globally for examples of strong safeguarding policy documents.



## Safeguarding Policy Development Process:

### Designated Safeguarding Officer



- Leads on the development of a safeguarding policy
- Consults with internal and external stakeholders

### Internal Safeguarding Working Group



- Contributes to content of the policy document
- Reviews draft policy documents

### External Safeguarding Advisors



- Guidance on the content of the policy providing country context and expert knowledge of protection
- Reviews draft policy documents

### Association Senior Management/Board of Directors



- Commissions development of safeguarding policy
- Formally adopts safeguarding policy and supports its implementation

# Model safeguarding policy for MAs



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

All member associations of the Confédération Africaine de Football are required to have a Safeguarding Policy. Safeguarding policies are best developed in consultation with internal stakeholders representing different aspects of a Member Association's activities and with input from external advisors with expertise in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults who can often be found in the governmental or non-governmental sectors such as social welfare or child development experts.

The following model safeguarding policy for member associations can be used as a guide when drawing up a policy for your member association or even at club level. The model policy should not simply be copied without giving consideration to national protection systems, legislation and cultural contexts. Notably the legal provisions may require adaptation to align with the Member Associations' applicable national laws.

## Model Safeguarding Policy for CAF Member Associations

### Introduction

Safeguarding is a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of the [insert name of Member Association] to make sure our staff, volunteers, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, young people, or vulnerable adults or expose them to harassment, abuse or exploitation. The [insert name of Member Association] has moral and statutory responsibilities to ensure that every person or group of people regardless of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, language, age, physical appearance, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation or any other reason, can participate in our activities and programs safely.

The [insert name of Member Association] shall attribute particular attention to protecting the welfare and interests of children and young adults throughout all types of Football and all related activities. At the same time, we recognise the [insert name of Member Association]'s responsibility to think about how we safeguard everyone in our organisation at all times, including protecting staff and volunteers from inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment.

### Background

The [insert name of Member Association] is the national association recognised as the body responsible for managing the sport of football in [insert name of the country]. The association is recognised by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), and the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF).

FIFA is the international self-regulatory governing body of association football. FIFA is actively working to improve the lives of people around the world to promote a fairer, more equal society through football.

Through the FIFA Statutes, FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and promoting the protection of these rights. It has the obligation to constantly promote football globally in the light of its unifying, educational, cultural and humanitarian values. FIFA implements programmes to uphold human rights through its activities and relationships across the six continents.

Article 3 of the FIFA Statutes states that "Every person and organisation involved in the game of football is obliged to observe the statutes and regulations of FIFA as well as the principles of fair play."

Article 23 of the FIFA Code of Ethics addresses the protection of physical and mental integrity:

1. Persons bound by this Code shall protect, respect and safeguard the integrity and personal dignity of others.
2. Persons bound by this Code shall not use offensive gestures and language in order to insult someone in any way or to incite others to hatred or violence.
3. Persons bound by this Code must refrain from all forms of physical or mental abuse, all forms of harassment, and all other hostile acts intended to isolate, ostracise or harm the dignity of a person.
4. Threats, the promise of advantages, coercion and all forms of sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation are particularly prohibited.



CAF is the recognised by FIFA as the confederation for football in Africa.

## The Statutes of CAF set out the objectives of the confederation including:

**Article 2.1 (f):** To prevent practices or procedures which may jeopardize the integrity of the players, the game, or its competitions; or give rise to any form of abuse of the game of football; (h): To promote football free from discrimination against any country, person or group of persons, be it the grounds of ethnicity, gender, handicap, language, religion, politics, and (n): To partake in the fight against scourges ravaging and/or posing a threat to the continent and humanity; in cooperation with the United Nations, the African Union, and other specialized organizations.

**Article 2.2:** CAF is required to comply at all times and unreservedly to the principles of good governance, integrity and sportsmanship; as well as to the Statutes, regulations, decisions and directives of FIFA.

**Article 2.3:** Any person or organization involved in football in Africa has to respect at all times and unreservedly the principles of ethics and fair play enacted by CAF, the principles of integrity and sportsmanship as well as the Statutes, regulations, decisions and directives of CAF and FIFA.

**Article 2.4:** CAF shall respect the human rights recognized internationally [insert name of Member Association] recognises that the safeguarding of young players under the age of 18 years is of paramount importance.

Children (persons under 18 years of age) have specific rights to protection, as articulated in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child because of their need to be cared for and owing to their dependency on others. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was adopted in July 1990 by the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU and entered into force on 29 November 1999.

[Insert details about the country's child protection legislation and system such as any Children's Act].

[insert name of Member Association] also understands their responsibility to safeguard extends beyond children to prevent the abuse of all persons and communities associated with their programs and activities.

[Insert here reference to legislation, including the Constitution, which provide protection for human rights of citizens including but not limited to women and girls, people with disabilities, people with care needs and the elderly].

# Commitment

The [insert name of Member Association] is committed to fostering a culture of safeguarding across football in [insert name of the country] and to implementing best safeguarding practice across all of its activities.



## Our commitments include:

**Prevention:** We strive to prevent harm by creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

**Protection:** We have robust policies, procedures, and training in place to protect our players, especially our young players, staff and others connected to our activities from all forms of harassment, abuse, or exploitation.

**Support:** We provide support and guidance to our players, staff, volunteers, members, and partners to help them recognize and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

**Accountability:** We take all safeguarding concerns seriously and ensure they are promptly and thoroughly investigated, with appropriate actions taken to address any issues identified.

**Partnership:** We work in partnership with relevant agencies, communities, and stakeholders to promote safeguarding best practices and advocate for the rights and well-being of individuals.



## Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to ensure everyone in football in [insert name of the country], but especially our players under 18 years, can participate in football activities without fear of harassment, abuse or exploitation.

The key objectives of the policy are to:

- Prevent harassment, abuse, and exploitation by creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that the [insert name of Member Association] and its members have robust policies, procedures, and training in place to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults and communities from all forms of harassment, abuse, and exploitation.
- Provide support and guidance to our staff, volunteers, players, parents and partners to help them recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously and ensure they are promptly and thoroughly investigated, with appropriate actions taken to address any issues identified.

- Work in partnership with relevant agencies, communities, and stakeholders to promote best safeguarding practice and advocate for the rights and well-being of all associated with our programs and activities.



## Principles

The [insert name of Member Association] recognises that the safeguarding young players under the age of 18 years is of paramount importance and is their highest priority.

The [insert name of Member Association] also understands their responsibility to safeguard extends beyond children to prevent the harassment, abuse, and exploitation of all persons and communities associated with their programs and activities.

Everyone has an equal right to protection from harm regardless of their race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, language, age, physical appearance, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, or sexual orientation.

Where a concern is raised about a child, the [insert name of Member Association] shall always act in the best interests of the child recognising that all adults have a responsibility to report concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

There is a mandatory requirement to report concerns of child abuse in [insert name of the country] [Note the author should check mandatory reporting requirements for [insert name of the country], Anyone who learns of child abuse must report it to the [insert name of the authorities as required under mandatory reporting].

Where a concern relates to an adult, that adult will be supported to take a lead in deciding what action is taken in respect of the concern.

The [insert name of Member Association] will implement a Safeguarding Framework based on this policy which includes identifying the people in our organisation with specific responsibilities for safeguarding, our prevention measures and response protocols.

# Definitions

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## Inter-personal violence

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.<sup>7</sup>

Interpersonal violence involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals. It can occur online, be perpetrated by different actors and take different forms.

## Types of interpersonal violence

**Physical abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child or vulnerable adult and includes any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. It mainly involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping” “punching”) children or vulnerable adults with the hand or with an implement – a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, scratching, pinching, biting or burning them or breaking their bones.

**Psychological abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. It is also sometimes called emotional abuse, and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development or a vulnerable adult’s long-term wellbeing. Psychological abuse may involve deliberately telling a child or vulnerable adult that he/she is worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her, or “making fun” of what he/she says or how he/she communicates. Emotional abuse often occurs as a pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-physical behaviour within a power-differentiated relationship. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s or vulnerable adult’s peers.

**Sexual abuse** is the inducement or coercion of a child or vulnerable adult to engage in any unlawful sexual activity. It occurs when adults exploit children or vulnerable adults sexually for their own gratification. It may involve physical contact, such as assault by penetration (for example, rape) or non-penetrative acts, such as kissing, rubbing and touching children’s private body parts. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve contact; examples include involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse by gaining their trust (including via social media). In the majority of cases, the perpetrator is a person the child or vulnerable adult knows and trusts with sexual abuse often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. Sexual abuse may also include sexual harassment. Victims of child sexual abuse can equally be both boys and girls. Statistics show that boys are as likely to be sexually abused as girls and perpetrators can be both male and female.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child or vulnerable adult’s basic needs when those responsible for their care have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter, that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child or vulnerable adult’s health or a child’s development. It also includes failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to danger.



## Forms of interpersonal violence

This list outlines some of the common forms of abuse found in football that can feature physical, psychological, sexual abuse or neglect or be combination of them.

**Bullying** (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. It can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.

**Financial Abuse** is the misappropriation of financial resources or abusive use of financial control, in the context of a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Adults at risk, families living in poverty, women in unequal relationships and older persons can be at risk of financial abuse. In sport, families are often financially exploited by fake agents promising a sporting career overseas for their children.

**Grooming** is when a person builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited, or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Children and vulnerable adults can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - a family member, friend or professional.

**Hazing** is known to occur in many different types of social groups, including sports teams as a way of initiating a new person when they join the group or want to be socially accepted by their peers. This may involve harmful or humiliating actions that can lead to physical, sexual, or psychological harm.

**Peer abuse** describes incidents when a child or young person is exploited, bullied, cyber-bullied and/or harmed by another person or group of similar age.

**Sexual harassment** encompasses a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviour and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating.

**Trafficking** is where people, men, women or children, are recruited, moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold. They are often moved away from their homes and forced to work in the sex trade. Trafficking is a common occurrence in Africa where vulnerable adults and children are persuaded to migrate with the promise of a better future and then are exploited. Trafficking through sport is common and is usually associated with financial abuse.



## Other terms often used in Safeguarding in Football

**Safe Football** refers to a physically and psychologically safe and supportive football environment where participants can thrive and experience the full benefits of participation in the sport.

**Safeguarding** refers to all initiative-taking measures to both prevent and appropriately respond to concerns related to harassment, abuse, and exploitation in football as well as the promotion of holistic approaches to player welfare.

**Children** refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

**Young Person** refers to a child aged 15 – 17 years transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

**Adult at Risk** refers to any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of services by reason of a disability, age or illness, and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him- or herself.

**Vulnerable Adult** refers to any person aged 18 or over who is unable to protect him- or herself against significant harassment, abuse, or exploitation as a result of their athletic ability, race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth.

**Poor Practice** is behaviour or in-action which may not always be immediately harmful, but which falls below expected standards and needs to be addressed. Acts of harassment and abuse are more likely to occur in sporting environments where poor practice exists and where harmful behaviour is not challenged. Poor practice may lead to suspicions about an individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended, such as being alone with a child or excessive or inappropriate touching. Poor practice can lead to a sporting environment that enables harassment and abuse to occur. Poor practice should always be addressed to ensure participants in sport can continue to enjoy a safe, inclusive and positive experience.

## Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all [insert name of Member Association] staff, players, academy players, parents/guardians, partner organisations and their representatives, and any person visiting our program and activities.

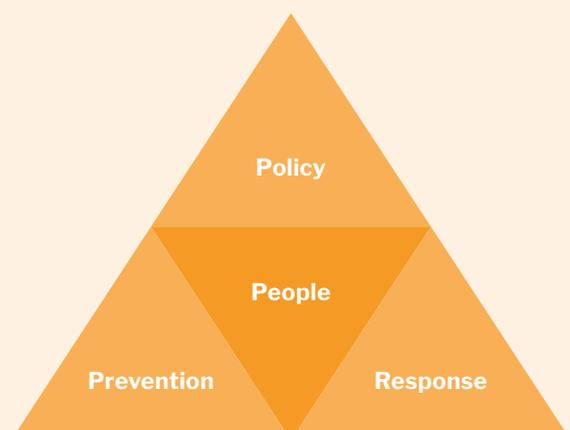
The policy applies specifically to any incidents of harassment and abuse that occur during or in connection with [insert name of Member Association] program and activities.

Where a concern is raised about the conduct of an employee of [insert name of Member Association] the matter will be considered in line with [insert name of Member Association] grievance and disciplinary procedures outlined in their contracts of employment.

However, where a participant is sanctioned under employment procedures, this can be addressed under this policy to the extent that it impacts on the participant's suitability to continue to participate in football outside of their employment relationship.

## [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Framework

The [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Framework consists of this policy, our people who all have a responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, our prevention guidelines and our response protocols.



## People - Roles & Responsibilities

The [insert name of Member Association] recognises that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in football is the responsibility of everyone involved in the sport. The [insert name of Member Association] is committed to raising awareness of safeguarding responsibilities by ensuring everyone involved in the sport has access to training and information on safeguarding.

Some people involved in the [insert name of Member Association]'s programs and activities have specific responsibilities for safeguarding including:

- The Council of the [insert name of Member Association]
- The General Secretariat of the [insert name of Member Association]
- The [insert name of Member Association] Designated Safeguarding Officers
- The [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Case Management Group

### [insert name of Member Association] Council

The [insert name of Member Association] Council approves this policy and maintains an oversight of safeguarding matters across football in [insert name of the Country].

One member of the [insert name of Member Association] Council shall act as the champion safeguarding across the association and will lead the board's oversight of the association's safeguarding policy and practice.

### [insert name of Member Association] Secretariat

The [insert name of Member Association] Secretariat and identified staff are responsible for the implementation of [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Policy, Prevention Measures and Response Protocols.

One member of the [insert name of Member Association] Secretariat and identified staff shall line manage the staff responsible for safeguarding functions.

## Designated Safeguarding Officer(s)

The [insert name of Member Association] shall appoint Designated Safeguarding Officer or Officers - preferably one male and one female, responsible for:

- Development and implementation of the [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Policy, Prevention Measures and Response Protocols covering all aspects of football in [insert name of the Country], ensuring the wellbeing and protection of all players, especially young players, volunteers and staff.
- Delivering safeguarding training and awareness programs across football in [insert name of the Country].
- Implementing risk assessment and action plans to ensure a safe football environment across all the [insert name of Member Association]'s football programs and activities.
- Establishing and maintaining an effective process for responding to reported concerns including managing reports, coordinating investigations via an independent investigator, and making referrals where required to statutory authorities or [insert name of Member Association]'s disciplinary panels.
- Developing a system to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve safeguarding practices across all football activities in [insert name of the Country].
- Managing and supporting others with designated safeguarding roles within the [insert name of Member Association] or football in [insert name of the Country].

### Human Relations Manager

The [insert name of Member Association] Human Relations Manager and will be responsible for managing safeguarding concerns involving members of staff in accordance with this policy, their contracts of employment and relevant employment legislation.

### Safeguarding Case Management Group

Where a safeguarding concern is reported to the [insert name of Member Association], an "ad hoc" Case Management Group shall be established consisting of three independent persons with appropriate qualifications or experience to triage the safeguarding concern and agree next steps in managing the case.

Care should be taken to ensure that there is no relationship between members of the Case Management Group and the persons subject of the raised concern.

The Safeguarding Case Management Group supports the Designated Safeguarding Officer by making decisions on how a raised concern should be managed. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for actioning the decisions of the Safeguarding Case Management Group.

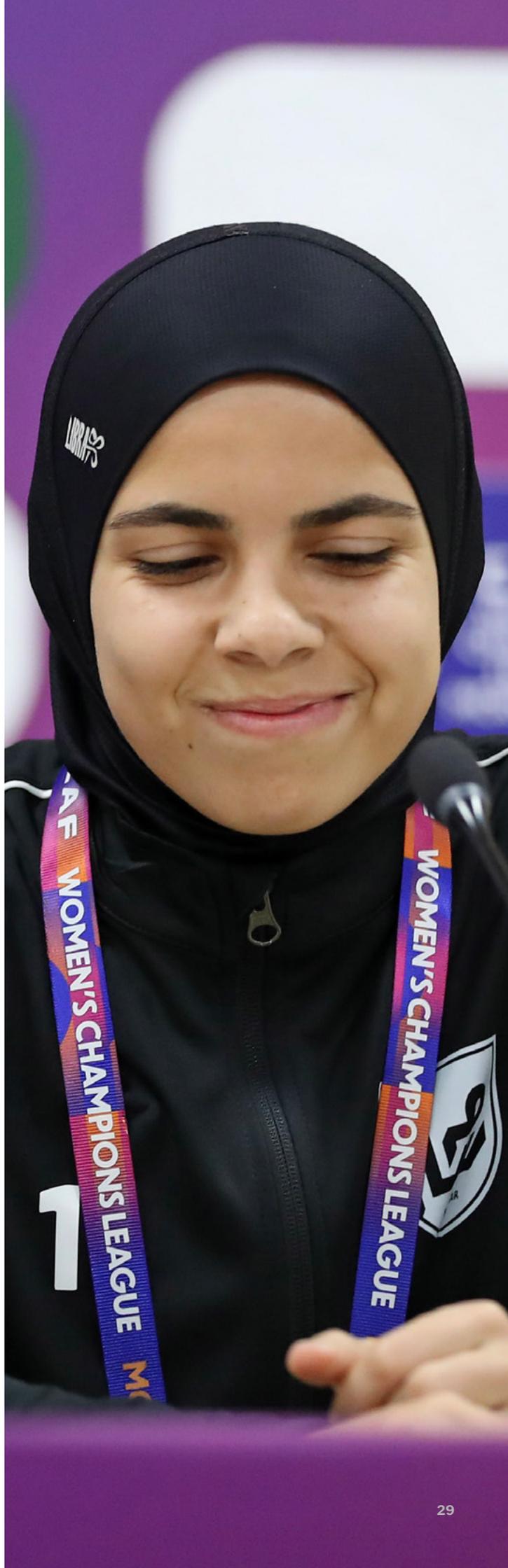
# Prevention Measures

The [insert name of Member Association] shall adopt, or develop, and implement measures to prevent the harassment, abuse, or exploitation of children and vulnerable adults in football in [insert name of the Country]. These prevention measures<sup>1,2</sup> will include, but will not be limited to:

- Guidance on Safe Recruitment & Vetting Requirements
- Safeguarding in Football Training
- Guidelines to Reduce and Mitigate Risk including the:
  - Use of Dressing Rooms and Shared Facilities
  - Use of Social Media
  - Use of Children's Images and/or Audio-Visual Recordings
  - Transportation of Children
  - Travel and Overnight Stays with Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Codes of Conduct

1. The CAF Safeguarding Toolkit provides guidance and templates for prevention measures for Member Associations.

2. The FIFA Guardians Child Safeguarding Toolkit for Member Associations includes templates for prevention guidelines. <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/1c3b2567b61a3b4f/original/nz1lyz3ykaioy7gwfmgms-pdf.pdf>



# Response Protocols

Response protocols which form part of the [insert name of Member Association] Safeguarding Framework include procedures for reporting concerns, for managing concerns, as well as disciplinary and appeals processes where the matter raised constitutes a medium to high risk.

## Reporting & Responding to Concerns

The following measures apply to any incidents, concerns, allegations, or disclosures of harassment, abuse, or exploitation brought to the attention of [insert name of Member Association] (herein after referred to as “concerns”).

Any person who reports an incident of harassment, abuse, or exploitation will be provided with support from the [insert name of Member Association].

Anyone person can report an incident of harassment or abuse using the following mechanisms:

- In writing, using the template form published on the [insert name of Member Association] website.
- By phone or email, to a [insert name of Member Association] Designated Safeguarding Officer. [Insert email address or phone number here]
- In person, to a [insert name of Member Association] Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Any anonymous reporting systems established by the [insert name of Member Association].

Any person who makes a complaint of harassment, abuse, or abuse to the [insert name of Member Association] and believes the concern has not been processed in accordance with the policy can write to the Secretary General of the [insert name of Member Association].

Any criminal incidents of harassment, abuse, or exploitation that are perpetrated against a child must be reported to the police and/or social welfare. [check national requirements and provisions for the reporting of crimes against a child] Matters of a criminal nature against a child reported to the [insert name of Member Association] Designated Safeguarding Officer shall be reported to the police and/or social welfare by the officer.

Any criminal incidents of harassment, abuse, or exploitation that are perpetrated against a vulnerable adult can be reported to the police and/or social welfare. In such cases the [insert name of Member Association] Designated Safeguarding Officer shall support the concerned adult to make a report to the police.

## Whistleblowing

Although safeguarding concerns can be reported directly by an affected individual, the term “whistle blowing” is used to describe a concern relating to the conduct of an individual made by someone other than the affected person.

[insert name of Member Association] recognises that some individuals may be fearful of the consequences of making a concern under these procedures, particularly where the alleged perpetrator is in a position of authority. In these circumstances, where possible, the identity of the whistle blower will remain confidential.

Any person who makes a concern in good faith must not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences because of submitting a report.

These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes a concern that is false, vexatious, retaliatory, or frivolous.

## Initial Assessment

Any concerns pursuant to this policy received by [insert name of Member Association] will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) who are the first points of contact for concerns raised under this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will make an initial assessment of the concern to determine whether the matter relates to a person or persons taking part in [insert name of Member Association]'s program and activities.

If the concern is believed to be a criminal matter, and a child or adult is thought to be in immediate danger, the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will refer the matter to the relevant law enforcement authorities or statutory authorities in the jurisdiction where the act is alleged to have taken place without delay.



## Case Management

After having considered whether the concern needed to be referred to law enforcement or other authorities and having reported the matter, the raised concern should be considered by a Case Management Group. This group should be no less than three persons and be drawn from independent safeguarding, legal or social welfare experts.

The Case Management Group shall triage the raised concern to determine how it should be managed.

The Case Management Group may commission an independent investigation where further information is needed to make an informed decision on the matter.

Having triaged the received concern, the Case Management Group may decide:

- To dismiss the concern where there are no safeguarding implications or where the concerns raised are unfounded or insufficiently serious as to require any action by [insert name of Member Association].
- To refer the matter to appropriate staff to initiate remedial action such as training where the concern is considered to be poor practice that can be corrected.
- To refer the matter to a Disciplinary Panel where the concern raised is a medium or high-level concern.
- To refer the concern to another body where the concern falls outside the jurisdiction of [insert name of Member Association].
- To refer the matter to law enforcement or another statutory authority where new information gathered during the investigation suggests possible criminal conduct.

### None

No safeguarding implication or concerns

**CASE DISMISSED**



### Low

One-off or infrequent lower level poor practice with less serious safeguarding implications

**BEHAVIOURAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**



### Medium

Repeated or more serious poor practice with clear safeguarding implications

**DISCIPLINARY ACTION**



### High

Possible Grooming, Serious Harassment or Abuse, or Criminal Conduct

**CRIMINAL REFERRAL & DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

# Support for Victims and Alleged Perpetrators

[insert name of Member Association]'s Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess whether any of the affected parties require support including possible trauma counselling and will make arrangements for such support.

## Confidentiality

[insert name of Member Association] recognizes the sensitive and serious nature of cases of harassment and abuse and will strive to keep all matters relating to a concern confidential. Information will only be disclosed to those organisations or individuals that "need to know" to manage the concern. Anyone who is party to information involved must also ensure that confidentiality is maintained unless the information becomes a matter of public record.

## Interim Measures

[insert name of Member Association] may impose interim protective measures, including the suspension of a person from [insert name of Member Association] and its program and activities, where one or more of the following circumstances applies:

- The person is believed to present a significant risk to participants in [insert name of Member Association] programmes or activities.
- The reputation of [insert name of Member Association] or one of its partners is at risk.
- The persons ongoing presence may hinder investigations into the concern.



## Investigation

[insert name of Member Association] will pause an investigation into a raised concern where it is known that the matter is under criminal investigation until they are given clearance by the investigating officer in order to not impede the criminal investigation. Once clearance to proceed has been obtained from local law enforcement, any internal investigation can proceed in a timely manner.

Where an investigation is required, [insert name of Member Association] will instruct an independent investigator to carry out the investigation, in accordance with this policy, and to an appropriate timeline agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where relevant, the independent investigator may request information from the local law enforcement and any other relevant organizations.

The independent investigator may require written or oral representations from relevant parties, taking special care when interviewing vulnerable witnesses.

The independent investigator shall prepare a report and include all relevant evidence for consideration by the Case Management Group who having considered the report may determine that:

- a) The concern requires further investigation.
- b) There is a case to answer, and the concern should be referred to a Disciplinary Panel for adjudication.
- c) The concern constitutes low level poor practice and can be resolved through remedial action such as providing the relevant party(ies) with instructions, advice, or guidance.
- d) No further action should be taken.

## Disciplinary and Appeals Proceedings

Where disciplinary proceedings are to proceed against a member of [insert name of Member Association] staff, the matter will progress in accordance with [insert name of Member Association]'s terms and conditions of employment.

Where disciplinary proceedings, are to progress against a person who is not a member of staff, the matter will be considered by a Disciplinary Committee of the [insert name of Member Association] comprised of suitably qualified persons to hear a matter of harassment, abuse or exploitation.

Appeals to decisions of a Disciplinary Committee of the [insert name of Member Association] may be considered by a separate Appeals Committee established in accordance with the statutes of the [insert name of Member Association].

The standard of proof for such proceedings is the civil standard of balance of probabilities. Consequently, the [insert name of Member Association] may seek to take disciplinary action irrespective of the outcome of any criminal proceedings.

The [insert name of Member Association] will provide appropriate support and guidance to ensure all participants understand the disciplinary and appeal procedures, especially if children or vulnerable persons are involved.

## Sanctions

Where it is determined that an act or acts of harassment and abuse have been proven, the Disciplinary Panel shall impose an appropriate sanction upon the person.

The Disciplinary Panel may consider, singly or in combination, depending on the nature and severity of the conduct and whether there are any aggravating and mitigating circumstances the following sanctions:

- Written or verbal apology.
- Formal warning.
- Fine.
- Training and/or Supervision.
- Temporary suspension.
- Termination of membership, license, agreement, contract, or registration.
- or any other sanction that the Disciplinary Panel considers appropriate in the circumstances.

## Appeals

Any person(s) who have been found to have harassed, abused, or exploited another person by a Disciplinary Panel will have the right to appeal against the decision.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Disciplinary Panel within 14 days of the notice of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel who will determine if there are any valid grounds for an appeal.

[insert name of Member Association] will appoint an independent Appeals Panel comprised of three suitably qualified persons to hear the appeal in a timely manner.

## Non-Recent Incidents

Serious allegations of sexual abuse may be made some time after the event. Where a non-recent allegation is made, the designated safeguarding lead will:

- Clarify whether there is a current risk to student-players or other vulnerable persons participating in or associated with [insert name of Member Association]'s programs and activities; and
- Advise the individual of their right to make a formal complaint to law enforcement and support them in doing so.

This policy does not apply any specific limitations periods for sexual abuse and any serious allegation of non-recent sexual abuse will be treated in accordance with these procedures.

## Criminal Convictions & Findings of Fact

[insert name of Member Association] shall establish that an incident of harassment, abuse, or exploitation has occurred where:

- A person has been convicted of a criminal offence of harassment, abuse, or exploitation against another person (s) in any legal jurisdiction, or,
- A recognized sports or regulatory body has determined that an allegation(s) of harassment, abuse, or exploitation against another person (s) is/are proven.

[insert name of Member Association] having considered any representations made by the person, and any other affected parties, may determine that it is appropriate to refer the case to a Disciplinary Panel.

## Data Protection

Any information relating to concerns of harassment and abuse will be stored securely and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Any information about poor practice or concerns about harassment and violence that may indicate that a participant in a position of trust is unsuitable to work or volunteer in the sport will be retained for as long as the participant remains active in the sport or for 10 years, whichever is longer, even if it were not possible at the time that the information was first reported to instigate any formal proceedings.

Any other records relating to other concerns will be retained for a period of [3 years] unless a similar concern arises within that period.

Any records relating to disciplinary action taken by [insert name of Member Association] will be retained for a period of [5 years] after the sanction has lapsed.

# Liability and Indemnification

## Organizational Liability

[Member Association] may be directly or indirectly liable for damages or other harm caused by its failures in implementing, monitoring, and enforcing the safeguarding policy, including:

- a) Negligent hiring, supervision, or retention of staff or volunteers;
- b) Failure to implement safeguarding measures as provided for herein;
- c) Failure to respond to reported concerns pursuant to the reporting schemes herein; and/or
- d) Systemic failures in policy or practice.

## Individual Indemnification

[Member Association] shall indemnify and hold harmless the following individuals against all personal liability, legal costs, and damages arising from actions taken in good faith in the execution of their safeguarding responsibilities as provided for herein and per their applicable responsibility descriptions:

- a) Designated Safeguarding Officers;
- b) Members of the Case Management Group;
- c) Members of Disciplinary and Appeals Panels;
- d) Board members with safeguarding oversight responsibilities; and
- e) Staff and volunteers implementing safeguarding policies.

### Such indemnification shall not extend to:

- a) Actions taken outside the scope of the individuals' safeguarding responsibilities;
- b) Acts or omissions constituting gross negligence;
- c) Willful misconduct or acts and omissions in bad faith; and
- d) Criminal acts.

[Member Association] shall provide legal representation for individuals covered by such indemnification when facing legal proceedings related to their safeguarding responsibilities.

## Insurance Requirements

[Member Association] shall maintain the following insurance coverage which shall have a minimum coverage limit of [Insert appropriate monetary value] per occurrence and an [Insert appropriate monetary value] aggregate annual limit :

- a) General liability insurance with specific coverage for safeguarding claims;
- b) Professional liability insurance for staff with safeguarding responsibilities, including the Designated Safeguarding Officers;
- c) Directors and Officers liability insurance covering governance oversight of safeguarding, including for board members; and
- d) Legal expenses insurance

All clubs and academies affiliated with, or licensed by, the [Member Association] shall be required to maintain similar insurance coverage proportionate to their size and risk profile.

## Documentation

To demonstrate due diligence and mitigate liability, [Member Association] shall maintain comprehensive records of:

- a) All safeguarding policies and procedures
- b) Risk assessments conducted
- c) Training provided to staff and volunteers
- d) Background checks conducted
- e) Reports of concerns and actions taken
- f) Regular reviews of safeguarding measures

Such documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the data protection provisions herein.



# Prevention Guidance

Proactive measures aimed at preventing the harassment, abuse or exploitation of children, young and vulnerable people in African football. Creating safe football environments for all participants.

## Codes of conduct

A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the norms, rules, and responsibilities or proper behaviour expected of individuals within football.

We've developed these sample codes of conduct for you to adapt for your own use.

They can help you to promote positive behaviour and manage poor behaviour in football.

Each code has been written with the intended audience in mind using age and role appropriate language and examples.



# Coaches Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

I understand and respect the responsibility that comes along with my position as a role model for all participants, especially children, women, and other vulnerable adults.



## I will promote good practice and:

- Ensure offering a fun, safe and inclusive experience.
- I will promote good practice and: Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone without discrimination on account of age, race, skin colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political opinion, etc.
- Always report promptly any concerns of poor practice or abuse to a designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Lead by example. Good sportsmanship and being a role model for others, include not drinking alcohol, taking drugs or using foul, racist, homophobic or other discriminatory slurs in the presence of other players.
- Respect my position of trust and maintain appropriate boundaries with players and everyone else.  
Work in an open environment and avoid spending time alone with players while leaving out others.
- Ensure players are safe by supervising appropriately and using safe training methods and techniques.
- Challenge any form of bullying behaviour among and towards players.
- Communicate in a positive, constructive and age-appropriate manner with everyone, by ensuring that no one gets ever humiliated, harassed or spoken in a disrespectful manner.  
Be aware of the menstrual cycle's implications for my female players and the effect it has on the overall players' performance and well-being.
- Provide meaningful opportunities that empower players to share their opinions in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that confidential information is not disclosed unless with the express approval of all those concerned; or whereas a case warrants disclosure to relevant authorities.
- Encourage all participants to take responsibility for their own conduct and performance both on and off the football pitch
- Immediately report any concern I have of poor practice or abuse to a [Member Association, Club, or Academy] designated Safeguarding Officer. All reports are treated with strict confidentiality.



## I will never:

- Engage in or allow any verbal, physical or sexually provocative games with, or inappropriate touching of players.
- Engage in any undesired sexual relationship with anyone, including making unsolicited sexually suggestive comments to anyone.
- Groom or exploit a player for personal and financial gain.
- Engage in the inappropriate use of social media. This includes engaging players in private social media conversation and posting upsetting comments, images or videos that could compromise their well-being, reputation or cause them harm.
- Engage in bullying behaviour.
- Condone rule violations, any form of violence or the use of prohibited substances.
- Physically hurt or threaten to hurt anyone – hitting and punching may be regulated forms of contact in some sports (e.g. combat) but have no place in football

I hereby confirm that I have been informed on the channels I can use to voice any concerns I may have.

I acknowledge that escalating concerns is highly encouraged – no action is not an option. All reports are treated with strict confidentiality Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action being taken. This may mean your removal from the activity/event for a period whilst an investigation is taking place and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Name of the Coach

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

# Adults Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

As an adult working in football – whether as staff, member of the Local Organizing Committee or a volunteer, you have a responsibility to ensure that everyone attending [Member Association, Club, or Academy] events or activities, particularly children, women, and other vulnerable adults, are protected from harm. Additionally, you have a duty to nurture an environment of dialogue and mutual respect.



## I will:

- Encourage everyone to play by the rules.
- Cooperate with, and show appreciation and respect to other staff, coaches, referees, match officials, volunteers, and players.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone without discrimination on account of age, race, skin colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political opinion, etc.
- Praise effort and participation instead of focusing on performance and results only.
- Accept decisions made by match officials and behave responsibly on the side-lines.
- Inform coordinators if anyone has been harmed, ill or hurt.
- Always report any concern of poor practice or abuse immediately to a [Member Association, Club, or Academy] designated Safeguarding Officer.



## I will not:

- Use aggressive or abusive language nor display bullying behaviours with anyone.
- Engage in any relationship with anyone which is an abuse of trust or power.
- Use inappropriate language in any medium or use foul, racist, homophobic or other discriminatory slurs.
- Engage in any unsolicited sexual relationships or inappropriate touches with anyone, including making sexually suggestive comments.
- Assault others or do hurtful things on purpose, such as: using mean / inappropriate words to upset, spread rumours about others; or excluding someone on purpose.
- Use social media in a way that negatively impacts someone's reputation – e.g. posting distressing comments or photos on social media platforms (i.e. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or X, etc.) with the purpose of hurting or upsetting someone.

**I understand that the organisers of this event/activity have taken all reasonable measures to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of all participants.**

I hereby confirm that I have been informed on the channels I can use to voice any concerns I may have. I acknowledge that escalating concerns is highly encouraged – no action is not an option. All reports are treated with strict confidentiality.

Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action being taken. This may mean your removal from the activity/event for a period whilst an investigation is taking place and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

**I pledge to abide by this Code of Conduct:**

**Name of Adult:**

.....

**Signature & Date:**

.....

# Adult Players Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

All players have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.



## Both on and off the field, I will:

- Adhere to the Laws of The Game.
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Always respect the match official decisions.
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials.
- Never engage in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour.
- Never engage in bullying, intimidation or harassment.
- Never engage in the inappropriate use of social media. e.g., posting inappropriate comments or images or videos on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, X, etc.) that could compromise someone's well-being, reputation or cause them harm.
- Never engage in physical abuse in any form.
- Speak to my team-mates, the opposition and my coach/manager with respect.
- Remember we all make mistakes.
- Win or lose with dignity.
- Shake hands with the opposing team and the match officials at the end of every game.
- Respect my coach, team-mates and referees.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone without discrimination on account of age, race, skin colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political opinion, etc.
- Be punctual, ready and prepared at the appropriate times for training, matches or any other football activity. Avoid wearing jewellery and long nails.
- Always report any concern of poor practice or abuse immediately to a [Member Association, Club, or Academy] designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All reports are treated with strict confidentiality.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken:



## I may:

- Be required to apologise to team-mates, the other team, referee or team manager.
- Receive a warning from the coach/team manager.
- Receive a written warning from the club committee.
- Be required to attend a Member Association education course.
- Be dropped or substituted from the team.
- Be suspended from training.
- Not be selected for the team.
- Be required to serve a suspension.
- Be fined.
- Be required to leave the club.
- Be fined by the member Association and/or receive a suspension on the club.

**I hereby confirm that I have been informed on the channels I can use to voice any concerns I may have.**

I acknowledge that escalating concerns is highly encouraged – no action is not an option. All reports are treated with strict confidentiality.

Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action being taken. This may mean your removal from the activity/event for a period whilst an investigation is taking place and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

**I pledge to abide by this Code of Conduct:**

**Name of the Player:**

.....

**Signature & Date:**

.....

# Referees & Match Officials Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Referees and other match officials have responsibility for promoting high standards of behaviour in the game.

The behaviour of the referee and other match officials has an impact, directly and indirectly, on the conduct of everyone involved in the game - both on the pitch and on the sidelines.



## As a referee or match official, I will:

- Remain honest and completely impartial at all times.
- Apply the Laws of the Game and competition rules fairly and consistently.
- Manage the game in a positive, calm and confident manner.
- Deal with all instances of violence, aggression, unsporting behaviour, foul play and other misconduct.
- Never tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour from players and team officials.
- Support my match official colleagues at all times.
- Set a positive personal example by promoting good behaviour from players and team officials.
- Set a positive personal example by promoting good behaviour and showing respect to everyone involved in the game.
- Communicate with the players and encourage fair play.
- Respond in a clear, calm and confident manner to any appropriate request for clarification by the team captains.
- Prepare physically and mentally for each match.
- Complete and submit, accurate and concise reports within the time limit required for games in which I officiate.
- Always report any concern of poor practice or abuse immediately to a [Member Association] designated Safeguarding Officer.



## As a referee or match official, I will never:

- Accept to fix a match and will say no immediately. I will not let myself be manipulated by unscrupulous individuals who might try to develop a relationship with me built on favours or fears that they will then try to exploit for their own benefit in possibly fixing an event. This can include the offer of gifts, hospitality, money or support.
- Engage in any undesired relationship with anyone who is abusing trust or power.
- Engage in the inappropriate use of social media. E.g. posting upsetting comments or images or videos on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or X, etc.) that could compromise someone's well-being, reputation or cause them harm.
- Engage in conduct that might constitute harassment, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation.

**I hereby confirm that I have been informed on the channels I can use to voice any concerns I may have. I acknowledge that escalating concerns is highly encouraged – no action is not an option. All reports are treated with strict confidentiality**

Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action being taken. This may mean your removal from refereeing or officiating matches for a period whilst an investigation is taking place and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may be required to meet with my member association's match officials committee.

**I pledge to abide by this Code of Conduct:**

**Name of the Referee or Match Official:**

.....

**Signature & Date:**

.....

# Parents Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

**As a parent, or guardian, of a child or young person playing football, I recognise my responsibility to be a positive role model for my child/children and all young people involved. I have a responsibility to ensure that everyone involved in football finds it to be a fun, safe and positive experience.**



## **As a parent or guardian, I will:**

- Show exemplary behaviour by respecting and appreciating match officials, opposition players, coaches, managers and spectators.
- Deliver and collect my child/children punctually before and after training, matches and club events.
- Support and motivate all players, including the opposition, and encourage my child/children to do the same.
- Encourage my child/children to obey the laws of the game and teach them that they can only do their best.
- Never publicly criticise, ridicule or embarrass any children.
- Ensure my child/children have kit and clothing appropriate to the environment and weather conditions.
- Ensure that proper sportswear and protective kit are provided and worn.
- Disclose any medical concerns or changes in medical conditions to the Club Coaches, Management of Safeguarding Officers.
- Not place unnecessary pressure on my child/children or push them into activities they do not want to do.
- Applaud effort and good play.
- Not to interfere with coach instructions and not to confuse the players by telling them what to do.
- Encourage all children not to discriminate on the grounds of religious beliefs, race, gender, social classes or lack of ability.
- Accept that striving to win is more important than winning itself.
- Respect the decisions of the match officials.
- Ensure that my child/children have read and understand their Code of Conduct.
- Not post anything inappropriate, or negative on social media which may bring the game into disrepute.
- Display high standards, behave responsibly and never engage in or tolerate the use of foul, abusive, insulting or inappropriate words, behaviour or gestures.
- Stay Behind the Line and not enter the field of play without prior permission from the referee.
- Make football fun.
- Always report any concern of poor practice or abuse immediately to a [Member Association] designated Safeguarding Officer.

**I pledge to abide by this Code of Conduct:**

**Name of the Parent/Guardian:**

.....

**Signature & Date:**

.....

# Youth Players Code of Conduct



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.



## In participating in football, I understand that I have the right to:

- Have fun and develop my football skills.
- Feel safe, happy and respected.
- Be protected from bad behaviour that make me feel uncomfortable or sad and affects my performance.
- Talk and be listened to, especially if I have concerns or do not feel safe.
- Know where to go for help or who to talk to if I am scared or worried about something.
- Be looked after if there is an accident or injury.



## In playing football, I will:

- Respect my coach, team-mates, the other team and referees.
- Always play to the best of my ability and for the benefit of my team
- Play fair, – I won't cheat, dive, complain or waste time.
- Be gracious in victory and defeat – I will shake hands with the other team and referees at the end of the match.
- Listen and respond to what my coach/team manager tells me and understand that a coach/ team manager has to do what is best for the team and not one individual player
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone without discrimination on account of age, race, skin colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political opinion, etc.
- Be punctual, ready and prepared at the appropriate times for training, matches or any other football activity. Avoid wearing jewellery and long nails.
- Not bully, assault or do hurtful things to others on purpose, such as:
  - Using mean words, spreading rumours or excluding someone on purpose.
  - Engage in the inappropriate use of social media. E.g. posting upsetting comments or images or videos on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or X, etc.) that could compromise someone's well-being, reputation or cause them harm.
  - Physically fighting and hurting others.
- Talk to someone I trust or the [Member Association, Club, or Academy] safeguarding officer if I'm unhappy about anything in my team, squad, or at my club or academy.



## Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate action being taken. This may include any/all of the following actions which may be taken by my club or member association:

- Be required to apologise to my team-mates, the other team, referee or team manager.
- Receive a formal warning from the coach or the club committee.
- Be dropped or substituted.
- Be suspended from training.
- Be required to leave the club.
- My club or Member Association may make my parent or carer aware of any infringements of the Code of Conduct.
- The Member Association could impose a fine and suspension against my club.

**I hereby confirm that I have been informed on the channels I can use to voice any concerns I have about my wellbeing or how I am being treated by others whilst training or playing football.**

I understand that I am encouraged to raise my concerns and that taking no action should not be an option. I also understand that all reports are treated with strict confidentiality.

## I pledge to abide by this Code of Conduct:

**Name of the Player:**

.....

**Signature & Date:**

.....

# Risk assessment process and templates

A risk assessment in the context of safeguarding is a process that evaluates the potential for harassment, abuse, or exploitation to harm a person's well-being. It is a key part of the safeguarding process and can help to identify potential risks, consider the needs and vulnerabilities of those involved in football, develop proactive prevention guidance, and make informed decisions.

Risk assessments are used to assess and manage potential risk of harassment, abuse, or exploitation in a similar way to how we consider health and safety risks, so that the specific safeguarding risks to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and addressed.

Regular risk assessments should be conducted to assess safeguarding risks within a member association and all of its activities. Risk assessments identify risks, assess the likelihood and impact of the risk occurring, and set out what steps need to be taken to mitigate the risk.

Risk assessments form a crucial first step in developing a safeguarding plan for a Member Association. Risk assessments can be conducted on all of a member association's staff, operations and programmes of activity including specific high-risk programmes or activities such as travel to a competition, when hosting a tournament, or when working with children or young people in talent development camps.

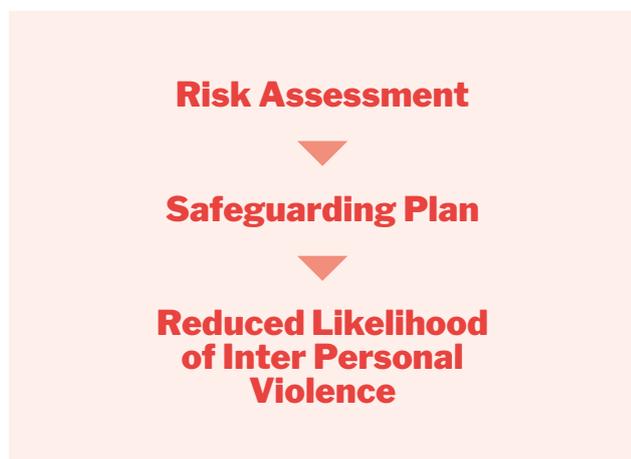
Included in this toolkit are two sample risk assessment tools. The first is for general assessments of safeguarding risks across the member associations activities and the second is for activities including travel.

The general safeguarding risk assessment tool can be used to maintain a register of risks and measures implemented to mitigate them. By revisiting the risk assessment tool on a regular basis, new risks can be added when identified and progress on previously identified risks can be monitored. General assessments should be revisited on a regular basis such as every six months or when a new risk is identified or when a new programme is introduced.

Failure to conduct regular risk assessments means that there will be no institutional record of the steps that are being taken to safeguard participants across the member association's operations and programmes of activity and increases the possibility of risks to the welfare of participants being missed.

The designated safeguarding officer should be responsible for maintaining a safeguarding risk register and sharing this with the senior leadership team.

The risk assessment template assesses each risk in terms of the possible impact if the risk is not addressed being high, medium or low. It also assesses the probability of the risk occurring again being high, medium or low. These two factors determine a risk score using the following table. Risk scores of 6-9 fall into the red zone and must be addressed immediately. Failing this the member association may need to postpone or cancel programmes or activities affected.



<b>Impact</b> (How severe the consequences for the person(s) affected) (How severe the consequences for the person(s) affected)	High	7	8	9
	Medium	4	5	6
	Low	1	2	3
		Low	Medium	High
<b>Probability</b> (Likelihood of harm happening if the risk is not mitigated)				

# General Safeguarding Risk Assessment Tool



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Examples of risks are shown below in the red. Member Associations, Clubs and Academies should consider all their operations and activities and identify where safeguarding risks exist. This tool can be used by deleting the examples shown and populating the table with risks identified at your organization. You can add rows for each risk identified.

RISK AREA	ASSOCIATED RISK	PROBABILITY (LOW/MED/HIGH)	IMPACT (LOW/MED/HIGH)	RISK SCORE	MITIGATION ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	DEADLINE FOR ACTION
Recruitment	Staff have not undertaken proper vetting and a criminal record check = possible staff unsuitable to work with children	MEDIUM	HIGH	8	All staff to complete criminal record check and provide details of referees from previous employment working with young people under 18 years.	HR Department	Insert date
Football Training	The football field is open to the public increasing the risk of adults not associated with the club approaching children.	LOW	HIGH	7	Ensure we have sufficient adults to chaperone children. Ask parents/carers to attend practice to observe their children during training.	Coaching Staff	Insert date – before practice commences.
Transport	Buses for team travel do not meet acceptable safety standards.	LOW	HIGH	7	Only book reputable transport services with high standards of maintenance, trained drivers and proper accreditation.	Team Managers	Insert date – prior to any travel.
Coaches	Coaching is not child friendly and verges on being abusive.	MEDIUM	HIGH	8	Coaches sign code of conduct, receive safeguarding training, have recognised coaching qualifications	Coaches and Coach Managers	Insert date – before training sessions commence.

# Safeguarding Risk Assessment Tool for Travel Away from Home



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Examples of risks are shown below in the red. Member Associations, Clubs and Academies should consider all their operations and activities and identify where safeguarding risks exist. This tool can be used by deleting the examples shown and populating the table with risks identified at your organization. You can add rows for each risk identified.

RISK AREA	ASSOCIATED RISK	PROBABILITY (LOW/MED/HIGH)	IMPACT (LOW/MED/HIGH)	RISK SCORE	MITIGATION ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	DEADLINE FOR ACTION
Accommodation	Adults sharing accommodation with children	LOW	HIGH	7	Adequate accommodation booked to ensure adults and boys and girls do not share rooms.	Team Manager	Must be in place before group departs home.
Supervision	Not enough adults present to supervise children adequately at all times.	LOW	HIGH	7	Supervision ratios are reviewed, and sufficient adults are in the party to provide supervision including during emergencies i.e., child needs to attend hospital.	Team Manager	Must be in place before group departs home.
Medical	Child needs first aid treatment or to attend hospital.	LOW	MEDIUM	4	Ensure at least two staff/volunteers are first aid trained. Identify location of emergency hospital near venue in advance. Have emergency contact details for players.	Team Manager	Must be in place before group departs home.
Education	Players missing classes due to event.	HIGH	LOW	3	Parents ask schools for home work, time allocated to study periods.	Parents/ Team Staff	Prior to departure.

# Member association safeguarding roles



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Everyone involved in football in Africa has a responsibility to safeguard children and other vulnerable persons taking part in our sport. That responsibility within a member association spans from the President, the board of directors and the senior leadership team all the way down to the coaches and managers that work with clubs and football teams.

In this section of the toolkit, we clarify some of the roles and responsibilities within a member association as they relate to the safeguarding of all participants in the sport from harassment, abuse and exploitation.

## President and the Executive Committee (Council)

The President and the Executive Committee of a member association have overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation has a safeguarding policy in place and that resources are made available to implement best safeguarding practice across the sport in their jurisdiction.

The safeguarding policy should be formally adopted by the Board of Directors is responsible for approving the safeguarding policy and should maintain an oversight of safeguarding matters across the association. We recommend that one member of the Board of Directors leads the board's oversight of safeguarding and becomes the "safeguarding champion".

## Secretariat

The senior leadership team of a member association usually comprises a Secretary General, Technical Director and other senior staff positions. The senior leadership of an association should take responsibility for the implementation of safeguarding across all the associations operations and programmes of activity.

All member associations should have at least one designated safeguarding officer who might sit in the Secretary General's, Technical Director's or Human Relation's Manager's office.

## Designated Safeguarding Officer

All member associations should have a full-time safeguarding lead officer. This post is best filled by a person with a background in social work, child protection, child rights or education who is also knowledgeable about the sport of football.

The association's designated safeguarding officer(s) shall be responsible for:

- Implementation of the safeguarding policy and ensuring all association activities, clubs and academies have consistent, up-to-date safeguarding protocols covering all aspects of player, public, volunteer, and employee wellbeing and protection.
- Coordinating safeguarding training and awareness programs across the sport targeting staff, players, coaches, volunteers, clubs, academies, competitions, and parents.
- Implementing standardized risk assessments and action plans to ensure a safe environment across the association's activities.
- Establishing and maintaining an effective, association-wide process for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns impartially, coordinating investigations via an independent investigator.
- Maintain close contacts with the administration and management of the association, as well as with external organizations involved in the fight against inter-personal violence – police, prosecutor's office, state agency for child protection, social welfare services, etc.
- Developing a system to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve safeguarding practices across all the association's activities.

## Human Relations Manager

Where an association has a Human Relations Manager, they will be responsible for managing safeguarding concerns involving members of staff in accordance with their contracts of employment and relevant employment legislation.

## Case Management Group

Where safeguarding concerns are reported to an association through their reporting protocol, there should be an “ad hoc” Case Management Group to assist the designated safeguarding lead officer determine how the case should be managed.

This group will usually consist of three persons who are independent of the association’s board of directors or senior leadership team. They should include individuals with knowledge of the law, national protective systems for children and vulnerable persons, and of football. Care should be taken to ensure that there is no relationship between members of group and the persons subject to the raised concern.

The case management group will assist the designated safeguarding officer in triaging the concern and ensuring appropriate action is taken.

Members of the case management group may not be members of any disciplinary or appeals tribunals set up to consider a safeguarding concern on which they have adjudicated that the matter be referred to disciplinary proceedings.

## Other Safeguarding Officers

Clubs, academies, matches, tournaments and teams should have designated safeguarding officer(s) who can be staff members or volunteers.

**These designated safeguarding officer(s) will be responsible for:**

- Create and maintain a safe environment for all who participate in football at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level.
- Implementation of the member association’s safeguarding policy and safeguarding protocols at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level.
- Developing up-to-date safeguarding protocols covering all aspects of player, public, volunteer and employee wellbeing and protection.
- Coordinating safeguarding training and awareness programs for different job roles at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level.
- Conducting standardized risk assessments and action plans to ensure a safe environment at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level.
- Working with the association’s designated safeguarding lead on the management of safeguarding cases at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level.
- Reporting on safeguarding matters at the club, academy, match, or tournaments level to the association’s designated safeguarding lead



# Job description template



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

**Job Title:** Member Association Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

**Reports To:** Secretary General or Technical Director

**Job Overview:** The Member Association is committed to ensuring that all who participate in football within the member association's authority, especially children and vulnerable people, do so in a safe environment free from harassment, abuse, and exploitation.

The role of the DSO is to build a culture of safeguarding across all the association's programmes of activity and to ensure compliance with the association's safeguarding policy. This includes implementing guidance on the prevention of inter-personal violence in football and establishing and managing protocols for reporting and responding to concerns.

## Responsibilities and Duties:

- Being the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented.
- Liaising with external safeguarding bodies, including local authorities, law enforcement, and child protection agencies.
- Supporting and advising staff and volunteers on safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring appropriate training is delivered and that all staff understand safeguarding responsibilities.
- Developing a system to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve safeguarding practices across all the association's activities.

## Qualifications:

- Have a recognised graduate qualification in social work, teaching, nursing, child rights, child welfare or similar.

Or

- Have successfully completed the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Diploma (Nominated FIFA Learner) Course or being in the training process.

## Experience:

- Experience of working with children or vulnerable people, especially in sports settings.
- Understanding of football and how the sport is structured.

## Specific skills:

- Excellent communication and people skills.
- Strong leadership, strategic thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- Effective communication skills, relationship building and influencing skills.
- Detail-oriented with excellent analytical and organizational skills.
- Ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders.
- Ability to adopt a trauma informed approach when dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Good facilitation skills to deliver meetings and training.
- Ability to influence and manage change in organisations.

## Personal

### characteristics:

- Demonstrates empathy when working with others.
- Conveys respect for diverse individuals and perspectives.
- Models' inclusive behaviour and treat everyone fairly.
- Open to doing things differently and trying new approaches.
- Can work on their own initiative and as part of a team.
- Critical thinking and creative problem solving.



## Safe recruitment

---

**Member associations and their affiliated clubs and organisations should take steps to ensure that all persons being recruited to work in their organisation are suitable to work with children and other vulnerable persons including but not limited to women, persons with a disability or persons with care needs.**

The following guidance outlines steps that should be taken to verify a person's suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Although the vetting of staff to work for the Member Association or its affiliated clubs and organisations can never guarantee that no staff member will act inappropriately towards a child and/or adult including other colleagues, the steps recommended here will greatly reduce the likelihood of such an occurrence.

### During the recruitment process

The following measures can be taken during the recruitment process to minimise the possibility of hiring a person unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

#### Candidate profile

Decide what skills and knowledge are needed to safely work with children and vulnerable adults and include these in the profile. This will depend on the position – clearly a coach will have more contact and need better skills working with children and vulnerable adults than someone in an administrative or ground keeper's role.

#### Advertisement

Include a clear statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in any advertisement about the position.

#### Interview

Ensure you have at least 2 people interview or meet with the applicant and check out any gaps in the application form, including any gaps in employment history. Make sure the applicant has the ability and commitment to meet the standards required to adhere to Member Association's safeguarding policy.

Include at least one question that relates to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

You may want to explore the applicant's attitude to power, authority and discipline, and ask for a response to a problem faced in football at the Member Association or one of its affiliated clubs or organisations. This will assess their commitment to promoting good practice and their ability to communicate with children and other vulnerable persons.

See sample questions below.

#### Self-declaration

Applicants should complete and sign a declaration of good character, including a section confirming they are safe to work with children or vulnerable adults and giving permission for checks to be made.

"I confirm that I have never been involved, charged or implicated in any manner of whatsoever nature involving inappropriate behaviour in regard to any minor or adult."

## Reference checks

Two professional references should be provided. Depending on the position applied for, references may include a previous employer. References should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee using an email address, postal address or phone number. Open references (i.e. a written reference provided by the candidate) are not sufficient.

## Proof of identification

Candidates' identities must be verified, e.g. by checking their passport or national ID card, as predatory offenders may provide false information, and even a false identity, to secure a position.

### Qualification and registration checks

Any qualifications or professional registrations claimed in the application should be verified by asking to see original certificates.

## Police checks

The decision to request a police check needs to be made with regard to whether the post requires access to children, as well as the validity, reliability and availability of such checks.

Where a police check is required, it should be sought from the country where the person is living and, if the person has worked overseas in the last 10 years, from those countries too. Some countries have a database of offenders/people who are unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable persons. If this exists, it should be checked. Having a conviction does not necessarily mean that the person cannot be appointed – it depends on the offence, although any conviction for mistreatment/abuse of a child should generally be sufficient reason not to appoint them.

Here are some examples of how police checks can be sought in African Countries:

### Egypt

An Egypt Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) or "Criminal Status Record" is a document issued by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, certifying that the applicant has never partaken in any criminal activity that led to the involvement of the Egyptian National Police Force. The PCC details whether or not the applicant has a criminal record in Egypt.

### Ghana

A police certificate from Ghana can be obtained by visiting the nearest police station or the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) or consulting a PCC service provider. An application form must be completed and submitted along with a valid ID and prescribed fee.

### Kenya

Kenyan Citizens can apply for a Police Clearance Certificate through the eCitizen portal. This involves creating an eCitizen account, completing an application, selecting a site to visit to take fingerprints, making a payment and downloading paperwork. You then have to visit a site for fingerprinting together with your paperwork and your national ID document. Once the certificate is ready, you will receive an SMS notification to download it from your ecitizen account.

### Angola

Apply in person or by mail at the Ministry of Justice or authorise a representative (Angolan citizens) to apply on your behalf. You need to complete application forms, which can be obtained from the respective office, and provide a valid identity document (identity card or driving license), valid passport and citizen proof/nationality card.

## International

When recruiting an employee from another country the person should be asked for an International Police Clearance Certificate (IPCC) from their country of origin and from any other countries they have worked in for the last 10 years.

## Post appointment

### Code of conduct

All staff at the Member Association or its affiliated clubs or organisations should sign the code(s) of conduct for adults working with children and other vulnerable persons. This should be explained to them so that they fully understand expected behaviours.

### Induction

As soon as possible after starting work at the Member Association or its affiliated club or organisation, staff should be briefed on the organisation's safeguarding policy. The name and contact details of the designated safeguarding lead and officers should also be provided to staff.

### Probation period

A probation period should be used to actively assess suitability for the position. Terms and conditions will depend on the employment laws of the country, but the probation period should ideally last at least three months.



## Sample interview questions

At least one question on safeguarding children and other vulnerable persons should be asked in interviews.

Questions should not be designed to test their knowledge of the Member Association's safeguarding policy and code of conduct as they may not yet be familiar with these. What is more important is to assess their attitude towards keeping children and other vulnerable persons safe.

“Have you worked for an organisation that had a safeguarding policy and/or code of conduct before? If yes, what difference did it make to the way you viewed yourself and your work and that of teams you were in?”

“Can you give me some examples of unsafe or unacceptable behaviours with children or vulnerable persons during football activities?”

“Have you worked/volunteered in a similar position before where you had contact with children or vulnerable adults? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?”

“If you were concerned about the actions or behaviour of another adult towards player at the association or club, how would you respond?”

“What have you done when a colleague or friend has broken a rule, procedure or code of conduct?”

“If you saw a member of the coaching team shouting at a child, what would you do?”

” What qualities have you observed in others that you have admired, particularly regarding their work with talented children or vulnerable adults?”

“What do you think makes a good role model in football for youth players?”

Imagine you hear that a group of youth players have been taking photographs of another young player in the changing room while they were undressing and posting them on the internet. How would you react? What would you do?”

## Sample questions to ask during reference checks

It may be difficult to ask straightforward questions and get straightforward answers from a referee, as in many countries it is illegal to discuss disciplinary matters with people external to an organisation and to provide details that reflect negatively on an employee.

Attention should therefore be paid to the way questions are answered (i.e. hesitation, reluctance to answer). It is important to explain that the role may bring the applicant into contact with children under 18 years.

“Do you know of any reason why we should be concerned about this applicant's conduct with children or vulnerable adults?”

“How would you describe the applicant's character?”

“In the time you have known the applicant, is there anything that has led you to believe that they are unsuitable to be in contact with children or vulnerable adults?”

“Would you be happy to have the applicant working with your organisation again/ with children or vulnerable persons?”

# Criminal Record Self Declaration Form



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

All applicants for a position with [Member Association, Club, Academy], working directly with children or vulnerable adults in football, including freelancers or volunteers, must complete this form in full.

Please refer to these guidance notes below before completing the following sections.

## 1. Why do you need to declare your criminal convictions and other related information.

[Member Association, Club, Academy], is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from harassment, abuse, and exploitation and expects all staff, freelancers, volunteers and others to share this commitment.

We ask you to complete this form as comprehensively and honestly as possible. All information disclosed is protected under [national data protection legislation]. At your interview, or in a separate discussion post-interview, we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the post you have applied for and the relevance and circumstances of your offence(s).

## 2. What will happen if you are offered the Position or Role

If you are offered the position or role, we will ask for evidence of your identity and your qualifications. We will also carry out a criminal record check (where applicable) and reference checks with current and previous employers.

## 3. False information

Please note that providing false information could result in your application being rejected or your dismissal from your employment or role if you are appointed.

## 4. Retention of information

The information that you provide in the declaration form will be processed in accordance with national data protection legislation. It will only be used for the purpose of determining your application for this employment or position and working directly with children and vulnerable adults.

## 5. Definitions

**Abuse** can take various forms and includes all forms of physical, emotional/ psychological and sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, violence and exploitation, whether it is inflicted in person or online. Moreover, these forms often overlap.

**Harassment** is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person.

**Exploitation** is the action or fact of taking unfair advantage of someone for your own personal advantage.



2. Have you ever committed an offence involving children or vulnerable adults, been subject to a sport disciplinary action involving your interaction with children or vulnerable adults, or been disqualified from work with children or vulnerable adults, convicted of an offence involving abuse, harassment, exploitation, or subject to any other sport sanctions in this respect? Attach additional pages if necessary.

Please tick (✓) as appropriate: No  (Proceed to question 2.) Yes  (Please provide details.)

Date and place:

Description:

3. Please sign the following declaration and return this form to the [Member Association, Club, Academy] recruitment manager with your application for employment. Failure to complete this declaration will result in your application being withdrawn.

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete. I understand that any false information could result in my application being rejected or, if appointed, in my dismissal from employment and/or position. I understand that any offer of employment and/or position made to me may be subject to a further review and I hereby give my consent for the [Member Association, Club, Academy] to carry out any additional criminal record checks.

I declare that I will notify the [Member Association, Club, Academy] recruitment manager immediately if I am prosecuted or convicted for a criminal offence involving abuse or harassment.

**I declare that I am not currently on any barring list or sex offenders list in any country. I declare that I will notify the [Member Association, Club, Academy] recruitment manager immediately if I do become barred or listed in future. I understand that the [Member Association, Club, Academy] might contact a third-party background service and ask my former employers to verify this information.**

Signature:

Date:

Full Name in Print:

# Safe away from home

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**Organised football involves competition which often requires teams to travel away from home either to matches, tournaments or even preparation camps. When children, young people and other vulnerable persons are away from home they are more vulnerable to harassment, abuse and exploitation.**

Travelling to away matches and tournaments or taking part in a training camp should be both safe and fun for children, young people and even adults. With careful planning and preparation risks of harm can be reduced allaying the fears of those travelling as well as those of their parents/carers and family members.

The following considerations will help to implement proper safeguarding measures when travelling to matches, tournaments and training camps.

## Supervision levels

Decide on the necessary level of supervision, taking into account the gender, age and number of children, young people or adults travelling.

Minimum adult-to-child ratios may be established by law. Typically, the younger the children, or the more challenging the activity or environment, the greater the number of adults that are needed to safely supervise them. Where children have special needs, additional supervision and support may be required.

Check if legislation or government guidelines exist in your country setting out supervision ratios. If there is no specific guidance on this in your country, the following adult-to-child ratios are recommended to help keep children safe:

- when working with children between six and eight years of age, a ratio of one adult to 16 children should be adhered to.
- when working with children between nine and twelve years of age, a ratio of one adult to 20 children should be adhered to.

If older learners are helping to supervise younger children, only those aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios. All activities should always be planned to involve at least two adults. This is recommended safeguarding best practise.

The following factors should also be taken into consideration in deciding how many adults are required to safely supervise children:

- the number of children involved in the football activity.
- the age, maturity, and football experience of the children.
- whether any of the members of staff, volunteers or children have a learning or physical disability or special requirements.
- whether any of the children have challenging behaviour.
- the hazards associated with the football activity.
- the hazards associated with the environment.
- the level of qualification and experience of the members of staff and volunteers.
- the full programme of football activities.

As a general rule, the following supervision ratios apply:

- Children aged 4–8 years old – one adult for every six children
- Children aged 9–12 years old – one adult for every eight children
- Children aged 13–18 years old – one adult for every ten children

It is always a good idea to have a least two adults supervising any overnight trip or trip that involves a lengthy journey. If something does happen, for example a child needs to be taken to hospital, the other adult can continue to supervise the rest of the children.

If male and female supervisors are available, it is important to identify the different roles and responsibilities of each, e.g. regarding supervision in changing rooms and entering bedrooms.



## Risk assessment

Additional care and support is required when children are taken from their usual environment to away matches and other activities, such as training camps, especially if the trip involves an overnight stay.

A risk assessment is recommended for any activity that involves taking children to a different venue/location.

A sample risk assessment form [here](#).

The purpose of the risk assessment is not to find reasons to cancel a trip! It is to identify any potential risks in advance, so that action can be taken to remove them or reduce their impact. For example, the location of a hotel may not be safe for children, and if this is known in advance it might be possible to change to a different hotel. This helps ensure that the trip or activity is safe and fun.

It is important to remember that if a trip or activity cannot take place safely, it should be cancelled.

## Trips and overnight stays

In these guidelines, the term 'accompanying adult' is used to refer to adults accompanying children on trips. These adults could be club/organisation staff members, such as safeguarding officer of the team, but may also include parents and other volunteers.

An accompanying adult does not mean someone who is travelling in a personal capacity as a supporter; it refers to someone who has agreed to take on the responsibility to ensure that the trip is safe and enjoyable.

The guiding principle in all situations is that the best interests of the child(ren) are of the utmost importance. The way in which accompanying adults take care of children and teenagers should be appropriate to their age and maturity.

Accompanying adults play an important role in taking the primary responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in their care at all times. This starts from the time when the child leaves their parent/carer and only ends when they are safely handed over to their parent/carer, or as agreed.

It must be clearly communicated to parents at what point the responsibility for caring for their children ends in order to avoid any confusion. For example, it may be agreed that parents will collect their children from the club upon returning from a trip, or that children will be dropped off at the club grounds and then make their own way home.

The best arrangement is where parents accompany their own children on trips. This helps the parents feel and be part of the club/organisation. It also eases the burden of responsibility on clubs/organisations and reduces the risk of confusion regarding arrangements.

Ideally, and especially before an overnight trip, there should be a short meeting with parents and children to confirm the various arrangements for the trip or this information should be provided in writing. Parents should be given emergency contact numbers for those supervising the trip. It can also be useful to ask children to sign a behaviour code or help to develop one, so that they know what is expected of them on the trip. Parents must always give consent for their children to take part.

Basic medical and emergency contact information should also be obtained prior to the trip.

Sample consent and medical forms can be found [here](#).

Depending on the location, it may be against the law for anyone other than a doctor or health professional to administer medications. Clubs/organisations need to determine what rules apply to their location.

## Role of accompanying adults

In addition to the expected behaviour set out in the code of conduct, accompanying adults are responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of children. This will mean carrying out a risk assessment in advance, including for transport and accommodation.
- Communicating with the parents before and during the trip, as necessary.
- Arranging or confirming all necessary details such as accommodation, destination, programme, competition details, kit and equipment list and transport, including making sure that vehicles are roadworthy and safe. Depending on the location, this could include ensuring that transport only takes place during certain (daylight) hours.
- Checking that consent forms have been signed by parents and children.
- Being aware of any special needs, including any medical requirements, impairments, access needs or medication. (This will depend on the country, as in some countries there are strict rules about administering medication or giving medical treatment to children, and who can do this. In all cases, accompanying adults need to be clear about any special needs and also have emergency contact numbers for parents.)
- Checking that children have any necessary travel or identity documents or permits.
- Ensuring that all children have emergency phone numbers on them at all times during the trip.
- Being physically near the children and aware of their whereabouts at all times. Children must not be left unsupervised, even for short periods of time. This means that accompanying adults should not leave children alone in hotels in the evening.
- Not allowing children to leave the group with adults, including family members, unless this has been agreed in advance, and permission has been given by the child's parents.
- Being aware of children's physical and emotional needs and helping meet those needs as appropriate or making every effort to meet those needs.
- Making sure that the children and teenagers can communicate with other groups of children, for example by helping translate if children only speak local dialects or have communication difficulties.
- Keeping copies of parents' emergency contact numbers with them at all times and informing parents immediately of any problems.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the safety, protection and well-being of children to the child safeguarding focal point or management, including if children go missing.
- Administering the correct medication and dosage to children, if legal in the country in question and if agreed in advance by parents/carers.
- Not allowing children to stay alone overnight in any adult's room (except for family members) or sleep in the same bed as any adult.

## Emergency situations and medical emergencies

In the event of an emergency, a child's parents must be contacted immediately, or as soon as possible.

In the event of a medical emergency, immediate medical help must be sought.

# Parental Consent Form



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Parents or guardians of players under the age of 18 are required to sign this form.

I/We* hereby declare my/our consent that my/our daughter/son whose Birth Certificate (BC) is attached may travel to and from		
Member Association Name		
School Name		
Parent/Guardian's Name		
Event/tournament name		
Travelling	From	To
Period	From	To
Parental or guardian consent statement		
<p>Agree to my child's participation in this activity.</p> <p>I/we have answered the questions regarding medical information below, and consent that, in the event of any illness or accident, any necessary treatment can be administered to my child, which may include the use of painkillers.</p> <p>I/we understand that, while the adult officials will take every precaution to ensure that accidents do not happen, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage, or injury caused to my child.</p> <p>I/we have read the codes of conduct and acknowledge the need for my child to behave responsibly.</p>		
Travel arrangements		
I/we agree to the transport arrangements that have been made for my child.		
Child's details* (please PRINT clearly)		
First Name:	Last Name:	
Age:	Date of Birth:	
Home Address:		
Mother's details* (please PRINT clearly)		
First Name:	Last Name:	
Contact No:	Date of Birth:	
Passport or National ID number:		
Nationality:		
Home Address:		

<b>Father's details* (please PRINT clearly)</b>		
First Name:	Last Name:	
Contact No:	Date of Birth:	
Passport or National ID number:		
Nationality:		
Home Address:		
<b>Legal Guardian details* (please PRINT clearly)</b>		
First Name:	Last Name:	
Contact No:	Date of Birth:	
Passport or National ID number:		
Nationality:		
Home Address:		
<b>Survey consent</b>		
<p>The [Member Association, Club, Academy] will be conducting a survey during (Competition Name).</p> <p>The primary objectives of the survey are to assess nutrition knowledge, injury surveillance and safeguarding awareness.</p> <p>The responses or any information to this survey will be anonymous and contains no identifiers.</p> <p>I hereby agree that my child take part in this voluntarily survey during the (Competition Name)</p> <p>I hereby disagree that my child take part in this voluntarily survey during the (Competition Name)</p>		
<b>Child's Medical Information</b>		
Does your child have		
Any allergies?	Yes/No	If yes, please specify:
Medication	Yes/No	If yes, please specify:
Disability requiring specific access needs?	Yes/No	If yes, please specify:
Food Preference:		Any Other information
Halal	Yes/No	
Vegetarian	Yes/No	
Doctor's Name:		Any Other information
Doctor's Tel. no.:		

<b>Use of images and videos and communication on social media</b>	
I give permission for photographs or videos of my child to be used on the [Member Association, Club, Academy]'s website, and for printed publications.	
I give permission for photographs or videos of my child to be used on the [Member Association, Club, Academy]'s social media pages.	
<b>I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, my child does not suffer from any medical condition other than those detailed above and that I will inform the association if this changes.</b>	
When my child is away, I know the contact person is:	
<b>Parent Signature</b>	<b>Safeguarding Officer Name:</b>
Date:	Date:

\*Passport copies or National IDs of the parents should be attached.

\*This document remains valid only for the period stipulated.



# Privacy and safe use of changing facilities

Children are particularly vulnerable in changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because they are less supervised than at many other times. The risk of child-to-child problems, such as bullying, is also present when coaches or staff members are not supervising.

Children are particularly vulnerable in changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because they are less supervised than at many other times. The risk of child-to-child problems, such as bullying, is also present when coaches or staff members are not supervising.

Where facilities are used by both adults and children at the same time, there must be access to separate changing, showering and toilet areas.

- Under no circumstances should adults be undressed in front of children in changing rooms. Adult staff and volunteers, especially those of the opposite sex, should not be in the changing room when children are undressed.
- Adult staff and volunteers must not change or shower at the same time as children using the same facilities.
- For mixed- gender activities, separate facilities must be available for boys and girls.
- If a child feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, then no pressure should be placed on him/ her to do so. Instead, he/ she should be encouraged to do so at home.
- If disabled children need to use facilities, make sure they are accessible, and the disabled child and his/her carer are involved in deciding if and how they should be assisted. Make sure the child can consent to the assistance that is offered.
- The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment with video recording capabilities by staff and volunteers and children themselves should be prohibited in general and should not be used under any circumstance in changing rooms.
- Where no changing facilities are available, children and their parents or guardians should be made aware of this prior to practice and advised to make alternative arrangements and take appropriate additional clothing.
- Parents should be discouraged from entering changing rooms unless it is necessary. In such circumstances, only a parent of the same sex as the children may enter the changing room, and he/she should let the coach know about this in advance. At least one member of staff of the same sex as the children involved should be present with the parent when other children are in the changing room.

This guidance has been produced in response to enquiries from individuals and organisations seeking advice about the safe use of changing facilities and/or toilets. These include queries about:

- adults who feel uncomfortable about sharing changing rooms with young children
- activity organisers unclear about the level of supervision they should provide
- unaccompanied children using facilities
- use of gendered changing rooms by transgender, gender-questioning or non-binary children
- toilets or changing rooms at a venue being used by young people for an event, but which can still be accessed by members of the public

Note: The term 'children' describes any person under the age of 18.

Clubs and other organisations, facilities and those with responsibility for children have a general duty of care towards them. However, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities.

This paper is therefore intended as practice guidance to support individuals and organisations to consider issues relevant to their particular context, and to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide a safe environment.

This could include leisure centres, schools, private gyms or public parks and open spaces used for organised activities and events.

Also, the context may relate to individual young people or groups, clubs, or organisations hiring facilities for training, competitions, events or festivals – in which case the planning process must include clarity about the third-party hire arrangements and responsibilities. Existing national governing body, local authority or facility policies.

Many national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), local authorities and private sports facilities may already have guidance and policies in place, which should be followed in the first instance.

This briefing may be useful in the absence of any other guidance, and to address issues or circumstances not covered in such a policy.

## Type of facility

A major consideration in establishing a safe use policy for changing facilities is whether the facilities will be used exclusively by junior teams or players. Typically, this would be the case where a club owns, hires or manages its own facility, or has negotiated sole use of a more public facility at a particular time. The advantage of this type of arrangement is that it reduces the safeguarding risk of children mixing with adults when changing or showering.

However, many changing facilities are also used by other adults (sports teams, individual players, or members of the public).

All facilities should have a safeguarding policy and procedures for reporting any concerns, and staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with these. In the case of a public park, for example, the activity organiser should find out who manages the facility and what their relevant policies are.

## Supervision in the changing facility

If mixed use of the changing facility by adults and children is unavoidable, at least 2 members of staff (of the same gender as the children) should supervise the group.

It is important that staff and volunteers seek to balance the need for adult supervision with the rights of children to privacy in this context.

Supervision in the changing facility may also be necessary when:

- children are too young to be left alone or change themselves
- leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of 8 years must be accompanied (even if children younger are capable of changing themselves)
- the group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing (note that this should be undertaken by prior agreement with their parent or professional carer)
- children could injure themselves or access a potential risk such as a swimming pool that is unattended
- there are concerns about bullying, fighting or other harmful behaviours taking place that need to be managed
- there are concerns about the prospect of photographs being taken in changing rooms

## Who should supervise?

If you have decided that children need supervision, staff and volunteers should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so.

The following should be considered when deciding supervision requirements:

- **Numbers** – organisers are recommended to have more than one adult supervising, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away
- **Gender** – it's considered good practice to ensure that children are supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender while
- **Changing timings** – by agreeing a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children,
- The risks associated to any extended contact between the adults and children are minimised carry out safe recruitment practices, including:
  - criminal records checks for individuals whose roles make them eligible self-declaration
  - completion of an appropriate self-declaration form as part of safe recruitment references – these should include a reference from a recent previous employer where they have worked with children role description – provide clear details about the boundaries of their role code of conduct – a document that individuals sign up to that clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers For further information, take a look at our topic page on safer recruitment.

## Parents as supervisors

Parents are often involved in supervising children during sports activities and outings and can provide valuable support to organisers and coaches. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or, by agreement, their relatives' or friends' children), this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of the activity organisers. However, when parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organiser, which includes having responsibility for other people's children, the same steps should be taken as for staff and volunteers to make sure they are suitable for the role.

## Unsupervised children in sport or leisure facilities

There are potential risks associated with inadequate adult supervision levels of young children in changing and shower areas.

### Parents' (or carers') responsibilities

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while they are attending a sport or leisure facility. It is parents' responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to allow their unaccompanied child to visit a sport or leisure facility. This judgement should be based on:

their child's general developmental maturity  
 their child's awareness of the potential risks  
 the level of supervision and care provided within the facility  
 Parents may wrongly assume that staff will take responsibility for their children within a sport or leisure facility, or within specific areas such as changing rooms. Parents should therefore be informed about the facility's expectations about supervision of their children, including the use of changing rooms and shower areas. Parents should clarify these points before they let their children go to a facility alone.

### Facility operators' responsibilities

When children are given access to facilities, operators assume a duty of care for them. The level of responsibility will vary, depending on if the child is:

- alone and unsupervised with parents attending an activity
- attending an activity staffed by the facility
- attending a school group, club or other activity managed by a third party
- attending a public session

Operators have a responsibility to put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements, which include promoting and implementing a policy for admitting unaccompanied children. This information should be provided to parents and other users, informing them about the policy regarding unaccompanied children and any rules about the supervision of young children within the facility.

Many facilities currently use the age of 8 as a guide (based on sector guidance for an unaccompanied child to attend a swimming pool).

In practice, while facilities need to be able to establish a minimum age for admission that is practical to operate, identifying a child's age can be difficult. While the facility may set the lower age limit, it is for parents to judge if their child needs to be accompanied. Facilities should have a process for responding to children below this minimum age of 8 who may arrive, or be left, at the facility alone. Refusing entry or asking an unaccompanied child to leave the centre would raise obvious safeguarding concerns.

## Third-party hirers

Organisations hiring facilities should ensure they are aware of:

- key safeguarding contacts at the facility, should an issue arise
- changing room layouts (for example, single gender, cubicles or village style)
- whether members of the public have access to the changing facilities and toilets at the same time as the children
- other activities taking place that could impact on the use of changing facilities and toilets
- the particular changing needs of any of the children and young people under their supervision; this may include gender, medical conditions, or disabilities, which could mean special equipment (such as hoists or changing mats) being required

If members of the public will also be using the toilets and changing facilities, make sure that there is staff presence at these points:

- to monitor and ensure that contact between young people and members of the public is appropriate
- to motivate and encourage young people to return to their groups in a timely manner
- to help young people if they are lost

Processes must be in place for missing children or found children who do not belong to the activity or event but who have been found or passed on to facility managers or event organisers.

### Mixed-gender teams

Many sports operate mixed-gender teams at several age group levels, and arrangements to enable the groups to change separately should always be made.

Solutions may include:

- each gender using a different room or facility each gender having a distinct time slot
- everybody changing at home before they leave
- each gender having an allocated area of a larger shared facility

## Safe use of images and information.

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Parents, children and football clubs generally look forward to celebrating and or publicising footballing successes by photographing children at matches and events. Documenting a child's involvement and progress through the season both by film and photos is widely accepted as contributing to the enjoyment of the game. It's also recognised some coaches find it helpful to use photographs or film as a coaching tool to support a player's development.

Member Associations and clubs should recognise the use of photos and film on websites, social media, posters, within the press or other publications, can pose direct and indirect risks to children or vulnerable adults if they are not managed appropriately. However, the taking of appropriate photographs and or filming of children should be supported by Member Associations and clubs. Everyone wishing to film or take photos in football has a responsibility to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the following guidance.

### Inappropriate Taking and or Use of Photographs or Filming of Children or Vulnerable Adults

Someone may set out to take inappropriate photos or film content in ways that are potentially illegal and harmful, such as:

- Children or Vulnerable adults changing.
- Photos taken in the toilets.
- Using a camera at ground level to photograph up girls' skirts.
- Photos and film footage that appear ambiguous can be used inappropriately and out of context by others.
- Photos and film footage that can easily be copied and edited, perhaps to create child-abuse images or film footage.
- Photos and film footage shared privately online that can be re-shared, possibly entering the public domain on websites or social media.



## The Identification of, Contact With, or Grooming of a Child

When a child's photo or film of that child is accompanied by significant personal information e.g. full name, address, school, team - it makes them more easily identifiable to third parties. This can lead, and has led, to children being located, contacted and/or 'groomed'. Even if personal details are kept confidential, details identifying the school or club, or their favourite sportsperson or team, can potentially be used to groom the child.

There's an increased risk of identification of, and contact with a child:

- By someone in circumstances where there are legal restrictions – such as if the child is in local-authority care or placed with an adoptive family.
- Where restrictions on contact with one parent following a parental separation exist e.g. in domestic violence cases.
- In situations where a child may be a witness in criminal proceedings.

## Official or Professional Photographers or Film Makers and the Local Media

If you a Member Association or club is commissioning professional photographers, or film makers, or is inviting the media to cover a football activity, ensure you and they are clear about each other's expectations.

The key is to plan ahead and communicate early on.

Please follow the steps below:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Inform them of your club's commitment to safeguarding children.
- Establish who will hold the film and or photographs and for how long they'll be retained and/or used and what they intend to do with them, e.g. place on a website for sale, distribute thumb nails to the club to co-ordinate sales.
- Issue the professional photographer/film crew with identification, which must be worn at all times.
- Clarify areas where all photography and filming is prohibited e.g. toilets, changing areas, first-aid areas etc.
- Inform the photographer or film crew about how to identify – and avoid the taking of photographs and or filming – children without the required parental consent.
- Don't allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo or filming sessions at events.
- Don't allow photo or filming sessions away from the event – for instance, at a young person's home.
- Inform participants and parents or carers prior to the event that a professional photographer or film crew will be in attendance.

### What to do when consent is not given

Member Associations, clubs and event organisers have a responsibility to put in place arrangements to ensure that any official or professional photographers or filmers can identify (or be informed about) which children should not be subject to close-up photography or filming.

This could involve providing some type of recognisable badge, sticker or wristband, and/or a system for photographers and film makers to check with the football activity organiser and/or team manager to ensure it is clear which groups or individuals should not feature in photographs or on film.

## Common Sense Considerations to Ensure Everyone's Safety

It's important to remember the majority of photographs and film taken are appropriate and taken in good faith. If we take the following measures, we can help to ensure the safety of children in football.

### DO:

1. Share CAF's guidance on taking photos and filming with everyone who becomes a club member (officials, parents/carers).
2. Ensure the club has written parental consent to use a player's photo and/or film footage in the public domain e.g. on the club website, Facebook page or in a newspaper article. This is essential in relation to point 3 below
3. Ensure that any child in your club who is under care proceedings where there are legal restrictions, is protected by ensuring their image is not placed in the public domain.
4. Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed (a minimum of shirt and shorts).
5. Aim to take pictures which represent the broad range of youngsters participating safely in football e.g. boys and girls, disabled people, different ethnic communities.
6. Advise parents/carers and spectators that there can be negative consequences to sharing photos or film footage linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media and that care should be taken about 'tagging'.
7. Establish procedures to respond to and manage any concerns, including clear reporting structures and a system to contact the Police when necessary.

### DON'T:

1. **Publish photographs with the full name(s) of the individual(s) featured unless you have written consent to do so, and you have informed the parents/ carers as to how the photo will be used.**
2. **Use player profiles with pictures and detailed personal information online.**
3. **Use an image for something other than that which it was initially agreed, e.g. published in local press when initially produced for a clubhouse commemorative picture.**
4. **Allow photos or film footage to be recorded in changing rooms, showers or toilets – this includes the use of mobile phones that record images.**
5. **Include any advertising relating to alcohol or gambling in photographs or film footage of children.**



## REMEMBER

- It's not an offence to take appropriate photographs or film footage in a public place even if asked not to do so.
- No-one has the right to decide who can and cannot take photos or film on public land.
- If you have serious concerns about a possible child protection issue relating to the taking of photos or film footage, then call the Police. This action should only be taken where you believe that someone may be acting unlawfully or putting a child at risk.
- The land or facility owner can decide whether or not photography and or filming at football activities will be permitted when carried out on private land. However, you need to make this known before allowing individuals access to the private property. If they do not comply then you may request, they leave.
- Try not to use photos or film footage that include individuals wearing jewellery (as wearing jewellery whilst playing is contrary to the Laws of the Game as well as being a health and safety issue).
- That swimming as a social activity for football clubs presents a higher risk for potential misuse than football, so photos or film footage should: – Focus on the activity rather than a particular child; – Avoid showing the full face and body of a child – instead show children in the water, or from the waist or shoulders up; – Avoid photos and camera angles that may be more prone to misinterpretation or misuse than others. If you are concerned about the inappropriate use of photos or film footage, please report this to your Association or Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer

## Filming as a Coaching Aid

The CAF advises that coaches using filming as a legitimate coaching aid should make parents/carers and players aware that this will be part of the coaching programme. Care should be taken when storing the film clips – see further guidance below. Parental consent must of course have been given.

## General Photography and Filming of Events

At many events, organisers will wish to take wide-angle, more general photos and or film footage of the event, the site, opening and closing ceremonies, and so on. It's usually not reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every participating child in order to take such photos or film footage, or to preclude such photography or filming on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents. In these circumstances, organisers should make clear to all participants and parents that these kinds of photos or film footage will be taken, and for what purposes.

## Secure Storage

Photographs or film recordings of children must be kept securely:

- Hard copies of photographs should be kept in a locked drawer.
- Digital photos should be in a protected folder with restricted access.
- Digital photos and film footage should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones.

Club and Leagues:

- If you're storing and using photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes – such as identity cards – ensure you comply with any legal requirements for handling personal information.

Member Associations should be aware of local legislation around data protection and privacy.

## Misuse and Manipulation of Photographs and Film

An individual with bad intent may deliberately target a vulnerable child or adult to take photos or film footage which may be uploaded to social media or shared with other like-minded individuals or groups motivated by sexual interest.

Occasionally, these photos or film footage are also used to threaten and force the child into unwanted, illegal sexual activity. Taking and sharing photos or film footage like this may form part of wider bullying of the targeted young person by other young people, motivated more by a wish to cause humiliation and embarrassment.

Even in the context of a shared joke among friends, without abusive intent, a young person taking and sharing inappropriate photos or film footage may be committing a serious offence and risk criminal prosecution.

### Responding to Concerns

Whether it's general club activities or when attending an event all club officials, volunteers, children and parents/carers should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography or filming (in terms of the way, by whom, or where photography or filming is being undertaken), these should be reported. Reports can be made to the:

- Event organiser or another official.
- Event Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Club Welfare Officer.
- The MA Safeguarding Team

There must be a safeguarding procedure in place to ensure that reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other safeguarding issue. Concerns about professional photographers or film makers should also be reported to their employers.

## Guidance to Journalists

The International Federation of Journalists recommends that journalists and media organisations maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct when reporting on children's affairs.

They recommends that journalists and media organisations:

- Set high standards of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children.
- Avoid programming and publication of images which is damaging to children.
- Avoid promoting stereotypes and making sensational presentations involving children.
- Consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and minimise harm to them.
- Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest.
- Where possible, give children the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement.
- Ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to do this without putting child informants at risk.
- Avoid the use of sexualised images of children.
- Use fair, open and straightforward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of the children, and a responsible adult, guardian or carer.
- Verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children.
- Not make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.

# Photography and filming consent form



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

In accordance with our safeguarding policy, we will not permit photographs, video or other images of young people to be taken without consent. If the child is under 16, consent must be obtained from a parent / carer. If the child is over 16, it's good practice to inform parents that photographs and/or videos of their child may be used if the child has given consent.

[Name or club or organisation] will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately, please inform us immediately.

Name of child	Age
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Declaration of consent child aged 16 or over	
Please tick each box (or strike out what you do not consent to), then sign this form.	
I give permission for my photograph to be used within the club/academy for display purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my photograph to be used within other printed publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my photograph to be used on the club/academy's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my photograph to be used on the club/academy's social media pages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of me to be used on the club/academy's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of me to be used on the club/academy's social media pages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of me to be used for training or analysis purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature	
Today's date	

Declaration of consent parent / carer of child under 16	
Please tick each box (or strike out what you do not consent to), then sign this form.	
I give permission for my child's photograph to be used within the club/academy for display purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my child's photograph to be used within other printed publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my child's photograph to be used on the club/academy's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my child's photograph to be used on the club/academy's social media pages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of my child to be used on the club/academy's website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of my child to be used on the club/academy's social media pages.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for video of my child to be used for training or analysis purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I confirm that I have read, or been made aware of, how these images or videos will be stored within the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature	
Today's date	

# Online Safety in Football

Online environments pose significant safeguarding risks for children, young people and adults participating in football. Children becoming victims of sexual predators grooming online, young people being exposed to inappropriate content, and players and referees being abused online are just some examples of the risks online environments can pose to participants in football.

Safeguarding risks online can be grouped under **Content, Contact, and Conduct (the three C's)**:



## Content

- **Exposure to harmful, inappropriate and illegal content online.**

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- **Children:** Online platforms connected to football (e.g., social media, fan forums, gaming platforms) may expose children to inappropriate content, including violent or explicit material, especially in the comment sections or links shared by other users. Exposure may be by accident, out of curiosity or shared by an adult.
- **Adults:** While adults are less vulnerable to being exposed to inappropriate content, online environments can still foster a toxic culture, especially around controversial topics in football like refereeing decisions or team performances.

### Example:

- Viewing sexually explicit content either by accident, out of curiosity or shared by an adult.



## Contact

- **Inappropriate contact with adult.**
- **Inappropriate contact with peers.**

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- **Children:** Football is a popular sport among children, making them prime targets for online predators. Grooming can occur via social media or gaming platforms associated with football. Predators may pose as fellow fans, players, or coaches to exploit children.
- **Adults:** While adults are less likely to be groomed, predatory behaviour in professional football environments can lead to exploitation, harassment, or manipulation by unscrupulous individuals in positions of power.

### Example:

- An adult luring children or young people online.
- Children or young people receiving images or information (usually of a sexual nature) about a peer or classmate.



## Conduct

- **Young people experimenting online.**
- **Young people creating, posting and distributing sexually explicit material.**
- **Young people posting private information about self and others.**

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- **Children:** Young footballers or fans may experience cyberbullying from peers, coaches, or even strangers, especially on social media platforms. This can lead to severe emotional distress and affect their mental well-being and performance.
- **Adults:** Professional players, referees, and coaches often face online abuse from fans or other stakeholders. This can impact their mental health and professionalism.

### Example:

- Self/peer exploration (sexting)
- Engaging in cyber bullying by sharing images of “liking” negative posts about a peer.

**Other online risks faced by children and adults in football include:**

### **Data Privacy and Phishing Attacks**

- **Children:** Personal data of young football players or fans could be exposed through football apps, games, or online accounts, leading to identity theft, frauds, or cyberstalking.
- **Adults:** Professional players or staff may have their personal data (including location, contracts, and income) exposed, leading to privacy breaches, fraud, or financial exploitation.

### **Scams and Fraud**

- **Children:** Children may fall victim to frauds, such as fake agents promising trials or scholarships in football, only to ask for payments or personal details.
- **Adults:** Fraudulent agents or organizations may exploit adult footballers, coaches, or staff with fake contracts, endorsements, or investment schemes.

### **Match-fixing and Corruption**

- **Adults:** Match-fixing, often coordinated through online betting platforms, can undermine the integrity of football. Players or officials may be coerced or bribed into manipulating match outcomes, which can destroy careers and the sport's reputation.



## **Online Risks**

**Online safety risks include, but are not limited to:**

- Making themselves identifiable by posting personal details on social media such as the school they attend or their home address.
- Communicating with others online.
- Potential for inappropriate relationships between adults in positions of trust or influence and the young people they work with.
- Sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse, or unwanted contact.
- Exposure to inappropriate content, including pornography, racist or hate material or violent behaviour.
- Being encouraged to create or share inappropriate or harmful material of themselves or others, including sexting (sexual messages, images or videos).
- Encouraging harmful activities including the use of harmful substances like illegal drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or vapes.
- Cyberbullying, trolling or berating by peers and people they consider 'friends' – in sport this can include negative comments or reactions about their performance or achievement.
- Access to inaccurate and therefore potentially harmful information.
- Encouragement to take part in violent behaviour or harmful trends.
- Seeing content or engaging in behaviours that promote unhealthy attitudes towards their health and bodies, this includes pro-anorexia content or self-harm content.

## Consequences of Online Abuse

**Experiencing online harassment, abuse, or exploitation can lead to mental health concerns.**

With children and young people, the pressure to perform and project a certain image online can negatively impact their mental health. Negative feedback, bullying, or the pressure to live up to their public persona can lead to anxiety, depression, or burnout.

In adults, players, coaches, and referees often face overwhelming public scrutiny on social media, which can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

Preventing online harassment, abuse, or exploitation for all involved in football requires prevention measures such as codes of conduct, digital literacy education, and robust cybersecurity measures.

## Member Associations

**Member associations reduce the risk of online harm to both children and adults by implementing comprehensive strategies that address cyber risks and promote a safer online environment.**

Member associations reduce the risk of online harm to both children and adults by implementing comprehensive strategies that address cyber risks and promote a safer online environment.

MAs can develop digital codes of conduct which set out specific rules regarding online behaviour for players, coaches, fans, and staff, with a focus on protecting children and vulnerable adults.

MAs can ensure that online protection is part of existing child safeguarding frameworks, outlining acceptable online interactions between children, coaches, and other staff members. They can create rules that restrict private one-on-one online communication between coaches and players, especially minors, to prevent grooming or inappropriate interactions.

MAs can ensure there are clear, enforceable sanctions for online abuse, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour within football, including consequences for violating the digital codes of conduct.

MAs can educate children, young people, parents/ carers, coaches and football staff through cyber safety workshops on cyberbullying, grooming, phishing, and online abuse. Education should cover safe online behaviour, recognizing online risks, and how to report inappropriate content or interactions.

MAs can provide guides and materials to children, parents, and adults about online risks, safe browsing, privacy settings on social media, and recognizing potential threats (e.g., phishing attempts or grooming).

MAs can promote responsible social media use by educating players, coaches, and fans about how to use social media platforms responsibly, including respecting privacy, avoiding negative interactions, and recognizing cyber threats. They can provide guidance on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using websites, social media including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype.

MAs can ensure that any data collected by the association and its members, apps, or related online platforms are protected under strong data privacy policies (e.g., encryption, limited access). They can protect sensitive information such as children's personal data.

MAAs can use secure communication platforms for online interactions between children and football staff, ensuring that parents are included in communications and that conversations are monitored or encrypted to prevent misuse.

MAAs can encourage players, parents/carers, and staff to report instances of cyberbullying, grooming, online abuse, or any other harmful online behaviour. Include options for anonymous reporting to encourage individuals who may be reluctant to come forward, such as whistleblowers or victims of online abuse.

MAAs can monitor association, club, and academy social media accounts and affiliated online platforms to detect and remove inappropriate behaviour, hate speech, or grooming attempts.

MAAs can raise awareness on online dangers through awareness campaigns specifically addressing online harassment and abuse in football. Highlight the dangers of cyberbullying, grooming, and privacy violations, and emphasize that such behaviours are unacceptable. They can run initiatives aimed at reducing cyberbullying among young football players and fans, promoting respect, and emphasizing positive engagement online.

MAAs can provide social media guidelines for professional football players, emphasizing responsible use, protecting personal information, and avoiding situations that could lead to reputational damage.

MAAs can ensure their own online presence through website(s) or social media platforms adhere to the following guidelines:



- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two members of staff will have access to each account and password.
- The account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the organisations committee.
- The designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead officer on online safeguarding requirements.
- Designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved).
- Make sure children and parents /carers are aware of who manages the association's social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that has happened online.
- The association's account, page and event settings are set to 'private' so that only invited members can see their content.
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number must never be posted on social media platforms.
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as a Member Association.
- Parents/carers will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
- Parents/carers will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

# Staff, Coaches and Volunteers

**Staff, coaches and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis must not communicate directly (one to one) with a child or vulnerable adult, either electronically or online (including phone calls) without the inclusion of a representative from the club or team and/or the child or young person's parent or carer.**

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis must ensure content of communications is directly associated with delivering the sport, for example advising arrangements for a football match. Communications should be concise with personal or social content limited only to convey the message in a polite and friendly manner. Communications must never include any sexualized language; or promote unauthorized social activity or contact.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults must inform the parent/carer or the member association, club, or academy, if a child or young person communicates with them outside their role and kindly advise the child or vulnerable adult that the behaviour is inappropriate.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults must follow any additional social media guidelines or policies that the member association, club, or academy has in place.

## Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults should not:

- Befriend, follow or engage with the child or vulnerable adult on social media.
- Communicate privately with a child or vulnerable adult via phone, email or social media.
- Request or infer a child or vulnerable adult keep online communication a secret from their parents/ carers or others.
- Use electronic communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.
- Use inappropriate language or language that is profane or sexual in nature.
- Use any device's (including a mobile phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis should be aware of the association's safeguarding policy and guidance on the use of the internet and social media and behave in accordance with it. They should also seek advice of the designated safeguarding officer if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media.

Rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff, coaches, and volunteers should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website. Emails or messages should maintain the association's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (x's) or using slang or inappropriate language.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms that children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online.

Any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to the association's safeguarding reporting procedures.

At least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home. Delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms must be supported by an additional staff member, coach, or volunteer (even if they are not actively delivering) to ensure transparency.

Staff, coaches, and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene.

**When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video, or text (including texting, email, and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), Staff, coaches and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis will take the following precautions to ensure children's safety:**

- Avoid having or using children or vulnerable adult's personal mobile numbers and instead seek contact through a parent/carer.
- Seek parental or carer's permission on each occasion they need to contact children or vulnerable adults directly; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon.
- Ensure accountability by keeping copies of texts, messages or emails being sent and copying messages to another member of staff or to parents/carers.
- Respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures using a smartphone of other people if it could invade their privacy.
- Have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with parents/guardians or children.
- Use texts, emails, or messages for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation.
- If a child or vulnerable adult misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member, coach, or volunteer in conversation, take the following steps:
  - end the conversation or stop replying,
  - suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event,
  - inform the association/club/academy's designated safeguarding officer in the interest of transparency,
  - if concerned about the child or vulnerable adult, provide contact details for the association/club/academy's designated safeguarding officer or appropriate agencies, and report any concerns using the organisations reporting procedures.

## Children and Parents/Guardians

Children and their parents/guardians should be aware of association/club/academy's online safety policy and agree to its terms. Their behaviour online should be consistent with the association/club/academy's codes of conduct for children and parents/guardians.

Children should follow the association/club/academy's guidelines on the use of all digital devices, including smart phones, tablets, and consoles.

Parents/guardians should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share about our sport online, where they share it and who they are sharing it with.

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in sports activities, the use of mobile phones during activity should be discouraged. Staff, coaches, or volunteers working with children should explain how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

The MA, club or academy should make children and parents/guardians aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements. They should inform parents/guardians of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at tournaments, matches or training camps and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times. As it is not possible to contact children during activities, parents and guardians should be provided a contact number for a member of staff who will be reachable should there be an emergency.

# Response Protocols

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Responding to situations where a child, young and vulnerable person is at risk of, or has experienced, harassment, abuse, or exploitation.



# Reporting concerns

Anyone in African Football who has a concern about the wellbeing of child, or any other person, has a duty to report their concerns. This is called our “duty of care”.

## Safeguarding concerns can be reported by:



**Talking** in person to a club, academy or association designated safeguarding officer.



**Calling** a club, academy or association designated safeguarding officer on a dedicated phone number.



**Sending an email** regarding your concern to a club, academy or association designated safeguarding officer.

If a club or academy does not have a designated safeguarding officer, you can escalate your concern to the association’s designated safeguarding officer or even to CAF or FIFA.

FIFA provides a confidential, dedicated, highly secure and web-based whistleblowing system so that individuals can report any safeguarding concern. Users can attach supporting documentation and create an anonymous post-box that allows them to correspond with FIFA without submitting personal information.

FIFA takes a zero-tolerance approach to such matters, and all issues raised will be handled in line with our statutory rules, codes of conduct and internal guidelines.

**However, if you think a child or vulnerable adult in football may be at imminent risk that would need immediate urgent attention, please contact the relevant statutory protection agencies in your country.**

If you do not feel that you can report your concern to the academy’s designated safeguarding officer for whatever reason, you have the option of reporting the concern at the level of CAF or FIFA



**To report concerns to CAF –**  
email to [Caf.safeguarding@cafonline.com](mailto:Caf.safeguarding@cafonline.com)



**To report a concern to FIFA -**  
you can use the FIFA Reporting Portal -  
<https://fifa.gan-compliance.com/p/Case?locale=en-GB>

## Recording reports

When reporting a concern, you may use the reporting form shown below. If you do not use this form, designated safeguarding staff will use this form or one similar to capture the concern.

## Reporting to the police

If you feel that the child or other person you are concerned about is in immediate danger you should report the matter straight to the police. If you have already reported the matter to the police, you should let this be known to your club, academy, or association's designated safeguarding staff when you report to them so that they can follow up with the authorities. You can also indicate this on the reporting form.

## How concerns arise

You can become concerned about the welfare of a child or other person through:

- Your own observations – what you see and hear – often over time – leads to you becoming concerned about the welfare of the child or person.
- You receive a disclosure of interpersonal violence, abuse or harassment from a young player or third party.
- A third party (a whistleblower) tells you of their concern for the welfare of a young player or other person.

Regardless of how a concern arises, it is your duty of care is to report.

## Confidentiality

All concerns reported will be treated confidentially ensuring that only those people who need to know to help the child or other person are informed of the concern. There may also be a mandatory responsibility in law to report the concern to the police or other statutory authority. This is common with regard to the abuse or neglect of children. All records should be kept confidential and stored securely in line with relevant data protection legislation.

## How do we manage reported concerns

After reassurance that a child or other person is not in immediate danger, designated staff responsible for management of the concern should establish a Case Management Group. This group of no more than three persons will first triage the concern to determine if the level of the concern and whether it is a high, medium or low-level concern.

A high level of concern will most likely be referred to the police or other relevant statutory authority. The club, academy or association should take advice from the police or authority before proceeding with any investigation or disciplinary proceedings. Given the seriousness of the concern, the club, academy or association will most likely need to initiate disciplinary proceedings after having been given assurance that that these proceedings and any internal investigation will not compromise criminal process.

A medium level of concern will be a serious matter that contravenes a club, academy or association's safeguarding policy and code of conduct but is not a matter that needs to be referred to the police or a statutory authority. A club, academy or association may need to conduct an investigation into the concern and the matter may end being heard at an internal disciplinary hearing before a disciplinary panel.

A low-level concern will be a case of poor practice which can be addressed by warnings and a requirement to address the poor practice possibly through further training.

Where the Case Management Group finds that the concern does not have any safeguarding implications the matter will be dismissed or referred elsewhere.

A Case Management Group can also recommend interim suspension of a person from, where there are concerns that person accused of a misdemeanour may

- a) pose a risk to children or other persons in football,
- b) may pose a reputational risk to a club, academy or national association, or
- c) may interfere with investigations into the matter.

## Protections when reporting

A club, academy or association will act to protect an "affected person" or a "whistle-blower" when they report a safeguarding concern. We recognise that some individuals may be fearful of the consequences of making a concern, particularly where the alleged perpetrator is in a position of authority

Any person who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith must not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences because of submitting a report.

As much as it is possible, a club, academy or association should keep the identity of persons affected or whistleblowers confidential and only share such information where required to in law or to complete disciplinary action.

These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes a concern that is false, vexatious, retaliatory, or frivolous.

# Referral form



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

**If an incident or concern is immediate and there is a risk of significant harm to a child or other person that they are in need of protection, then call your local Police and/or Social Services.**

Once the matter has been referred then complete this form and submit to the designated safeguarding officer at the club, academy or association. This form should be used by to record the details of any concerns raised. A copy should be sent to the designated safeguarding officer at the club, academy or association.

All efforts must be made to keep the information confidential. The information should only be shared with those that need to know if it is in the best interest of the child or other affected person. The form should be completed for all levels of concern, even where no immediate action may be necessary.

Details of person completing the form			
Name:			
Organisation:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Name and details of the person who raised the concern (if different from above):			
Name:			
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Details of the person to whom the concern is attributed (the person alleged to have caused harm):			
Name:			
Organisation:		Position:	
Relationship to the alleged victim of harm:			
Details of the alleged victim (if more than one continue on a separate sheet)			
Name:			
Academy/Club/Program:		Date of Birth:	
Age at time of incident(s):		Gender:	
Parent/Guardian (include names and address):			
Email:		Phone:	
Any identified special needs or disability:		Date(s) of incident(s):	

**Details of the Incident of Concern**

Description of the incident(s) (please include as much detail as possible. If a child or vulnerable adult talked to you, write down the exact details of the conversation – remember not to lead them. Please include any other information including location, number of incidents, any witness details etc. - please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary)

Any actions taken:

Please indicate if you are in contact with any other bodies concerning this incident and include a contact name, address and telephone number.

**Police/Law Enforcement**

Name of Contact:

Email:

Phone:

Action they are taking/  
details of advice:

**Social Welfare**

Name of Contact:

Email:

Phone:

Action they are taking/  
details of advice:

The following forms can be used by the designated safeguarding officer(s) in managing the concerns after they are received.

 [Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.](#)

Safeguarding Case Management Record			
Name:			
Club/Academy:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Details of the alleged perpetrator (s)			
Name:			
Club/Academy:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Details of the original person who raised the safeguarding concern			
Name:			
Club/Academy:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Details of the club/academy/program designated safeguarding officer			
Name:			
Club/Academy:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Details of the person responsible for maintaining this case management record			
Name:			
Club/Academy:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	

Has the concern been referred to any external authority?			
Yes/No:		Date of referral:	
Person who made referral:		Police/Law Enforcement:	
Country:			
Investigating Officer:			
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Prosecuting Service:			
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Social Welfare:			
Country:		Case Officer:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	

**Details of the Case Management Group**

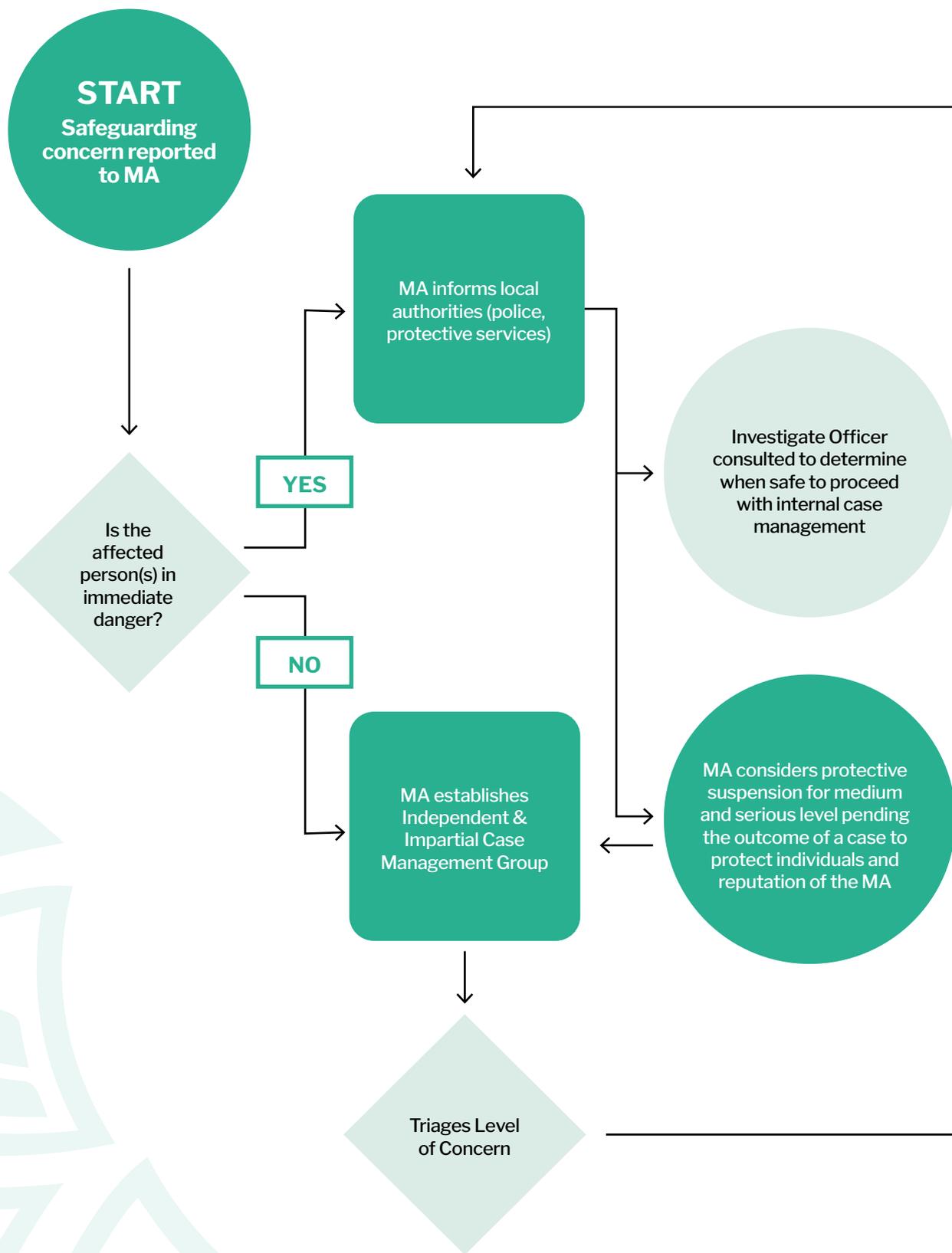
Person 1:			
Organisation:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Person 2:			
Organisation:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	
Person 3:			
Organisation:		Position:	
Address:			
Email:		Phone:	

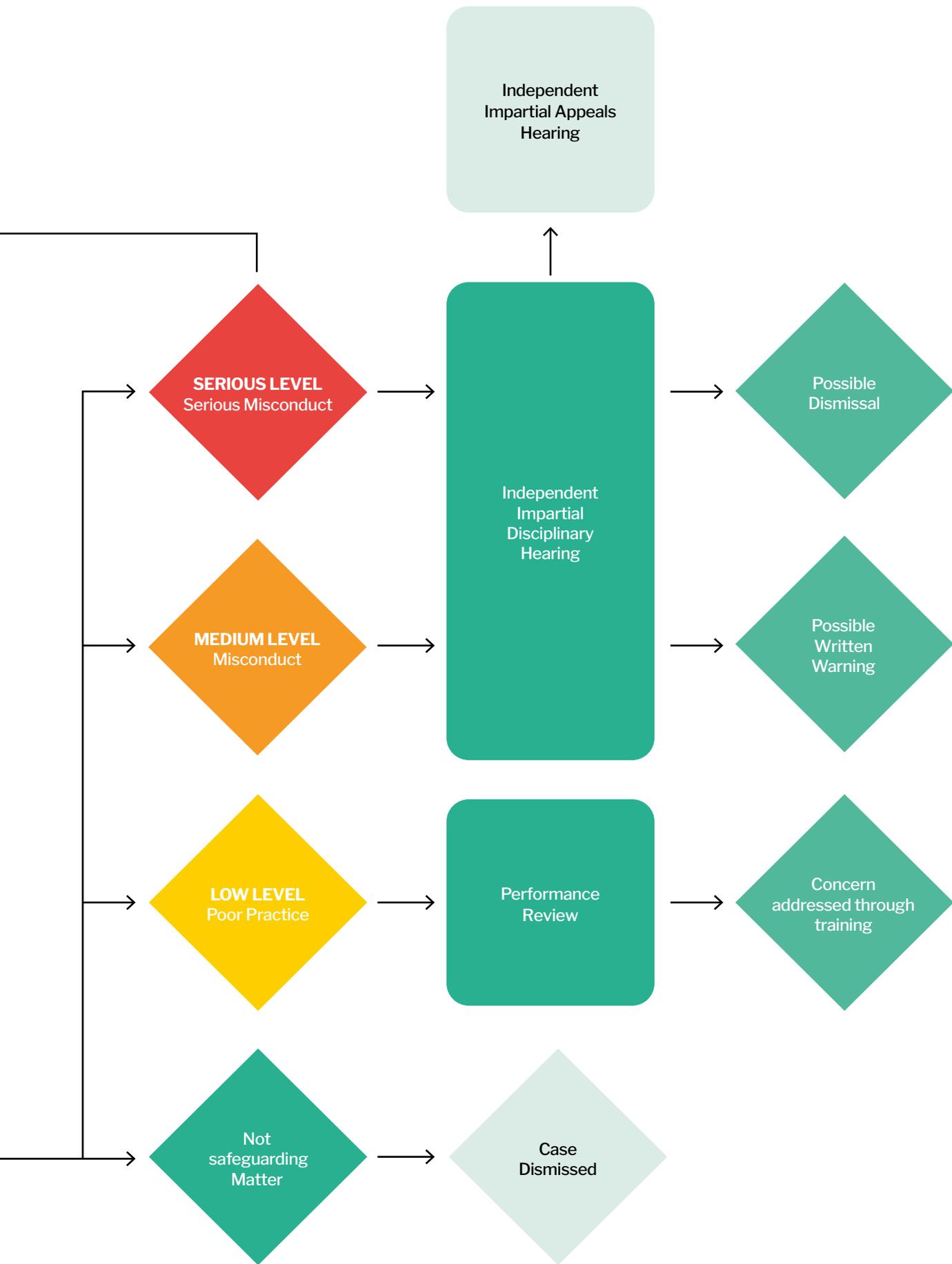


# MA Safeguarding Case Management Flowchart



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.





# Safeguarding Concerns in African Football

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Specific safeguarding concerns that are impacting African football.



# Human Trafficking and Fake agents

Human trafficking is generally understood to refer to the process through which individuals are placed or maintained in an exploitative situation for economic gain.



Trafficking can occur within a country or may involve movement across borders.



It affects all regions and most countries.



Women, men and children are trafficked for a range of purposes, including forced and exploitative labour in factories, farms and private households, sexual exploitation and forced marriage.

Human trafficking through football is a major challenge on our continent with fake agents using the promise of trials with professional clubs to fraudulently extract money from the parents and families of hopeful players. Children have been trafficked through football both in-country and across borders. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that more than 15,000 children are trafficked from West Africa into Europe every year, many with the hope of becoming professional footballers.

A survey conducted in 2023 by FIFPRO of 263 professional players from seven African countries—Botswana, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—revealed that over 70% had been contacted by someone claiming to help them move to a new club. However, 56% never received the trial they were promised, and 44% did not sign the contract they had been led to expect.



MAs should be aware of the problem of fake agents, and the trafficking of young football players, an act that is against FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players and may also breach international laws aimed at preventing human trafficking.



## How fake agents operate

Dr James Esson, a Ghanaian, and Reader in Human Geography at Loughborough University, has researched human trafficking in football in Africa.

In order to clarify some of the misconceptions surrounding this particular form of migration, he developed a step-by-step summary of the migration process.

1. A person claiming to be a football agent or talent scout identifies a player in a match or trial and offers him/her the opportunity to be signed by a foreign club. This person is a fake agent, and they do not always meet their victims, as this trafficking process can even happen online, such as through social media.
2. The fake agent asks the player for money in exchange for securing the sports opportunity, akin to a 'finder's fee'. They also ask for additional funds to cover living costs and spending money in the destination country.
3. The player's immediate and extended family often sell family possessions, remove siblings from schooling or take out a loan to meet the costs. This is typically in the region of €3-5,000.
4. The player arrives in a destination country often on a short-term tourist visa. Contrary to popular media reportage the travel conditions are not always illegal and or dangerous. Players often arrive via legal channels, and in the instances where they do not, it is often using conventional modes of transportation with false travel documents.
5. On arrival in a destination country, the fake agent often takes the player's documents and any spending money for 'safekeeping'.
6. While in a destination country the player may or may not attend a trial with a club. In some cases, the fake agent abandons the player on arrival in a destination country.
7. If the player is not abandoned on arrival, they might be taken to multiple trials until a contract is offered, and the fake agent is satisfied with the terms.
8. If the trials are successful, the player signs a contract with the club. Problematically, the contract is typically exploitative with unfavourable terms for the player.
9. If the player is unsuccessful at his trials or his contract is not renewed and another club cannot be found, the fake agent abandons the player. In most cases the intermediary will also take his 'finder's fee', the player's documentation and any remaining money with him.
10. Once the player realises the precarious nature of their situation, they are often reluctant to return to their country of origin. They may decide to remain in the destination country illegally without any means of subsistence.

## Regulations on the transfer of minors

FIFA regulations are clear that the international transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18. There are five exceptions to this rule, but these are unlikely to apply when a fake agent in Africa approaches a minor player to offer an opportunity to be signed by a foreign club.

### FIFA agents

Football agents who are legitimate and are allowed to act as intermediaries between a player and a club are FIFA licensed agents. They are registered with FIFA and the Member Association in the country in which they operate. They have to meet strict eligibility criteria, pass the FIFA Agents examination, and pay a licence fee.

An approach by a Football Agent to a minor or their legal guardian in relation to any Football Agent Services cannot be made more than six months before the minor reaches the age where they may sign their first professional contract in accordance with the law applicable in the country or territory where the minor will be employed. This approach may only be made once prior written consent has been obtained from the minor's legal guardian.

### Overseas Trials

For minor players (below 18 years of age) FIFA has defined extra regulations, which among others state that:

- Players can only go on a trial during the season they have their 16th birthday.
- Parents must have given written permission for the player to attend the trial.
- Clubs are not allowed to ask you for money to attend a trial.
- No person is allowed to ask or receive money from you for arranging a trial.
- Before you go on a trial, the club must register the FIFA Trial Form in its digital system (FIFA TMS). The club must fill out this form together with you. In this form the club and you agree on the conditions of the trial, such as who pays for travel, accommodation, meals, and daily expenses.
- The club must cover the costs for your medical care in case you get injured during the trial.
- You can only participate in training sessions and friendly matches.
- The maximum duration of the trial is eight weeks for players aged 21 and younger, and three weeks for players above 21.
- A professional player under contract is only allowed to go on trial with another club if their current club provides a written permission.

# Safe football events

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All football events held under the jurisdiction of member associations and their clubs should be safe, enjoyable and inclusive. It is a member association's responsibility to organise safe events from both a health and safety and a safeguarding perspective. With concerns about crowd safety at large events the Confédération Africaine de Football provides advice on safety and security measures. Safeguarding players, spectators (including children), others working at the competition venues or involved in transportation is often forgotten about.

It is a competition organisers responsibility to safeguard everyone attending a match or tournament by putting in place safeguarding measures both prevention and response.

Everyone working at a match or tournament has a responsibility for safeguarding others at a match or tournament. They need to be able to recognise and report safeguarding concerns and so require adequate knowledge, understanding and awareness on safeguarding. **This might require asking all persons working at match or tournament to undergo some form of safeguarding awareness training or briefings. This will include people involved in the match or tournament but not working at the competition venues i.e., those working at the hotel or in transportation.**

All matches or tournaments need a designated safeguarding officer or team. No concern should go unreported. Anyone who has felt, seen or doubt a safeguarding risk must report the matter to the designated safeguarding officer or team.

Safeguarding concerns reported at matches or tournaments should be managed by the designated safeguarding officer or team. This will involve the use of a case management team to determine if the case should merit referral to a sports disciplinary process or to the local authorities. At some major tournaments the case management team may be appointed in advance and be on call to consider any raised concerns.

The designated safeguarding officer or team will determine reporting processes for a match or tournament and will ensure those working at, taking part in, or attending the event know how to report by communicating reporting protocols.

The designated safeguarding officer or team together with the case management group will have the power to suspend a person suspected of a safeguarding violation from working at, attending or taking part in a match or tournament in any way. This is to protect others involved in attending the match or tournament and also to stop the accused person interfering with any investigations.

**Football must blow the whistle for any form of harassment, abuse or exploitation taking place during a match or tournament. We need to say NO to different forms of inter-personal violence.**

## Prior to a match or tournament

Prior to a tournament or match the designated safeguarding officer or team can conduct safeguarding training or briefings with event staff, event officials, volunteers, team members, and team officials. This training should include information on how to raise a concern. It is especially to check that players have an understanding and awareness of safeguarding, and they know how to report concerns.

Where the event involves young people under 18 years of age either as competitors, or in any other role, both the child/young person and their parents/carers must sign a consent/assent form. Assent forms are used where participants who are not legally able to give consent, such as children or those with cognitive impairments. The form documents the agreement of the participant, and the consent of their parent or legal guardian for them to participate in the event.

Consent and assent forms should cover safeguarding and health & safety matters including, but not limited to, agreeing to photo release and use of multimedia.

All adults working at the event should have a Police Clearance Certificate or at least have signed a **self-declaration** that they have never been convicted for sexual or other violent offences and never been disqualified in any country from working with children or vulnerable persons.

All members of each participating team's entourage should also have a Police Clearance Certificate or have signed a self-declaration form.

**Each team** should have a member of staff whose roles include being the team's designated safeguarding or welfare officer. This role might for example be assigned to a member of the team responsible for medical care provided they also have safeguarding expertise.

The designated safeguarding officer or team will be responsible for establishing a reporting and case management process. The event organiser should be made aware of this process and all staff and teams should receive this information during briefings.

## Accommodation & transportation

Team officials and players must be provided with separate rooms. No player should be asked to share a room with a team official. There should be compulsory separate rooms for male and female officials and players.

Accommodation should ensure privacy and have adequate security whilst being easy to escape in the event of a fire or other emergency. Rooms should have locks that can be opened from the outside and windows should not be barred. Bathroom locks should be functional/

**In shared facilities, shower rooms, toilet and changing areas should provide adequate privacy.**

Where the players are under 18 years of age, TV channels and multimedia access should be child safe and child friendly.

There should be adequate supervision of young players under 18 years at all times - food, medication, outside access, etc. No player under 18 years should be allowed to go out of the competition and accommodation venues without their team manager's supervision or permission. Team management should ensure that players are not exposed to any place, equipment or substances that could cause harm to them.

Measures should be taken to ensure no unauthorized person has access to accommodation, transportation & other restricted areas.

Team managers should have emergency contact details of all players, and these should be shared with the event designated safeguarding officer or team.

Steps should be taken to ensure that all transportation is safe and that players under 18 years are not allowed to be transported without an adult team official on board.

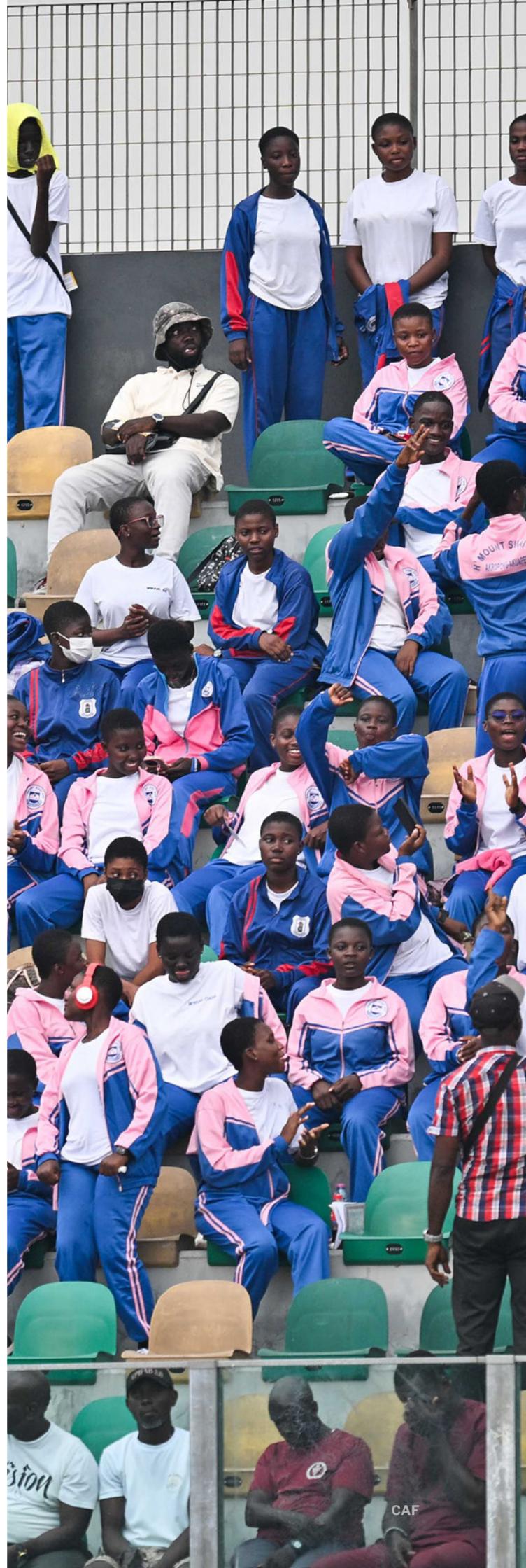
## Media & communications

The media officer or team should ensure that they have consent/assent and release forms for all children or vulnerable adults that may be photographed during the event.

**There should be no use of mobile phones, cameras or any such audio-visual recording equipment in dressing rooms, shower rooms, toilets, changing facilities and private sleeping accommodation unless prior permission is received.**

Steps should be taken to ensure that children and young players are appropriately clothed when using pictures for photo release and no picture or video portraying children in a disrespectful, demeaning, distasteful, or embarrassing manner should be allowed

No inappropriate photo/video can be captured and/or stored in any device at any point. If the person photographed feels unsafe or uncomfortable about any



specific picture, footage or part of it, upon assessing the concern, the objectionable content must be deleted from all devices, external storage and/or multimedia.

No unauthorized photo/video equipment can be used.

No bullying/ trolling or objectively objectionable content shall be allowed in social media

Any unmoderated private conversations or social media contacts are strictly prohibited with any player under 18 years of age.

All media staff should maintain high standards of media protocols to ensure the online and offline safety of all children and young players.

### During the match or tournament

The competition venues should have adequate dressing room facilities with individual privacy for changing and the use of showers and toilets. Sanitary and hygiene products for women should be made available by the event organisers.

No adult shall be allowed to undress or change, in the dressing room or changing facilities, in front of players under 18 years, or of a different gender, without privacy and no youth player can do the same in front of an adult

During the match or tournament there should be a zero tolerance for bullying, body shaming, name calling, etc., inside dressing rooms, on the field of play, or at the training grounds.

No unauthorised persons including parents or outsiders should be allowed in team dressing rooms and team officials should ensure that the prohibition of the use of mobile phones in changing rooms, showers, and toilet areas is strictly enforced.

Event organisers should ensure there are waiting/rest areas available for children while they are in between activities other than changing/toilet areas and these areas are adequately supervised by suitable staff or volunteers with safeguarding awareness/knowledge.

Any dangerous or hazardous equipment, facilities or materials in the premises/ competition venue must be labelled with adequate caution mark and should not be accessible to team members or members of the public

If any **one-to-one** photography/medical/any other session is required with children, they must be accompanied/supervised by the team's safeguarding officer or other(s).

Ensuring equal access to participation in tournament activities for all children regardless of ethnicity, background, sex, religion, ability, disability, socio-economic status, etc., is important.

Protocols for reporting safeguarding concerns of harassment, abuse and exploitation should be in place and shared with teams, staff and spectators. Help or information desks should know the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

**Medical facilities at matches and tournaments should be able to provide trauma informed psycho-social support and care for victims of inter-personal violence.**

### Monitoring, reporting & case management

The event's designated safeguarding officer or team should oversee and monitor the implementation at a match or tournament and report back to the event organisers on activity and recommendations for the future.

Incident reporting forms and anonymous reporting opportunities should be available at matches and tournaments. Maintaining confidentiality through the reporting and case management procedures is of the highest priority.

The designated safeguarding officer or team should ensure that there are clear reporting and prompt investigation mechanisms available for recording concerns, opening files and following up on them.

The designated safeguarding officer or team should have access to case management group that includes a person with a legal background.

The designated safeguarding officer or team will refer cases of a missing child, drug/substance abuse, criminal offence to the security team, police and local authority and inform senior management of the MA that a referral of a criminal matter has been made.

The designated safeguarding officer or team will ensure that safeguarding concerns of a low to moderate level as agreed by the case management team will be appropriately resolved.

### After the match or tournament

The designated safeguarding officer or team will prepare post event/matchday report. Reported concerns will be reported together with details of action taken. The report will respect the need for confidentiality of victims of inter-personal violence and of persons accused of safeguarding breaches whose cases have not yet be heard by an internal disciplinary and ethics committee or an external criminal court.



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

### Safeguarding Matchday Report Form

1. Were there any incidents related to child protection or vulnerable individuals during the matchday? Yes/No

If yes, please describe the nature of the incidents and actions taken:

2. Were safeguarding protocols (e.g., player escorts, changing room access, security measures, food & water distribution) followed throughout the day? Yes/No

If not, what gaps were identified, and what immediate steps were taken:

3. Did all team members comply with safeguarding measures, including wearing proper identification, arriving at the stadium on time, and reporting any concerns? Yes/No

4. Did any team members engage in unacceptable behaviour? Yes/No

If yes, please provide details:

5. Did the Team Safeguarding Officers accompany their team throughout the matchday (arriving, staying, and leaving together on the same bus)? Yes/No

6. Did any young players, referees, officials, or spectators raise concerns regarding safety or welfare during the event? Yes/No

If so, how were these concerns addressed:

7. Were there any incidents of harassment, bullying, or abuse (verbal or physical) reported by players, officials, staff, or attendees? Yes/No

If yes, please provide details of how these incidents were handled:

8. Was a safeguarding briefing conducted for the teams, and were all key personnel aware of their responsibilities? Yes/No

9. Were there any barriers to maintaining safeguarding standards during the event (e.g., lack of resources, poor communication)? Yes/No

If yes, please provide details:

10. Do you have any recommendations for improving safeguarding procedures for future matchdays?

# Gender-based violence in football

Violence against women and girls is a serious and widespread problem that affects people of all ages, backgrounds, and countries. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. Levels of gender-based violence are high in many African countries.

Physical violence against women and girls can include physical harm, such as beating, biting, choking, and the use of weapons. Sexual violence can include rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Emotional violence can include verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, and controlling or manipulating behaviour. Economic violence can include controlling access to resources, such as money or food, or preventing someone from seeking employment or education.

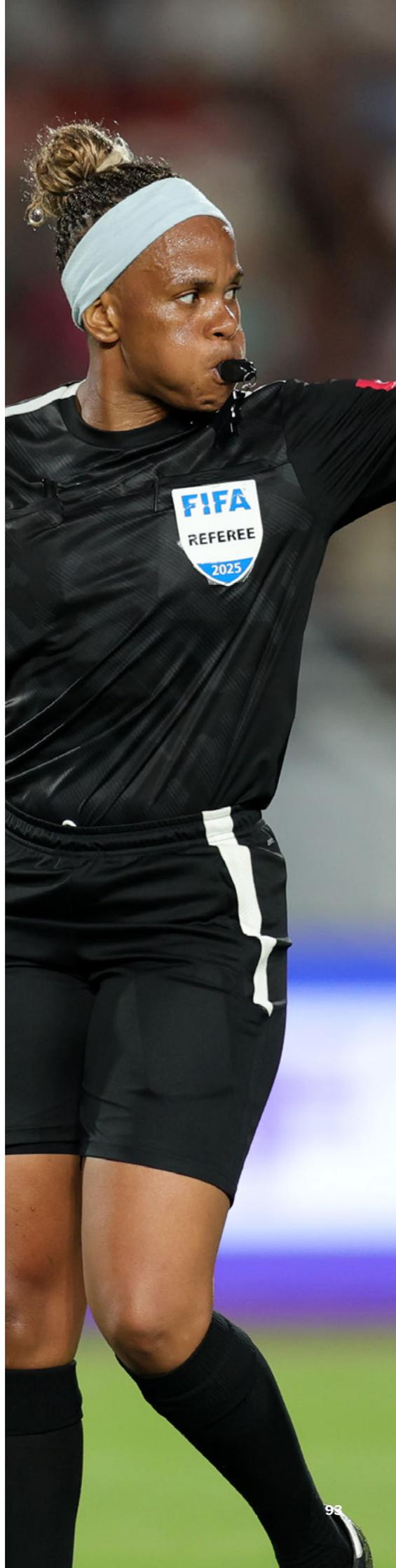
There have been reported cases in sport of elite female players being killed by intimate partners (Femicide) after arguments about the control of resources earned through the elite female players' participation in sport.

Violence against women and girls is often perpetrated by intimate partners, but it can also be perpetrated by family members, friends, and even individuals in positions of power in sport. It can occur in a variety of settings, including the home, workplace, community and in our sport.

Violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights and is deeply harmful to the physical and mental well-being of those who experience it. It is also a major barrier to gender equality and can have serious negative impacts on families, communities, and societies. It is important to take steps to prevent and address violence against women and girls, and to support survivors in getting the help and assistance they need.

There are several factors that can contribute to the prevalence of violence against women and girls in football, including a culture of power imbalances and gender inequality, as well as a lack of appropriate policies and procedures to prevent and address such violence. Additionally, the close proximity and intense nature of football can create environments that are conducive to abuse and exploitation.

It is important for football associations and clubs, coaches, and players to take steps to prevent and address violence against women and girls. This can include implementing policies and procedures to address and report incidents of abuse, promoting gender equality and respect, and providing education and training on these issues to players, coaches, and other stakeholders. It is also important for football organisations to create safe and supportive environments for women and girls to train and compete in, and to ensure that there are clear consequences for those who engage in violence or abuse.



## What is the link between football and violence against women?

Like other human activities, football provides an environment where people learn and reproduce attitudes, behaviours, and social norms. Football has the capacity to influence, inform and shape attitudes and behaviours in both negative and positive ways.

Football environments are places where violence against women can occur directly and, if allowed, can provide a setting for entrenched violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours to be played out.

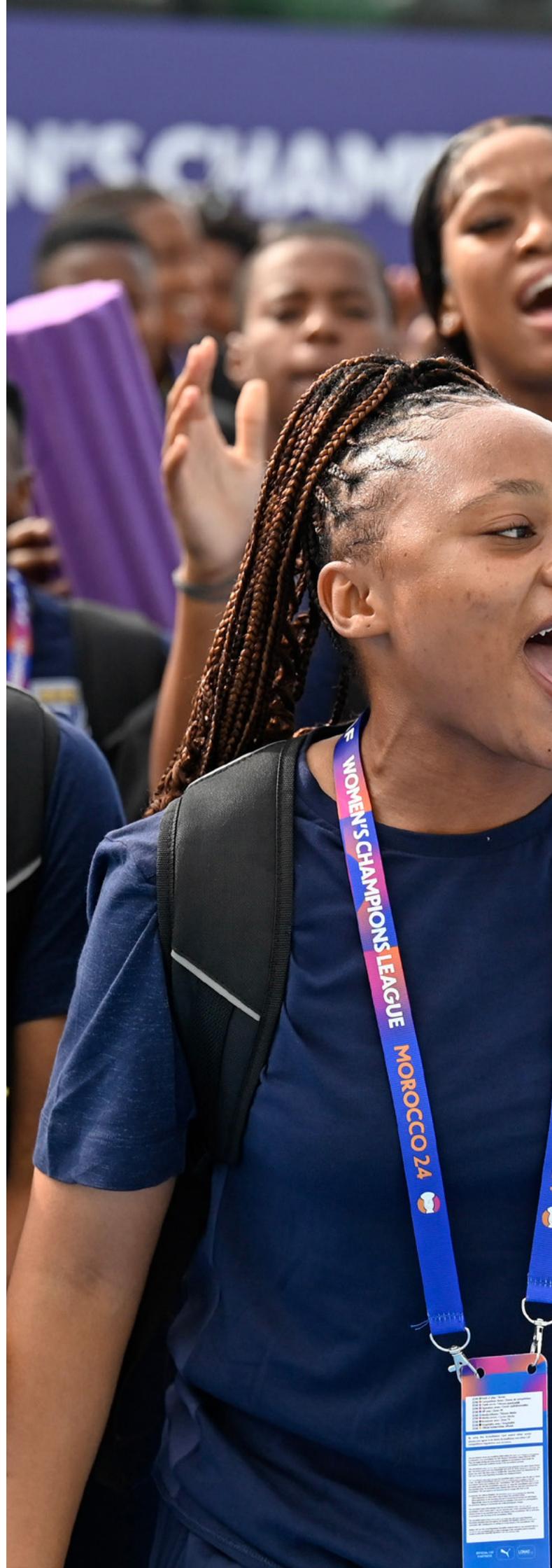
From a more positive perspective football and football cultures can help to reduce health and gender inequalities in society. On and off the field, football provides the environment and opportunity to set and reinforce positive community standards about respect and equality. It can challenge problematic norms, practices, and structures to drive transformative cultural change. For this reason, football settings have great potential to influence social change and prevent violence against women by creating inclusive, equitable, healthy, and safe environments for men and women, boys, and girls.

Gender inequality including harmful gender norms are key drivers of violence against women. Violence against women and girls is serious, prevalent, and driven by gender inequality. Gender inequality sets the social context necessary to enable violence against women and girls. The gendered drivers of violence against women and girls being:

- Condoning of violence against women and girls
- Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

Actions to prevent violence against women include:

- challenging the condoning of violence against women and girls
- promoting women's independence and decision making
- challenging gender stereotypes and roles
- strengthening positive, equal, and respectful relationships
- promoting and normalising gender equality in public and private life





# Reporting concerns

Gender inequality occurs when men have a higher status over women and can control women in different spheres of life.

Violence against women is caused by gender inequality – including unequal power relations between women and men, rigid gender roles, norms and hierarchies, and ascribing women lower status in society. Promoting and achieving gender equality is a critical element of the prevention of violence against women.

**The prevention of violence against women and girls might be thought of as operating on three levels.**

### Third Level Prevention or Response

Support survivors of interpersonal violence and hold perpetrators to account and aim to prevent the recurrence of interpersonal violence.

### Secondary Level Prevention or Early Intervention

Aims to change the “trajectory” for individuals at higher-than-average risk of experiencing or perpetrating inter-personal violence.

### Primary Prevention

Whole of population initiatives that address primary underlying drivers of interpersonal violence.

Safeguarding in football includes prevention and response. Primary and secondary prevention are the things we do to minimise the risk of inter-personal violence occurring to participants in football. Tertiary responses are what we do when we’re concerned that someone is at risk of, or is, suffering harm or abuse.

Prevention measures addressing gender-based violence in football include initiatives that promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of males and females of all ages.

Most practices are aimed at raising awareness and promoting capacity building for preventing gender-based violence among football associations, football clubs and football coaches.

Many in positions of authority in football still deny or downplay the existence or extent of gender-based violence in the sport and when issues arise try to ignore or suppress the issues raised. This taboo needs to be broken to bring about change and create a safe environment for denouncing cases of gender-based violence in football.

## Promoting Gender Equality in Football

There are several steps that can be taken in football to improve gender equality and promote the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls:

**Implement policies and procedures to promote gender equality:** This can include creating policies that address discrimination and harassment; and establishing procedures for reporting and responding to incidents of abuse.

**Provide education and training:** Offer education and training programs for players, coaches, and other stakeholders on issues related to gender equality, such as discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls.

**Increase the representation of women and girls in leadership positions:** Encourage and support the participation of women and girls in leadership roles within football, including as coaches, match officials, and administrators.

**Foster a culture of respect and inclusion:** Promote a culture that values diversity and inclusivity and actively work to create an environment that is welcoming and supportive for all individuals, regardless of gender.

**Promote and support the participation of women and girls in football:** Encourage and support the participation of women and girls in football at all levels, including through the provision of resources and facilities, and by offering opportunities for competition and development.

**Increase media coverage and visibility of women's football:** Increase the visibility and coverage of women's football in the media, to promote the participation and achievement of women and girls in the sport.

By taking these steps, football can work to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women and girls.

## Working with Women & Girls to address Gender Inequalities

There are several ways to work with women and girls to overcome gender inequalities:

**Provide education and training:** Offer education and training programs that teach women and girls about their rights, and about issues related to gender equality, such as discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls. These programs can help women and girls understand their own value and worth; and empower them to assert their rights and advocate for their own needs.

**Encourage and support leadership:** Encourage and support the participation of women and girls in leadership roles, both within and outside of football. This can help women and girls develop the skills and confidence they need to advocate for themselves and others, and to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

**Foster a culture of respect and inclusion:** Promote a culture of respect and inclusion and actively work to create an environment that is welcoming and supportive for all individuals, regardless of gender.

**Support and empower women and girls:** Offer support and assistance to women and girls who are facing challenges or discrimination; and help them access resources and services that can assist them.

**Speak out against violence and abuse:** If you witness or experience violence or abuse, speak out and report it to the appropriate authorities or a designated safeguarding officer in football.

By taking these steps, you can work with women and girls to overcome gender inequalities and create a more inclusive and equitable society.

## Working with Men & Boys to address Gender Inequalities

By using and sharing their power and privilege, men and boys can shift dominant norms and ideas about gender and masculinity, and challenge the patriarchal beliefs, practices, institutions, and structures that drive gender inequality.

Positive masculinity is a concept that refers to a healthy and respectful form of masculinity. It involves rejecting traditional gender roles and expectations that are harmful or limiting, and instead embracing qualities and behaviours that are respectful, empathetic, and inclusive.

Positive masculinity is not about being “tough” or aggressive, but rather about being authentic and true to oneself, and treating others with respect and compassion. It involves being aware of and actively challenging harmful gender stereotypes, and recognizing the value and diversity of all people, regardless of gender.

Promoting positive masculinity can help create a more inclusive and equitable society; and can also benefit men and boys by allowing them to be their true selves and to express a wider range of emotions and behaviours. It can also help prevent violence and abuse, as it encourages men and boys to challenge and reject harmful behaviours and attitudes that contribute to violence and abuse.

There are several ways to work with men and boys in football to encourage positive masculinity:

**Provide education and training:** Offer education and training programs that teach men and boys about issues related to gender equality, such as discrimination, harassment, and violence against women and girls. These programs can help men and boys understand the importance of positive masculinity and the role they can play in promoting it.

**Encourage positive role models:** Highlight positive role models in football who demonstrate healthy, respectful forms of masculinity. This can help men and boys see that it is possible to be successful and respected while also being compassionate and inclusive.

**Foster a culture of respect and inclusion:** Promote a culture of respect and inclusion in football and actively work to create an environment that is welcoming and supportive for all individuals, regardless of gender.

**Promote and support the participation of women and girls in football:** Encourage and support the participation of women and girls in football at all levels, and work to create an environment that is inclusive and welcoming for them.

**Speak out against violence and abuse:** If you witness or experience violence or abuse in football, speak out and report it to the appropriate authorities or to a designated safeguarding office in the sport.

By taking these steps, you can work with men and boys in sport to encourage positive masculinity and create a more inclusive and equitable environment in football.

## Coaching to address Gender Based Violence

Football coaches can through their work with women, girls, men and boys address gender inequality and violence against women and girls by teaching gender transformative life skills alongside football training.

Gender transformative approaches are programs and interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address power inequities between persons of different genders.

Gender transformative life skills sessions address such issues as gender roles and attitudes, forms of violence against women and girls, respectful behaviour towards women, and positive masculinities.

Football coaches can lead the holistic development of players by coaching life skills alongside sports skills. In football this is often done by creating a safe space for players to reflect on and discuss with each other life skills that are applicable not just to Football but also to other aspects of their life.

Life skills (what one can do) are made up of Inter-personal, Intra-personal and Cognitive skills (what one has), Knowledge (what one knows) and Mindset or Attitude (what one believes and values). Life skills when supported through enabling environments and opportunities to exercise personal agency can lead to empowered women and girls, men and boys.

Life skills are the positive things a person can do in life such as making good decisions or standing up for human rights. Life skills are the result of a combinations of:

- **Interpersonal Skills** such as communication skills, having empathy or being able to work with others in a team.
- **Intra-personal skills** such as having self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-control.
- **Cognitive skills** such as critical thinking, creativity, and decision making.
- **Knowledge** can be many things including about gender-based violence. Other examples of knowledge that contribute to life skills might be an understanding of reproductive health and rights, of hygiene in the case of the COVID 19 pandemic, or the dangers of mines in a post-conflict environment.
- **Mindset or Attitude** such as believing people should have equal rights. Other examples of mindset or attitudes might be believing it is important to study hard to better one's prospect in higher education, or being persistent when trying to reach a goal, or being able to push back on peer pressure when there are negative consequences.

Developing confidence, resilience and competence in girls and promoting positive masculinity in boys are examples of how life skills can address gender inequality and reduce violence against women and girls.

A safe space for reflection and discussion on life skills can be created at the end of a training session, or some other designated time, where the coach can sit down with his/her training group and explore different life skills including those that promote gender inequality and address violence against women and girls. Skills that can transform inequitable gender norms and advance gender equality and justice by building the confidence, competence and agency of girls and young women and developing gender awareness, and an alternative vision of masculinity in boys and young men.

# Club licensing regulations

Member Associations (MAs) are required to establish and enforce a licensing system for clubs in alignment with CAF's Club Licensing Regulations. These systems must be clearly outlined in the MAs' statutes, which should also identify the competent bodies responsible for granting, monitoring, and revoking club licenses.

The regulations emphasize the importance of safeguarding and welfare measures for youth players, as detailed in the respective provisions for women's and men's football:

## 1.

### CAF Women's Club Licensing Regulations

Article 26, SW.02: Player and Child Protection and Welfare

## 2.

### CAF Men's Club Licensing Regulations

Article 29, S.05: Player and Children Protection and Welfare

## Key Requirements for License Applicants:

License applicants must take the following measures to protect and ensure the welfare of youth players:

- **Appoint a Safeguarding Officer:** Employ a dedicated safeguarding officer within the club's administration to oversee the implementation of these measures.
- **Develop a Child Safeguarding Policy:** Establish and apply a comprehensive child safeguarding policy that outlines the club's commitment to child protection, procedures for addressing safeguarding concerns, and mechanisms for reporting and resolving incidents.
- **Implement Safeguarding Measures:** Develop and enforce measures aligned with CAF guidelines to protect youth and women players and provide a safe environment during club-organized activities.
- **Engage Child Protection Expertise:** Collaborate with locally based child protection professionals to design and execute safeguarding strategies tailored to the club's needs.

### Additional Measures:

- Regularly train staff, coaches, and volunteers on safeguarding in football principles and their responsibilities in ensuring a safe environment.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding measures to ensure continuous improvement.
- Foster a culture of awareness and accountability, encouraging all stakeholders to actively participate in creating a safe and supportive environment for youth players.

By adhering to these regulations, clubs not only fulfil their licensing requirements but also contribute to the holistic development, safety, and well-being of young players, ensuring football remains a positive force in their lives.



## Safeguarding at academies

The FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP), define a football academy as “an organisation or an independent legal entity whose primary objective is to provide players with long-term training through the provision of the necessary training facilities and infrastructure. This shall primarily include, but not be limited to, football training centres, football camps, football schools, etc.”

However, this definition does not fully capture the broader role of a football academy as it is largely focused on football-specific development.

As expressed by Arsène Wenger, French former football manager and player who is currently serving as FIFA’s Chief of Global Football Development:

“We want to combine instruction and education, because if you do not become a top-level football player you can still have a great life if you have the right education. And our responsibility goes beyond producing top-level players - this is as well something we want to embrace - it’s to make reliable people who can have a bright life after.”

Football academies should focus not only on developing players’ athletic abilities but also on fostering their personal growth and education, ensuring they are equipped for success both on and off the field.

### Regulation of football academies

Member Associations of the Confederation of African Football should require all football academies operating on its territory to be registered with association, comply with national legislation in respect of sports academies where this exist and meet the standards of safeguarding and player care published by FIFA.

This should apply to both academies linked to registered clubs and to all other private academies. To achieve regulation of private football academies some Member Associations will need to update their regulations and may need to engage with government to advocate for national legislation in respect of sports academies.

## Registration and reporting of minors at academies

The FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP) require clubs that operate an academy (within their own structure and/or through a separate entity with legal, financial or de facto links to the club) to report all minors who attend the academy (registered with the club or not) to the association with which the club concerned is affiliated.

When an academy is operated outside the territory of the club's respective association, the reporting shall be made by the club to the association on whose territory the academy operates.

These regulations also require that member associations request all academies without legal, financial or de facto links to a club, i.e., private academies, operating on its territory to report all minors who attend the academy to the association.

Member associations are required to keep a register of players, comprising at least the following information: full name (first, middle and last names), nationality, date of birth, country of origin (or previous country of domicile), agent (if any) and club operating the respective academy, regarding the minors who have been reported to it by clubs or academies.

### Safeguarding minors at academies

FIFA has produced a set of standards for safeguarding and player care in football academies which all academies should aspire to action.

A member association that becomes aware of any wrongdoing occurring at a football academy including private academies should report this to the relevant authorities, taking all necessary measures to protect and safeguard minors from potential abuse.

A club operating under the jurisdiction of a member association wishing to collaborate with a private academy must:

- report such collaboration to the association with which the club is affiliated.
- ensure that the private academy reports its players to the association where the academy operates.
- before entering into a contract with a private academy, ensure that the private academy takes proper measures to protect and safeguard minors.
- report any wrongdoing of which it may become aware to the relevant authorities, taking all necessary measures to protect and safeguard minors from potential abuse.

## Minimum standards for safeguarding

For a football academy to be able to register with the member association the following need to be in place:

1. An academy safeguarding policy
2. A designated safeguarding officer who is suitably qualified or has completed the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Award (Global Football Community Learners) Course, or being in the training process, and have submitted their certificate of completion to the Member Association.
3. All other staff, coaches and volunteers working at the academy with access to young players must complete modules 1 and 2 of the FIFA Guardians Global Football Community Learner pathway and provide evidence of completion using the corresponding course certificates. The two courses are FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials and FIFA Guardians™ Starting your Safeguarding Journey.
4. All staff, coaches and volunteers working at the academy with access to young players must provide a Police Clearance Certificate or complete a Self-Declaration Form.
5. All young players under 18 years of age attending the football academy must be receiving a basic education or vocational training provided by a recognised education provider.
6. After registration all football academies have three months in which to use the FIFA safeguarding and player care assessment tool to conduct an assessment and based on the assessment develop an action plan for the development of safeguarding and player care at the academy. This action plan must be overseen and regularly updated by the Football Academy's designated safeguarding officer.

# Women's Health and Wellbeing

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CAF is committed to growing women's football in Africa increasing the numbers of women and girls playing football and encouraging more women into leadership, administrative, and coaching roles. For women's football to develop we need to create safe spaces for women and girls to practice and play football free from harassment, abuse and exploitation.

To increase participation in football, we need gender sensitive approaches to the promotion of the game in Africa. This means not just safeguarding women and girls but also promoting their health and wellbeing.

Young females in football have sex specific experiences, such as the menstrual cycle, hormonal contraceptive use and breast development that may impact their participation, enjoyment, and performance in these sports.

Male coaches are not best placed to provide support to female players around their specific health and wellbeing issues. The use of female coaches is encouraged. When a male coach is responsible for a female team, there should be female members on the coaching and support staff to whom young female players can speak regarding their specific needs.

## Menstruation

Menstruation may pose challenges for women and girls engaging in football activities in Africa, but it does not inherently prevent their participation. Several factors can influence their involvement:

Many players face menstrual symptoms like cramps, headaches, mood swings, and irritability, impacting their training and performance.

Lack of access to sanitary products is a notable issue. Some players use alternatives like old rags during menstruation, which can affect their comfort and confidence on the field. Approximately 36% of players in a study reported using such alternatives due to financial constraints.

Menstruation is a topic that is not widely discussed in many African communities, which can lead to stigma and misinformation. This cultural perception can inhibit open discussions about menstrual health, impacting players' ability to manage their cycles effectively and seek necessary support.

Players and staff often lack knowledge about the menstrual cycle. Female players need menstrual health education, access to hygiene products, and an environment for open discussions on menstruation.

Players should have access to absorbent menstrual products like pads, tampons, menstrual cups, and period underwear. Suitable changing and toilet facilities near the football field are essential, with biodegradable wet wipes, hand sanitizer, and disposable bags for discreet disposal where water access is limited.

Women and girls need access to changing and shower facilities at their training centres and match locations. Group showers can deter participation during menstruation; providing individual showers or private access when needed can help overcome this barrier.

Female players may need pain relief for menstrual cramps, heat patches for abdominal pain, and electrolyte drinks or snacks to manage hydration and energy levels affected by menstruation.

Female football teams should have access to female-friendly medical staff for guidance on menstrual health and sports performance. Additionally, MAs, clubs, and academies should offer menstrual health training or educational materials on cycle tracking, hydration, and the impact of periods on performance.

MAs clubs and academies should choose team kit with dark-coloured shorts to prevent visibility of bleeding during menstruation.

FIFA Regulations state that clubs shall at all times respect the needs of female players related to their menstrual cycle and menstrual health. Subject to the production of a valid medical certificate issued by her personal gynaecologist or specialist medical practitioner, a female player shall be entitled to be absent from training or matches whenever her menstrual health so requires. The player shall be entitled to receive her full remuneration when exercising these rights related to menstrual health.

## Sports Bras

A well-fitting sports bra is crucial for female football players. In some areas of Africa, access to appropriate bras is limited. While some sports bras work for running, they may not support the quick direction changes and jumps experienced in football.

Football involves high-intensity activities such as running, jumping, and sudden changes in direction, which can lead to significant breast movement. A well-fitted sports bra is essential for minimizing this motion, thereby reducing discomfort and the risk of tissue damage. This allows players to concentrate on their performance without distraction. Additionally, proper support provided by sports bras can prevent secondary injuries associated with poor posture or restricted movement, including back and shoulder pain.

Continuous breast movement during physical activity can stretch Cooper's ligaments, causing pain and sagging. Sports bras prevent this damage by providing support. Research shows that 17% of female players reported better performance with proper sports bras.

MAs, clubs, and academies should provide sports bras to female players as part of their team kit.

## Pregnancy & Maternity

Pregnancy or maternity does not terminate a football career. Numerous high-profile players have successfully resumed their careers after pregnancy.

FIFA has regulations to protect the rights of players during pregnancy and maternity. These are set out in the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

The physical effects of pregnancy on a player include:

- **First Trimester (0-12 weeks):** Many players can continue training with modifications, but morning sickness, fatigue, and dizziness may affect performance.
- **Second Trimester (13-27 weeks):** The growing belly shifts the centre of gravity, increasing the risk of falls and balance issues. High-impact activities, including tackling and sprinting, become riskier.
- **Third Trimester (28+ weeks):** Most players stop playing competitively as their bodies undergo significant changes, including reduced endurance and increased joint laxity, which raises the risk of injury (e.g., ACL tears).

Access to medical professionals, mental health support, and club backing is crucial for pregnant players. More MAs and clubs are introducing maternity policies, allowing players to balance motherhood and football.

Following pregnancy female players can return to football. The timeline for return varies. Some players return within months while others take a year or more. Pregnancy weakens core muscles and the pelvic floor, requiring specialized training as players prepare to return. There will be a need for some players to balance breastfeeding with training, but hormonal changes can affect endurance, hydration needs, and recovery times.

FIFA rules state that players must have the opportunity to breastfeed or express milk while training or playing for their club. Clubs need to provide appropriate facilities according to local laws or agreements. The player's reduced working hours for these reasons is considered justified, without any reduction in their salary.

## RED-S and the Female Athlete Triad

Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) and the Female Athlete Triad are both conditions related to inadequate energy availability in football players, but they differ in scope.

RED-S is a broader syndrome recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that affects both female and male athletes. It occurs when an athlete's energy intake is insufficient to support the energy demands of exercise and essential bodily functions.

### Key Consequences of RED-S:

- **Hormonal Imbalances:** Disruptions in oestrogen, testosterone, and thyroid hormones.
- **Menstrual Dysfunction:** Irregular or absent periods in women.
- **Decreased Bone Health:** Increased risk of stress fractures and osteoporosis.
- **Impaired Performance:** Fatigue, muscle loss, and slower recovery.
- **Mental Health Issues:** Increased anxiety, depression, and irritability.
- **Weakened Immune Function:** Higher susceptibility to illness and infections.
- **Gastrointestinal Issues:** Digestive problems due to poor nutrition.

RED-S affects cardiovascular, metabolic, and immune systems. It primarily impacts athletes in endurance, weight-category, and aesthetic sports, but can also affect football players.

The Female Athlete Triad is a more specific condition that focuses on three interrelated issues found in female players:

1. **Low Energy Availability (LEA):** Insufficient calorie intake to support both exercise and normal physiological functions.
2. **Menstrual Dysfunction:** Irregular or missed periods due to hormonal imbalances.
3. **Low Bone Density:** Increased risk of stress fractures and osteoporosis due to a lack of essential nutrients.

RED-S and the Female Athlete Triad can damage female footballers' health by causing stress fractures, ACL injuries, delayed muscle recovery, fatigue, mood swings, and anxiety. Untreated, they may lead to osteoporosis, fertility issues, and cardiovascular problems.

Address RED-S and the Female Athlete Triad by ensuring sufficient caloric intake for training demands. Monitor menstrual health, as irregular or missed periods can signal issues. Regular bone density assessments help detect early osteoporosis.

Coaches, players, and medical staff should be trained to recognize RED-S and the Female Athlete Triad symptoms. Psychological support may be required for body image issues and performance pressures linked to disordered eating.

### Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Injuries

Female footballers are more prone to ACL injuries, with rates approximately 2.2 times higher than their male counterparts. Factors contributing to this increased risk include anatomical and biomechanical differences, such as smaller ACLs, more flexible joints, and less muscle mass. While hormonal changes have been considered as potential risk factors, recent studies have found no consistent evidence linking menstrual cycles to ACL injury risk.



### Summary

There are various health and well-being issues that affect football players. Member Associations and Clubs should ensure that players are supported by coaches and team support staff, including medical officers with specialisms in relevant health areas. If there is a lack of coaches with sufficient technical coaching competence, measures should be put in place to ensure the coach and players are supported by qualified members of the coaching and support staff.

### Key Differences Between RED-S and the Female Athlete Triad:

Feature	RED-S	Female Athlete Triad
<b>Affects</b>	Both males & females	Only females
<b>Scope</b>	Broad, multi-system impact	Focused on bone, energy, and menstruation
<b>Cause</b>	Low energy availability	Low energy availability
<b>Health Impact</b>	Includes cardiovascular, immune, and mental health issues	Primarily affects bones, menstruation, and energy balance

# Mental Health

In football we tend to spend more time thinking about the physical health of our players and tend to forget that their mental health is equally important.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Mental health is an important part of athletic performance, and athletes can face unique challenges that increase their risk of mental health issues:

Football players face many of the same risk factors for mental illness as the general population, including family history, social isolation, and significant life stressors. Football players may face additional challenges. These include the physical and time demands of competition and travel, high competition levels, which can lead to fear of failure, pressure to meet expectations from coaches, fans, teammates, and themselves, and the need to balance personal responsibilities with sports commitments.



## Mental Health Barriers in Africa

The major barriers to promoting mental health in Africa include widespread stigma associated with mental illness, lack of awareness and understanding about mental health conditions, limited access to qualified mental health professionals, high cost of treatment, reliance on traditional healing practices, cultural beliefs that discourage seeking help, and inadequate government funding for mental health services.

**Stigma** - The most significant barrier, where people with mental illness are often viewed with shame, fear, and discrimination, preventing them from seeking help.

**Lack of awareness** - Many people in Africa lack basic knowledge about mental health conditions, leading to misinterpretations and reluctance to seek treatment.

**Limited access to healthcare professionals** - A severe shortage of psychiatrists and mental health specialists across the continent makes accessing treatment difficult.

**Financial constraints** - High cost of mental health services, especially in private settings, often prevents people from seeking treatment, particularly in low-income communities.

**Preference for traditional healing** - Reliance on traditional healers and spiritual practices as the primary method of addressing mental health concerns can delay or prevent access to professional care.

**Cultural factors** - Certain cultural beliefs and norms may discourage individuals from openly discussing mental health issues, further contributing to stigma.

**Geographic barriers** - In rural areas, limited availability of mental health services due to distance and transportation difficulties can hinder access to care.

**Policy limitations** - Inadequate government funding and lack of comprehensive mental health policies often prevent the development of robust mental health systems.

## Mental Health Issues

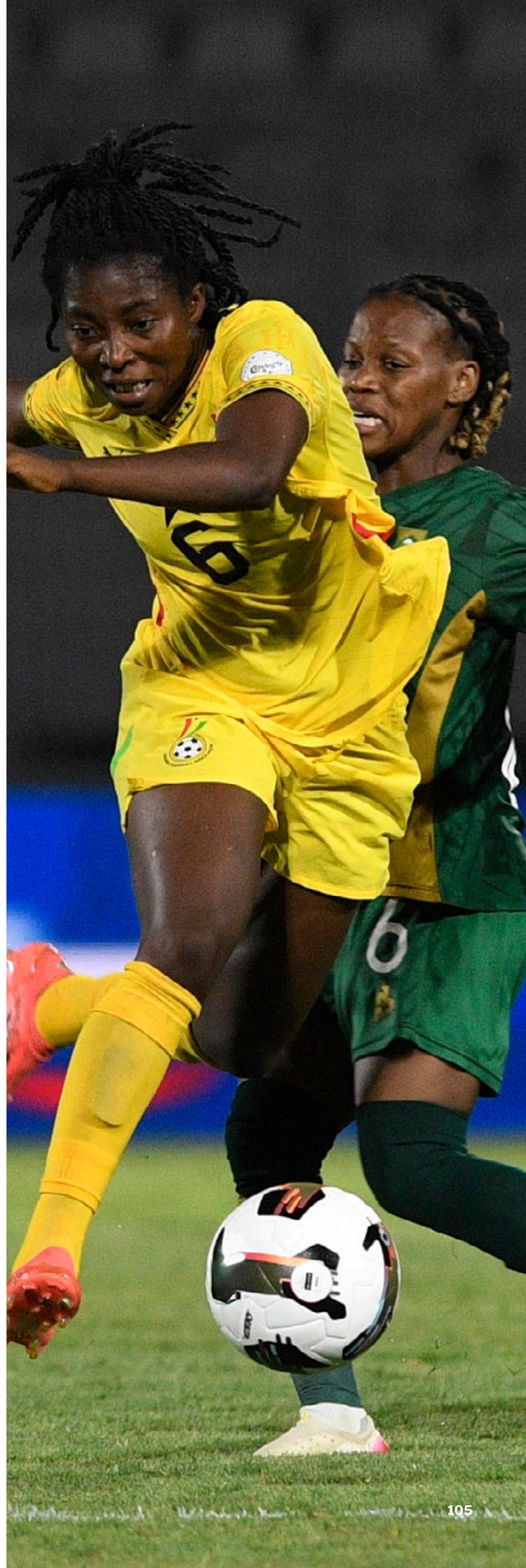
Football players can experience a range of mental health issues, including:

- **Anxiety** - Excessive fear, anxiety-related behavioural disturbances (including phobias and panic attacks).
- **Depression** - Persistent and pervasive sadness/low mood, excessive fatigue and loss of interest/pleasure.
- **Burnout or overtraining syndrome** – Football player experiences fatigue and declining performance despite continued or increased training. Overtraining can result in affective problems such as low mood and hostility toward the training environment, cognitive issues such as distracted focus, memory, and helplessness, and physical aspects, such as fatigue, increased probability of injury, even using doping.
- **Sleep-related problems** - Such as insufficient sleep, difficulty falling or staying asleep, or misalignment of sleep-wake patterns.
- **Eating disorders** - Disturbance of eating and related behaviours including excessive restriction, compulsive exercise, and/or bingeing and purging.
- **Substance abuse** – Alcohol and/or drug dependency.

The IOC Mental Health Consensus Statement (2019) also identified the following disorders as mental health issues that occur in sport:

- **Post-traumatic stress disorder** and other trauma-related disorders.
- **Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.**
- **Bipolar and psychotic disorders.**
- **Suicide.**
- **Gambling disorder and other behavioural addictions.**

Just as in the general population, the impacts of mental health symptoms and disorders in football players can be severe and debilitating. Those impacts may include poor performance, increased injury risk, delayed recovery from injury, and decreased quality of life.



## Causes of mental health problems

Mental health problems can arise in players due to stress. Key stress categories include competitive stress, organisational stress, and personal stress. These three categories are not exclusive and can impact on other causes of poor mental health.

**Competitive stress** - the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with competitive football.

**Personal stress** - the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with personal “nonsporting” life events.

**Organisational stress** - the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organisation within which an individual is operating.

According to the biopsychosocial model, mental health problems are caused by an intricate, variable combination of biological factors (e.g. genetic, biochemical), psychological factors (e.g. temperament, personality, behaviour), and social factors (e.g. cultural, familial, socioeconomic, medical).

There are risk factors or stressors that are associated with higher incidence / greater severity of mental health problems. For example, a family history of mental health problems or adverse life events (e.g. abuse or neglect in childhood, divorce, death of spouse, severe bullying, poverty).

Specifically in football factors such as injury, high-pressure environments and performance demands, media attention, negative reactions from the public, and transitioning in or from football, can have a negative impact on a player’s mental health.

Positive parenting experiences, good social support network, good physical health and high IQ are recognised protective factors associated with a lower incidence or less severe impacts of mental health problems.

Protective mental health factors that may be relevant for football players include engagement in meaningful activity, a sense of identity, belonging, or purpose, support from the MA, club or academy, family support, and the team around player.

Participation in football as a physical activity may also help players to regulate their emotions.

How a player copes or responds to the symptoms they experience can greatly influence the extent of their distress and the impact on their day-to-day functioning. Unhelpful coping strategies include avoidance and alcohol or substance consumption. Helpful coping strategies include healthy attempts to regulate emotions (e.g. talking to a friend, going for a walk) and proactive problem solving (e.g. making a plan to resolve a financial stressor).





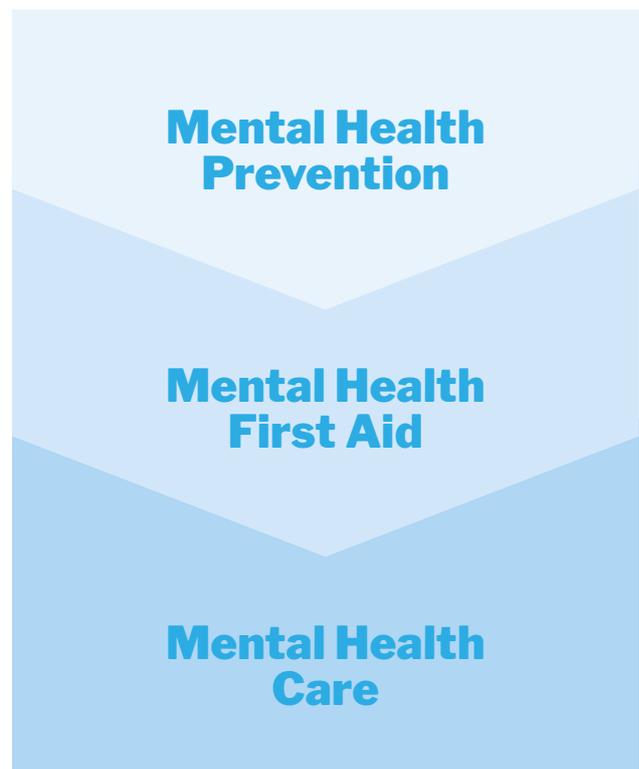
## Considerations for MAs, Clubs and Academies

A player's mental health needs are as important as their physical health needs.

In football, psychological illness should be accepted as readily as physical injury, and the same process of recovery and return to play process should apply.

Early recognition and intervention can significantly improve outcomes for mental health. MAs, Clubs and Academies should build develop psychologically safe cultures that support help-seeking by players. They should have strategies addressing the mental health of their players and staff should have an understanding of pathways to care for players experiencing mental health problems.

MAs, Clubs and Academies should be prepared to respond to a mental health concern and be able to support a player's safe return to play.



MAs, Clubs and Academies should have a plan to support the mental health of players that includes:

- Measures to promote mental health and prevent mental health problems.
- Staff trained as mental health first aiders able to support players facing mental health issues.
- Access to mental health practitioners who can provide care for players with mental health issues.

## Mental Health Prevention

MAs, Clubs and Academies have an essential role in facilitating a safe and supportive environment that allows players to feel comfortable in coming forward with concerns about their mental health. Education and awareness raising of mental health issues and services amongst staff and players can help establish safe and supportive environments.

A positive culture surrounding mental health should be adopted at all levels of a MA, Club, or Academy and be supported by the top leadership/ management. Football organisations must recognise their duty of care and how that extends to safeguarding athletes' mental health.

MAs, Clubs and Academies should develop appropriate mental health policies and communicate those policies to all departments and stakeholders, regardless of the nature of their relationship with players. They should develop a Mental Health Emergency Action Plan (MHEAP) to support players in the event of a mental health emergency.

Individual staff members with specific mental health roles and responsibilities for mental health should receive sufficient training to support them in exercising their role.

MAs, Clubs and Academies should create and implement career transition programmes to support athletes' mental health as they make the transition out of sport.

In the same way that medical professionals of MAs, Clubs and Academies conduct regular assessments of the physical health of players, they should also assess player's mental health.

Assessments might use the Sports Mental Health Assessment Tool developed by the International Olympic Committee Mental Health Working Group. It is a standardized assessment tool aimed at identifying elite athletes at risk of or already experiencing mental health symptoms and disorders.

### Sport Mental Health Assessment Tool – 1

Another useful and simple to use tool for assessing the emotional wellbeing of children is the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (commonly referred to as the Stirling Scale) which measures emotional and psychological wellbeing in children and young people aged 8 to 15 years.

The areas of wellbeing covered by the scale include optimism, cheerfulness, and relaxation; satisfying interpersonal relationships; positive functioning including clear thinking and competence.

It includes 12 self-report items answered on a 5-point scale and aims to assess wellbeing with a positive focus, rather than focusing on mental illness, in the areas of positive emotional state and positive outlook.

There are an additional three items to determine if the participant's answers are biased or if they have a socially desirable response set.

See here for more information.

The Stirling Scale can be downloaded here.



## Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a globally recognized training program that equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to provide initial support to people experiencing mental health challenges. Member Associations, clubs, and academies should have staff trained in mental health first aid in order to provide support to players with mental health difficulties.

MHFA enables trained staff to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health issues. To provide a safe and supportive environment for those experiencing mental health difficulties and to empower individuals to connect people with appropriate professional help when needed.

### ALGEE Action Plan

MHFA trained staff can use a five-step framework for providing support, including:

- 1. Assess** - identify potential mental health issues and risks.
- 2. Listen** - actively listen and show empathy.
- 3. Give support** - offer reassurance, encouragement, and practical assistance.
- 4. Encourage professional help** - suggest seeking help from a healthcare professional or mental health services.
- 5. Educate** - provide information about mental health and available resources.

Training will help staff in understanding the symptoms and warning signs of conditions such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, and substance use disorders. They will learn how to respond in emergency situations, such as suicidal thoughts or self-harm.

MAs, Clubs, and Academies having trained staff in MHFA will be able to reduce the stigma associated with mental health, improve mental health literacy and awareness in the organisation, empowers individuals to intervene and provide support and promote early detection and treatment of mental health issues.

MHFA training is open to anyone, regardless of their background or experience. It is a valuable tool for MAs, Clubs and Academies that want to make a positive impact on mental health well-being of players.

## Mental Health Care

The medical practitioners working with a MA, Club, or Academy should be able to make links to Mental Health practitioners who can provide professional support in cases of players suffering mental health concerns that require professional treatment. Referral to Mental Health practitioners should form part of the MA, Club, or Academy Mental Health Emergency Action Plan.

# Monitoring, evaluation and learning

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Tracking the implementation of safeguarding measures, assessing their impact, and using the insights gained to enhance future safeguarding efforts



# Monitoring, evaluation and learning systems

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) in terms of safeguarding in football is essential to ensure that policies and practices aimed at protecting children and vulnerable persons are effective, responsive, and continuously improved.

MEL involves systematically tracking the implementation of safeguarding measures, assessing their impact, and using the insights gained to enhance future safeguarding efforts. Here's what this process could look like in a sporting context:



## Monitoring Safeguarding Practices

Monitoring involves the regular collection of data and observations to ensure that safeguarding policies are being properly implemented.

- **Safeguarding Audits** – Member Associations can regularly review their safeguarding policies and procedures including checking that staff, volunteers, and coaches are following the safeguarding policy and relevant code of conduct.
- **Tracking Incidents and Reports** – Member Associations should maintain accurate records of any safeguarding incidents or concerns, including allegations of harassment, abuse, bullying, or exploitation. Track how these incidents are reported, investigated, and resolved. See tracking form here.
- **Compliance Checks** – Member Associations can ensure that background checks (e.g., criminal background checks or child protection clearances) for coaches, staff, and volunteers are up to date and conducted regularly.
- **Staff and Volunteer Training Records** – Member Associations can monitor the completion of safeguarding training by coaches, staff, and volunteers, and ensure that refresher courses are regularly conducted.
- **Digital Monitoring** – Member Associations can monitor online interactions between players, staff, and fans to detect potential risks, including cyberbullying, grooming, or inappropriate communication.



## Evaluation of Safeguarding Policies and Practices

Evaluation involves assessing the effectiveness of safeguarding initiatives to understand whether they are achieving their goals and protecting players, particularly children and vulnerable adults. Some methods that can be considered by Member Associations include:

- **Impact Assessments** – Evaluate the outcomes of safeguarding interventions. For example, assess whether there has been a reduction in incidents of bullying, abuse, or harassment as a result of implementing certain policies.
- **Feedback Mechanisms** – Collect feedback from key stakeholders (e.g., players, parents, coaches, and staff) to understand their experiences with safeguarding measures. This can be done through surveys, interviews, or focus groups.
- **Children's Voice** – For children, use child-friendly methods (e.g., age-appropriate surveys or facilitated group discussions) to gather their input on how safe they feel within the sport environment.
- **Incident Reviews** – Conduct a thorough review of how reported safeguarding incidents were handled, from initial reporting to investigation and resolution. Identify any gaps or weaknesses in the response process to inform improvements to the case management process.
- **Comparative Analysis** – Compare safeguarding performance across different teams, clubs, or regions to identify best practices or areas that require additional support.

## Learning and Continuous Improvement

Learning is about using the information gathered through monitoring and evaluation to improve safeguarding policies and practices. This step involves adapting and updating safeguarding policies, guidance and processes based on evidence. This might include:

- **Reviewing and Updating Safeguarding Policies** - Based on evaluation findings, update safeguarding policies and codes of conduct to address any gaps or emerging risks (e.g., online safety, mental health support, or diversity considerations).
- **Training and Capacity Building** - Use evaluation insights to inform future training programs. For example, if certain safeguarding risks (like online grooming) are becoming more prevalent, focus training efforts on those areas.
- **Sharing Best Practice** - Share successful safeguarding approaches and lessons learned with other clubs, other sports or governing bodies. Encourage cross-organizational learning through conferences, workshops, or webinars.
- **Feedback Loops** - Implement a feedback loop where stakeholders (players, coaches, staff, and parents) are informed about changes made in response to their input. This promotes transparency and engagement in the safeguarding process.



## Key Indicators for Safeguarding MEL in Football

To effectively measure safeguarding efforts, certain key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics can be established. These may include:

- **Number of Safeguarding Training Sessions Conducted** - Track the number of training sessions provided to staff, coaches, and volunteers, as well as the percentage of personnel who have completed the training.
- **Percentage of Background Checks Completed** - Monitor the proportion of staff and volunteers who have undergone background checks, ensuring that all personnel working with children and vulnerable adults are vetted.
- **Reported Safeguarding Incidents** - Track the number of safeguarding incidents reported over time, along with the nature and severity of each incident (e.g., bullying, abuse, neglect).
- **Time Taken to Resolve Incidents** - Measure the average time taken to investigate and resolve reported safeguarding concerns, with a focus on ensuring swift and appropriate responses.
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction Levels** - Use surveys or interviews to gauge satisfaction levels among players, parents, and staff regarding the safeguarding measures in place.

## Tools and Approaches for Effective MEL

There are several tools and approaches that can support the implementation of MEL in safeguarding:

- **Data Management Systems** - Use digital platforms or case management systems to record safeguarding incidents, track progress, and generate reports for ongoing monitoring.
- **Surveys and Questionnaires** - Regularly distribute surveys to players, parents, and staff to gather feedback on how safe they feel and how effective they perceive the safeguarding efforts to be.
- **Safeguarding Committees** - Establish dedicated safeguarding committees within sports organizations to oversee MEL activities, review incident reports, and ensure continuous improvement of safeguarding practices.
- **Independent Audits** - Engage external evaluators or child protection specialists to conduct independent reviews of safeguarding policies, practices, and outcomes, ensuring an objective assessment.

## Engaging Stakeholders in the MEL Process

Engaging key stakeholders is crucial to the success of safeguarding MEL in sport. Some strategies include:

- **Player Participation** - Involve players, especially children, in shaping safeguarding policies by giving them a voice in the process and gathering their perspectives on risks and safety.
- **Parental Involvement** - Engage parents and guardians in monitoring and evaluating safeguarding efforts. Their insights can help identify risks that might not be apparent to staff or players.
- **Staff and Volunteer Input** - Encourage open communication among coaches, volunteers, and staff, giving them the opportunity to provide feedback on safeguarding protocols and their implementation.

## Learning from Incidents: Root Cause Analysis

When safeguarding incidents do occur, it's important to conduct a root cause analysis to understand why the incident happened and how similar events can be prevented in the future. Steps include:

- **Identify Contributing Factors** - Look for patterns in the incidents (e.g., location, time, people involved) to identify underlying issues, whether they're procedural (e.g., a lack of training) or environmental (e.g., insufficient adult supervision).
- **Action Plans for Improvement** - Based on the analysis, develop targeted action plans to address identified weaknesses and implement preventive measures.

By embedding Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning into safeguarding strategies, football can create safer environments for players and continuously improve how they address and mitigate risks, thereby ensuring long-term protection for children and vulnerable persons in the game.

# Safeguarding Training

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Member associations should ensure that all persons working with children, young people and vulnerable people in football have received safeguarding training.



# Online Training

Anyone in football can access free online training through the FIFA Guardians Diploma or Certificate courses using the domain name [safeguardinginfootball.fifa.com](https://safeguardinginfootball.fifa.com)

## FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Diploma

The FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Diploma is a series of five online courses designed to support the work of Safeguarding Officers in Member Associations.

It aims to develop a group of trained safeguarding professionals within football. These Safeguarding Officers must be nominated by their Member Association and, once their nomination has been approved by FIFA, they will be referred to as 'Nominated FIFA Learners'. Nominated FIFA Learners will participate in 70 hours of online learning across the five courses. They will also benefit from additional support that includes:

- A series of programme-wide webinars delivered on specific themes.
- An online discussion forum led by experts.
- Feedback for online quiz assessments for each course.
- Feedback on written assessment tasks for Courses 3 and 5.
- Mandatory participation in a FIFA Guardians residential safeguarding workshop.

As a Safeguarding Officer you can collect up to five 'Digital Badges', one for each of the five courses you successfully complete. FIFA will award the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Diploma qualification to those who complete all five courses, the assessments, and fulfil the requirements of the additional face-to-face residential workshop.



## FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Award

If you are not a Nominated FIFA Learner, you can still benefit from all the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football courses by registering as a Global Football Community Learner.

This Award is a series of five online courses designed to support the work of Safeguarding Officers and other people in football. You will receive an Open University 'Digital Badge' for each one of the five courses you successfully complete. The FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Award will be achieved by those who collect all five Digital Badges.

When you complete the full FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Football Award you will have in-depth knowledge to contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for everybody in football, especially children. You will understand how to apply your safeguarding responsibilities and how your own values and behaviours can influence safeguarding standards.

## In Person Training

As member associations seek to raise awareness of safeguarding across all their programme activities there will be a need to reach local grassroots football communities. Given that there are over 2000 living languages in Africa there is a need for in person safeguarding training delivered by local facilitators in local languages.

To support delivery of training CAF has developed guides on the topics of "safeguarding essentials" and "fake agents and trafficking". These training guides can be used by local facilitators and adapted for local languages to help raise awareness of safeguarding, fake agents and trafficking in football in Africa at a grassroots level.

# Introduction to Safeguarding - Facilitators Guide

The aim of this workshop is to raise awareness in football in Africa of Safeguarding. The workshop is for clubs, academies, coaches, volunteers, players and parents/guardians and aims to raise awareness safeguarding in the football both the prevention of abuse and how to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Facilitators are invited to bring their own style and resources to the delivery of this workshop. The priority is to ensure that the three learning outcomes for the workshop are delivered but we appreciate that different facilitators will achieve these outcomes in different ways. The activities and resources provided in this session plan are for guidance. Facilitators can replace the activities with their own and amend the Power Point Slides as they wish provided, they achieve the three learning outcomes.



## Workshop outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to:

- Explain what is meant by safeguarding in football.
- Recognise safeguarding risks in football and take steps to reduce such risks.
- Describe how to report a safeguarding concern.

### Indigenous Languages:

This resource is provided in English (and may be translated into other languages) but we recognise that for training to be effective in protecting vulnerable person if football it is best delivered in local languages. We encourage facilitators to translate and deliver this workshop in indigenous languages.



# Workshop Session Plan



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Time	Intended learning Outcome	Activities	Resources
15 Mins	<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce yourself and the participants. Feel free to use an icebreaker.</li> <li>Show the short introductory video on safeguarding in sport.</li> <li>Explain that the topic we are discussing might be difficult for persons with lived experience of harassment, abuse or exploitation. If during the workshop they become upset, they can excuse themselves or take a break and return later.</li> <li>Explain the purpose of the workshop and the three learning outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PPT Slides 1 to 4.</b></p> <p>A master copy of the PPT slides can be obtained from the CAF Safeguarding Office.</p> <p>Includes video in <b>slide 2</b> which can be downloaded if preferred from <a href="https://www.sport-for-development.com/tools?id=265#cat265">https://www.sport-for-development.com/tools?id=265#cat265</a></p>
30 Mins	<p><b>Safeguarding in Football</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to explain what is meant by safeguarding in football.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define safeguarding in football using <b>PPT slide 6.</b></li> <li>Ask participants to name the four main types of abuse and to identify different forms abuse might take (<b>slides 7-8</b>).</li> <li>Remind participants that abuse can take place in different places and affect anyone if football.</li> <li>Highlight that safeguarding is both prevention and response (<b>slide 9</b>).</li> <li>Use <b>slides 10-14</b> to engage the participants asking them to consider and discuss whether the following behaviours are acceptable or unacceptable? After considering three behaviours on each slide some which refer to football and others to conduct outside football, you can ask what type of abuse is being described?</li> <li>Use <b>slide 15</b> to remind participants that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard others in football.</li> </ul>	<b>PPT Slides 5 to 15</b>
30 Mins	<p><b>Safeguarding Risks in Football</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to recognise safeguarding risks in football and take steps to reduce such risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using <b>slides 19-21</b> organise the workshop into small groups and ask each group to select an aspect of football and ask a) what are the risks of harm, b) how severe would be the impact of the risk, and c) what can be done to reduce the risk. Give groups 10 mins to discuss and 10 mins to report back to the session.</li> <li>Use <b>slides 22-24</b> to look at what safeguards a football club or academy should have in place to reduce safeguarding risks (the eight safeguards).</li> </ul>	<b>PPT Slides 19 to 24</b>
15 Mins	<p><b>How to Report Concerns</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to describe how to report a safeguarding concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that participants are clear about what mechanisms they can use to report safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>Ensure they know to contact the police or social welfare if they are concerned about the immediate safety of a child or vulnerable adult.</li> <li>Ensure they know who the designated safeguarding officer is at their member association, club or academy.</li> </ul>	<b>PPT Slides 22 to 25</b>

## Workshop on Trafficking – Facilitators Guide

The aim of this workshop is to raise awareness in football in Africa regarding the problem of trafficking of young people through football. The workshop is for clubs, academies, players and parents/guardians and aims to raise awareness and reduce the number of young players being exploited by fraudulent agents and subjected to illegal trafficking.

Facilitators are invited to bring their own style and resources to the delivery of this workshop. The priority is to ensure that the three learning outcomes for the workshop are delivered but we appreciate that different facilitators will achieve these outcomes in different ways. The activities and resources provided in this session plan are for guidance. Facilitators can replace the activities with their own and amend the Power Point Slides as they wish provided, they achieve the three learning outcomes.



### Workshop outcomes

By the end of the workshop participants should be able to:

- Describe what is meant by human trafficking and what does trafficking through football involve.
- Recognise signs of trafficking through football and take steps to reduce the risk of players being trafficked.
- Explain how to report a trafficking concern.



### Indigenous Languages:

This resource is provided in English (and may be translated into other languages) but we recognise that for training to be effective in protecting vulnerable person if football it is best delivered in local languages. We encourage facilitators to translate and deliver this workshop in indigenous languages.

# Workshop Session Plan



Click here to download the form, fill it in and print it out.

Time	Intended learning Outcome	Activities	Resources
15 Mins	<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce yourself and the participants. Feel free to use an icebreaker.</li> <li>• Explain that the topic we are discussing might be difficult for persons that have experience of human trafficking and that if someone becomes upset during the workshop they can excuse themselves or take a break and return later.</li> <li>• Explain the purpose of the workshop and the three outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PPT Slides 1 to 3.</b></p> <p>A master copy of the PPT slides can be obtained from the CAF Safeguarding Office.</p>
30 Mins	<p><b>Trafficking through Football</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to describe what is meant by human trafficking and what does trafficking through football involve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to check the understanding of participants as to what is meant by “human trafficking” and specifically “trafficking through football”.</li> <li>• Use PPT slides to introduce the concepts.</li> <li>• Use the case studies in slides 8 to 10 to highlight how real a problem trafficking through football is and some of the consequences in falling for a such a scam.</li> <li>• Alternately you can use your own experience as an example, share alternative stories or show a video on the topic such as “Drogba warns about African footballers’ dreams that turn into nightmares.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>PPT Slides 4 to 10.</b></p> <p>Video - Drogba warns about African footballers’ dreams that turn into nightmares</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/OEQ21Gb4Nv8?si=ZhiYZoVJ_I_ZD-T">https://youtu.be/OEQ21Gb4Nv8?si=ZhiYZoVJ_I_ZD-T</a></p>
30 Mins	<p><b>Recognising Trafficking through Football</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to recognise signs of trafficking through football and take steps to reduce the risk of players being trafficked.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the role of fake and predatory agents, unlicensed clubs and academies, lack of knowledge of the rules around transfers and the layers of vulnerability that all contribute to trafficking through football in Africa.</li> <li>• Highlight the red flags around fake agents and unlicensed clubs or academies (slides 13-16).</li> <li>• Use slides 11 to 22 to guide the session.</li> <li>• Check participants knowledge of the rules regarding international transfers and trials for players who are under 18 years (slides 17-20).</li> <li>• Use slide 22 to highlight the predatory nature of many fake agents and that they groom players and families in order to exploit them.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PPT Slides 11 to 22.</b></p>
15 Mins	<p><b>How to Report Trafficking</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to explain how to report a trafficking concern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish the session by ensuring that everyone in football including players and parents know who to report concerns of trafficking to.</li> <li>• As trafficking is a crime reporting to the police.</li> <li>• Check to see if there is a national hotline where you can report trafficking.</li> <li>• Emphasise that designated safeguarding officers can receive reports of trafficking through football as this is a safeguarding matter.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PPT Slides 23 to 26.</b></p>

# Additional Safeguarding Resources

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In addition to this toolkit there are other useful safe sport resources which are free to access and useful sources of information for safeguarding in football.





## **International Safeguards for Children in Sport**

Visit [SafeinSport.org](https://SafeinSport.org) to access a range of resources including the \*8 International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

Click on the “8 Safeguards” to access resource guides to help strengthen safeguarding in your association, club, team, or academy which are available in several languages.

## **FIFA Guardians™**

Visit [safeguardinginfootball.fifa.com](https://safeguardinginfootball.fifa.com) to access free online training tailored for football organisations.

There are five courses available which are hosted by the Open University. Select the “Global Football Community Learners” and work your way through the five courses to gain your FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Award.

Member Associations can nominate designated safeguarding officers for the nominated learner’s pathway which leads to FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Diploma. This course is run every two years.

Visit the FIFA Digital Hub to find a free copy of the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding Toolkit. This resource is filled with useful information for anyone seeking to develop a safeguarding policy and procedures for their football association, club, team, or academy.

## **GIZ Sport for Development Africa**

Visit the GIZ’s Sport for Development Platform to access useful resources on safeguarding in sport and sport for development contexts.

You will find a video here specifically reflecting the African context and resources including a practitioners guide available in six languages including Arabic and Swahili.

## **UEFA Child Safeguarding Toolkit**

UEFA and Terre des hommes have developed a child safeguarding toolkit for European football. The toolkit establishes guiding principles that will help national associations take measures to protect and safeguard children from abuse and respond to any concerns.

The UEFA safeguarding toolkit has a range of resources that support implementing safeguarding in football including guides, posters, templates and online training.

## Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Safeguarding

The AFC has available online some useful child safeguarding resources which can be found here.

## Sports Integrity Australia

We especially like Sports Integrity Australia's "Children and Young People Safe Practices; Do's & Don'ts" resource but you will find a range of free access safeguarding resources on their website.

## Safe Sport International

We also recommend that you visit Safe Sport International online and click on "Courses & Resources" to check out i-Protect Safeguarding Learning.

**i-Protect will increase your awareness and understanding of safeguarding, enabling you to recognise and respond more effectively to any safeguarding concerns within your organisation.**

Individual access will help you understand safeguarding within the context of five specific roles – Coach, Family, Sport Manager, Leadership Team and Club Coordinator.

Safe Sport International have created i-Protect to make quality safeguarding learning freely available to the sports sector, essential to anyone engaged in any level of sporting activity.

## Common Goal

Common Goal is a global network of football for development organisations that recognises the importance of safeguarding children, vulnerable adults, and communities.

They have a free online safeguarding course called Safer Play designed for the football for development sector.

Safer Play is designed to address the specifics of football for development from a variety of perspectives and roles that surround vulnerable people. This e-course will take you on a learning journey to recognise, reflect and act upon identifying risks of harm, different types of harm, such as physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect on site or online, and building inclusive spaces.

The content was created jointly by committed safeguarding experts from several contexts and geographies, coordinated by Common Goal and supported by the UEFA Foundation for Children to reduce harm in sports for development sector. The e-course is available in French, Spanish, and Arabic with assistive tools to increase accessibility for everyone working with children and young people in non-profit and non-governmental organisations.

## NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit was created in the United Kingdom to support sports organisations to implement safeguarding measures.

Visit their resource library to access a range of resources that can inform your organisation's work in safeguarding in the sport for social change context.

## International Olympics Committee - IOC

The IOC Safeguarding toolkit provides practical guidance for International Federations and National Olympic Committees to create safe sport environments by establishing safeguarding policies and procedures. It emphasizes prevention, reporting, and response mechanisms to protect athletes from harassment and abuse.





**PROTECT  
THE DREAM**

**CAF** SAFEGUARDING