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Airdrieonians FC – Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy

Definition of Adult

For the purpose of this policy an “adult” is any individual aged 18 and over or any individual under the age of 18 years old but who is in a ‘position of trust’. For further information on positions of trust see Practice Note – Relationships.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse is the act or omission that harms a child or young person.

An individual may abuse a child or young person directly, or may indirectly be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person from harming that child or young person, or their inaction leads to harm or risk of harm. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect. Abuse can take place in person or online. Although typically thought of as when an adult is mistreating a child or young person, children and young people can also be perpetrators of abuse against other children or young people.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding is taking action to ensure that all children and young people are safe from harm when involved in football. It means proactively doing everything possible to minimise risk and prevent abuse of children and young people.

Definition of Child Protection

Child protection refers to the actions in response to a specific concern for a child or young person who is at risk or suffering from abuse. Child protection is an essential part of safeguarding if there is a concern that a child or young person is being abused or their safety is compromised.

1.3 Children’s Wellbeing in Scotland

Getting It Right for Every Child

The Scottish Government’s Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is based on children’s rights, and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The GIRFEC approach is child focused, based on an understanding of the wellbeing of a child or young person in their current situation, and based on tackling needs early in a collective way. As part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the concept of wellbeing and the GIRFEC approach is now enshrined in law in Scotland.

The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected, and can realise their full potential. Children and young people should be: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included. These are the eight wellbeing factors and are commonly known as SHANARRI Indicators.

Behaviour which is abusive or neglectful and is, or is likely to cause harm, will often be referred to as a 'child protection concern'. Regardless of whether a concern is a wellbeing or child protection concern, it must be responded to in line with the Responding to Concerns Procedure.

1.4 Risks to Children's Wellbeing in Scottish Football

The protection and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in Scottish football must be a priority for everyone working, volunteering or participating in the game, including spectators. For children and young people involved in football there may be risks associated with their involvement whether it be injury, the despair of their team losing, or exposure to poor practice or abusive behaviour. It is essential that those working or volunteering with children and young people are alert to the associated risks and take steps to prevent, minimise or respond to the risks.

In addition to recognising risks to all children and young people, it is important to understand that some children and young people may be more vulnerable to particular risks associated with taking part in football.

Increased vulnerability

The Club is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and young people in football across all levels of the game. Children and young people who have additional care needs or who come from a minority ethnic group may face a range of additional challenges. Club staff and Volunteers will be encouraged and supported to challenge, and address any behaviour or attitudes which compromise a child or young person's wellbeing, or acts as a deterrent to the participation of some children and young people.

Children in elite football

For many children and young people it is their dream to play football professionally. When they have the talent, skill and dedication to realise this dream they will pursue it. Unfortunately this can lead to a number of increased risks for children and young people involved in football at an elite level. For example, rivalry among their peers, inappropriate or detrimental relationships with their peers, pressure from their family, friends and the wider public, or, in some cases, exploitation by a trusted adult who can, or who they perceive can, help them 'achieve' this dream.

Research by Celia H. Brackenridge in 2010⁴ highlighted the following about the risk to children and young people at an elite level:

- The greatest risk of emotional and sexual abuse occurs among the highest ranked athletes
- Poor practice, emotional abuse and bullying are probably more prevalent in sport than sexual abuse
- Athletes perpetrate more sexual harassment on their peers than coaches
- Athlete-athlete bullying is widespread
- Coach perpetrators are often very highly qualified and very highly respected which acts as a mask for their poor practice and abuse

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have significant communication differences — this may include very limited verbal communication, the use of sign language or other forms of non-verbal communication | |
|--|--|

² Source: Jones, L et al Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies (NSPCC) (2012)

³ Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

⁴ Brackenridge, C.H (2010) 'Myths and evidence — learning from our journey', keynote address to the conference 'How Safe is Your Sport' held at the Excel Sports Centre, Coventry on 25 Feb, hosted by the Coventry Sports Foundation and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit. Available at <http://bura.brunel.ac.uk/handle/2438/4177>

1.5 **Everyone's Responsibility**

The responsibility to safeguard, promote, support and protect a child or young person's wellbeing does not rest on one person. **We are all responsible.**

Football can contribute in many different ways to a child or young person's positive wellbeing including health benefits of being active, the achievements they can make in gaining new skills and their experiences of being included and respected as part of a team. Supporting and promoting a child or young person's wellbeing at all times includes forming positive relationships, understanding their circumstances and responding appropriately to any concerns about their wellbeing. To ensure we can respond when a child or young person needs help or support, we must firstly understand their rights and the meaning of wellbeing. Secondly, we must recognise and acknowledge the risks that exist for children and young people in football and put in place a range of safeguards that minimise these risks.

Leadership is essential to ensure that these safeguards are managed and promoted, and this will be done by Club staff and volunteers within particular roles who receive specific training for their level of responsibility. However, everyone must understand the risks associated for children and young people, and the appropriate processes which are in place should a child or young person's wellbeing be at risk or they are in need for protection.

Everyone has the responsibility to recognise the concern, to ensure the child or young person is safe if they are at risk of immediate harm, and to report the concern to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Department. Thereafter the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer can respond appropriately in line with the [Responding to Concerns Procedure](#).

Airdrieonians FC – Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy

- We see the child or young person before the player, coach, volunteer, spectator or referee
 - Children and young people have the right to express views on matters that affect them, should they wish to do so, and to have those views taken into account
 - Children and young people have the right to relax, play, and join in a wide range of sporting activities
4. The best way to promote the wellbeing, health and development of a child or young person is to work in partnership with each other, the child or young person, their parents/carers and other relevant organisations

<p style="text-align: center;">ACCOUNTABLE</p> <p>We accept responsibility and take ownership of the wellbeing and protection of children in our game. Our collective leadership calls upon integrity, consistency and confidence in our everyday behaviours.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INCLUSIVE</p> <p>Football is for everyone, irrespective of background. We celebrate what makes us unique and embrace our differences. We create a culture where rights are respected and everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OUR VALUES</p> <p>Our values support our efforts to achieve our vision. They set the tone of our work and will be visible in our decisions and actions. All Club members of staff and Volunteers, when working or volunteering with children and young people involved in Club activities, will be...</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">APPROACHABLE</p> <p>We are visible, accessible, open and caring. We build respectful and supportive relationships, listening to children’s voices, and championing their views in everything we do.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">EMPOWERING</p> <p>We are forward facing and strive to be the best for children and young people. We are brave, challenging ourselves and others to continually strive for the best outcomes for children and young people. We encourage and support children and young people to express their views.</p>

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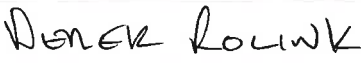
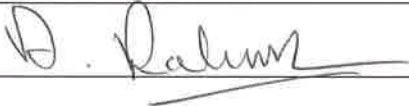
- Always listen to and act upon any concerns raised by a child or young person
- Allow young people the right of being involved in decisions affecting them

Sign Up

I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy including the Policy Statement, Procedures and all associated Practice Notes.

I agree to abide and demonstrate the Club's Wellbeing and Protection Values.

I understand that a breach of the Club's Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with the Responding to Concerns Procedure and, where applicable, the Club's Disciplinary Procedure.

Name:	Scott Russell
Position:	Managing Director
Signed:	
Witnessed by:	 
Date:	30 January 2025