



Child Protection and Safeguarding

As a club we have a duty to protect the young people that support our club, whether they are volunteers, members or occasional spectators. We all have responsibility to ensure their safety – physically and emotionally.

The best way of ensuring children's safety is if EVERYONE at this club helps to ensure nothing untoward happens to any of our youngsters. All adults; management staff, players, coaches, board members, volunteers and match day fans should be vigilant at all times for both active abuse or signs of inappropriate behaviour towards youngsters.

If you become aware of any of our youngsters being abused physically or verbally, whether it is at a home or away match, the club would ask that you report it immediately to a club official or the Club Welfare Officer, Chris Boulderstone by phone 07813 913357 or email chrisb@fc-utd.co.uk

Awareness of Age

There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child "*means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.*" It isn't always easy to guess the age of a young person and girls particularly often look and act much older than their years, so if in doubt, treat the young person as a child.

Young Volunteers

There have been a couple of occasions where our ball crew have been verbally abused by opposing and on one occasion, home fans. This can be extremely frightening for our youngsters. They are there to do a job and abuse in any form should not be tolerated. We would not encourage anyone to put themselves at risk in an altercation, but again we implore that you report it immediately to a club official, in order for it to be dealt with appropriately.

Social Networks

Advice is given in the players' code of conduct about social networking sites, but everyone should be aware of posting things that could bring the club into disrepute. Lots of our young fans belong to social networks. Although the legal age for Facebook is 13, I know a number of our fans younger than 13 *are* using Facebook. Twitter and other sites have no lower age limit. We would therefore encourage everyone to be aware of this, when adding "friends" or "followers" to their networks. Some of the content/language used on adult's accounts is not age appropriate and this needs to be taken into consideration. If you are not sure of the

person's age, it is probably best to reject their request to "follow" or "friend." We would ask that you NEVER send or answer private messages from youngsters, as this could lead to all kinds of problems. If a youngster does private message you with something you need to share; i.e. if you think they are disclosing that they are at risk in any form, please do not try to deal with this yourself, but report it to a club official or the Club Welfare Officer.

If Youngsters Feel Abused at FC United

If any of our younger supporters feel they have been abused in any way, we would ask that they or their parents inform us immediately and not wait until they get home. That way we can deal with it in a timely fashion.

Disclosure

If a young person approaches you with suggestions that they have or are being in any way abused, please DO NOT question them about the incident. Listen to everything they have to say and then report it to the appropriate person in order that correct action can be taken. If you question them it could be construed as "leading." Qualified people will know how to talk to the child to gain facts.

Likewise, if a young person approaches you and tells you they have been, or are being abused, NEVER agree to keep it secret. You MUST inform the child that you have to report the disclosure to the appropriate person, but reassure them that it will be in their best interest and will be dealt with in a considerate manner. This also applies if a young person divulges that they are self-harming in any way. Appropriate action needs to be taken to protect the young person, so please report any problems immediately.

Document prepared by;

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