



# RICKMANSWORTH YOUTH FC

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## Child Protection Policy

**Rickmansworth Youth FC is committed to creating and preserving the safest possible environment for children to play football. It is the duty of the club and team officials and other individuals directly or indirectly involved with children playing at the club to be aware of and help prevent abuse which children can suffer: physical, sexual, neglect, bullying and emotional.**

Rickmansworth Youth accepts children's welfare is paramount and all children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender or religious belief, have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to in an appropriate manner.

### FORMS OF ABUSE

There are five main categories of abuse you should be aware of:

#### Physical

This can include any direct acts of physical injury upon a child or young person, which are not the result of normal competitive interaction. This can also include training sessions, which clearly exceed capacity of the child's body to manage and encouraging young people to take alcohol, cigarettes or inappropriate drugs.

#### Sexual

This includes all forms of sexual acts perpetrated upon a child by another person. Younger children cannot give consent due to their age and experience, but this issue is more complex between older children of similar age groups. The essential issue is one of exploitation, which is considered to have occurred if the activity was unwanted when first began and/or involved a misuse of power, age or authority. This can also include exposure or failure to prevent the exposure of children to all forms of pornography.

#### Neglect

This relates to the persistent failure to prevent the exposure of a child to danger, or the extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, medical or physical which results in the significant impairment of the child's health or development. This can occur when a coach fails to adequately supervise the safety of young children or exposes any child to extreme or unmanageable weather conditions or preventable risk of serious injury.

#### Emotional

This is persistent and psychological ill treatment, which results in a severe impact upon a child's behaviour and development. It will involve a denial of normal respect and may take the form of persistent personal criticism or humiliation in the absence of any positive or concern. This can



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happen in competitive situations when children are subject to a persistent level of personalised criticism and/or bullying as a result of the unrealistic expectations of others.

## **Bullying**

It is not always easy to define bullying. It can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types of bullying are:

- **Physical** (e.g. hitting, kicking and theft)
- **Verbal** (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats or name calling)
- **Emotional** (e.g. isolating an individual from activities)

Emotional or verbal bullying is more common in football than physical violence. It can also be difficult to deal with or prove.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse is occurring. Any concerns about the welfare of a child or young person should be reported as explained in these procedures. Indications that a child or young person may be suffering from abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- Any injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The child or young person describing what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else – a child or adult, expressing concern about the welfare of another child or young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Sexual awareness inappropriate for age
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games
- Being mistrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Having difficulty in making friends
- Being prevented from socialising with other children or young people
- Variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite



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- Loss of weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. All children and young people will suffer cuts, bruising and grazes from time to time, and their behaviour may sometimes give cause for concern. There may well be a reason for these factors other than abuse.

If, however, you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person you **must** act. Do not assume that somebody else will.

## **WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE MAKES ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Remember non-action is not an option in child protection. The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child or young person in football, the home or other settings:

- Understand that this may be the only time the person has built up courage to tell someone what has happened
- Stop what you are doing and respect the persons privacy, listen to what they tell you
- Do not react in a way which may add to the persons distress e.g. with anger or shock
- Only question to establish exactly what was done and who did it
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep any secrets, you may have to tell someone else
- Do not ask leading questions e.g. did he/she.....
- Let the person know that you understand how difficult it is to talk about such experiences
- Inform Rickmansworth Youth FC Child Protection Officer
- Make an accurate record of the time and date and exactly what was said
- Do not discuss with any other parties who may be involved

## **WHEN DEALING WITH YOUNG PERSONS**

### **Always:**

- Treat all players and children with respect and dignity befitting of their age



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- Watch their language, tone of voice and the nature of any physical contact
- Record and report all allegations of abuse

## **Never:**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate or intrusive touching of any kind
- Allow children to use sexually explicit language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun
- Not follow up any allegations a child may make, always act as directed
- Invade the privacy of children when they are changing, showering or going to the toilet

## **Avoid:**

- Doing things of an intimately personal nature that children can do for themselves e.g. going to the toilet
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with the children away from others
- Taking children alone on car journeys however short
- Taking children to your home

**Where any of the situations are unavoidable, first seek parental consent where possible. If unable to speak to the parent, always inform them of the circumstances as soon as practicable.**