



# COVID-19

## Safeguarding Arrangements

April 3, 2020.

## 1. CONTEXT

Watford Football Club (the Club) is following the Government guidance regarding social distancing, therefore most activities that the Club and the Club's Community Sports and Education Trust operate are no longer taking place.

The Club's Academy and Training Ground located in London Colney was closed on the 12th March 2020 and the Club's stadium based offices and all retail outlets were closed to the public on the 16th March 2020.

Most of our staff are working from home therefore there will be times when staff engage with children, young people and adult at risk be it over the phone or electronically.

On the 20th March 2020 the Government closed schools for all children except for the children of essential workers.

This addendum to the Club's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults at Risk policies contains the details our safeguarding arrangements during COVID-19.

## 2. REPORTING A CONCERN

Where staff have a concern regarding a child, adult at risk or a member of staff, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the Club's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policies ensuring concerns are reported on the Club's safeguarding system (CPOMS) and to the Clubs Head of Safeguarding - email is preferred.

Staff must report any concern they have immediately, closure of the Stadium and Academy offices should not affect how we deal with safeguarding issues.

## 3. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

**Kim Pearce** - Head of Safeguarding  
07876 786910 - [kim.pearce@watfordfc.com](mailto:kim.pearce@watfordfc.com)

**Carlan Edgar** - Academy Welfare & Safeguarding manager  
07718 492205 - [carlan.edgar@watfordfc.com](mailto:carlan.edgar@watfordfc.com)

The Head of Safeguarding remains in daily contact with the Board's Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding issues are constantly discussed.

## 4. SAFER RECRUITMENT/VOLUNTEERS AND MOVEMENT OF STAFF

It is essential that only staff with the correct vetting are gaining access to children and adults at risk. The club will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes in accordance with the policy.

The Club through the Head of safeguarding will continue to follow its legal duty to refer to the Premier League FA and relevant authorities anybody who poses a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk.

The Club acknowledges the challenge of the current national emergency, therefore it is essential from a safeguarding perspective that the Club is aware on any given day which staff or volunteers will be working directly or remotely with children or adults at risk and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anybody engaging in any regulated activity. The Head of Safeguarding will keep a record of these.

## 5. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important that all staff who interact with children and young people, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk, Any such concerns should be dealt with in accordance with the Club's safeguarding policy and that the Head of Safeguarding is contacted immediately.

All staff are reminded of the Club's social media policy and should be aware of their data protection / GDPR responsibilities.

All staff who are in regular contact with children in the Academy or in the Community should be mindful of the below.

- Staff should only use equipment (laptops, mobile phones) that are provided by the Club to communicate with children and young people, any difficulties should be discussed with the Head of Safeguarding.
- Where possible contact should be carried out in groups.
- All contact should be carried out with parental consent
- When using online video, staff and children must wear suitable clothing as should anybody else in the household who may be seen.
- Computers when webcams are used should be located in appropriate area's for example not in bedrooms. Staff should be mindful to ensure the visual background has no inappropriate material.
- Web based contact should be recorded where possible
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.

## 6. SUPPORTING SCHOLARS

The Club is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all it's Scholars, The Head of Education and the Academy Welfare and safeguarding Manager will ensure that:

- All Scholars are contacted by Club staff once a week
- Weekly Academy Management Team meetings take place each week and any welfare or education concerns should be raised.
- Activities for the scholars to engage with are sent out by the Head of Education.
- The medical/ fitness team provide each Scholar with recovery and fitness support and their health is monitored.
- Where a Scholar is identified as requiring further support or help a robust communication plan is put in place to manage the needs of the child. Details of such plan will be recorded on CPOMS together with all contact with the scholar.

## 7. WIDER ACADEMY

The Club recognises that the Academy is a protective feature / environment for some children and young people and with the current COVID-19 related circumstances, separation may affect the mental health of children and young people, their parents and carers. Lead coaches should ensure that players and their families are regularly contacted

## 8. HOST FAMILIES

With the Academy closed, all children and young persons living in Great Britain have been allowed to return home. Where a young person has had to remain in host accommodation, they will receive weekly support by coaches and welfare team to ensure any issues are identified and addressed.

## 9. VULNERABLE CHILDREN

It is essential that staff are aware of the vulnerable children whom they work with and in particular those who have been subject of discussion during the Academy's wellbeing team meetings in the past. Particular attention should be paid to these children and any concerns raised to the Head of Safeguarding immediately.

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, those with and health or education plans, those with specific health needs, and those who live in an environment where they may require assistance financially or emotionally.

**Kim Pearce** - Head of Safeguarding

3 April 2020.