

SYFA Limited (SYFA)



PLAYER PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

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FORWARD

The Scottish Youth FA Limited (SYFA) is a Company Limited by Guarantee set up in May 1999 as the governing body for grassroots recreation youth football.

The Scottish Youth FA mission is:

Leading the way and modernising our approach to guarantee the continued growth of grassroots football.

Encouraging all boys and girls throughout Scotland to play organised football and enabling every child to develop and flourish as a player.

SYFA is helping all SYFA volunteers to create a safe and fun environment while developing and supporting all players.

The Scottish Youth FA vision is:

To increase the number of children and young adults playing organised, quality football throughout Scotland.

The SYFA is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all players in its care and recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect players from harm, abuse and exploitation.

SYFA Staff and all registered officials will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people and are fully committed to and recognises the importance of the volunteer sector without whom it would be impossible for football to function at grassroots level in Scotland.

This document outlines the SYFA commitment to protect all players. These guidelines are based on the following principles and are supported by our work and experiences over a number of years:

- *The welfare of players is the primary concern;*
- *All players, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse;*
- *Protection is the responsibility of all registered SYFA officials, member leagues & clubs;*
- *Players have a right to express their views on all matters which affect them and should be encouraged to do so in appropriate ways e.g. at club meetings;*
- *The SYFA shall work in partnership together with players and parents to promote the welfare, health and development of players within the Scottish Governments GIRFEC framework of supporting children to be Active.*

Child Protection and the SYFA

Child protection in SYFA is not only protecting children from others who may seek to harm them through sport. A trusted coach or leader may be the person a child chooses to tell about something that is happening at home or out with sport, in either case the SYFA have a responsibility to act on all concerns.

Participation in sport is an important contribution to a child's development to support them to be Active and Healthy (GIRFEC). A child's natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in a positive environment created by sports organisations. Sport provides an excellent opportunity for them to maintain good health, learn new skills, become more confident, build resilience, self-esteem and maximise their own unique potential. This is particularly important for children who are affected by adversity and who may be particularly vulnerable.

The SYFA is committed to addressing, planning and implementing the protection of children and young people. This will:

- ensure the governing body and member clubs fulfill legal and moral obligations for the care and protection of players;
- Send a positive message to both players and parents about the value you place on players and their participation in your sport;
- Send a positive message to staff and officials that you will support and guide them when they work with players and you will put safeguards in place to minimise risk to all;
- Set the standards and expectations for everyone working in the sport and provides a benchmark against which practice can be measured and challenged;
- Build a legacy for the future of the sport;
- Reduce the risk of legal action against the organisation by ensuring that all legal duties have been fulfilled and that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard and promote the health, welfare and development of players.

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

POLICY STATEMENT

In Scottish law a child is defined as being a person under the age of 16 years however for the purpose of this policy SYFA registered players up to the age of 18 years will be covered.

SYFA plus its Working Groups, Committees, regions, member leagues/associations, member clubs and officials are fully committed to providing every player and official with a safer environment in which they may enjoy participating in grassroots football.

BACKGROUND AND THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Children's Act (Scotland) 1995 states that the 'welfare of the child is paramount' Child protection in the wider context of the Scottish Government framework for every child in Scotland is set under the framework of '*Getting it right for every child*' (GIRFEC) which is supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of which the principles are enshrined in legislation and practice throughout the UK.

All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it, and this is paramount within a SYFA setting.

The Scottish Government's vision is that all Scotland's children and young people will be: successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. GIRFEC promotes the well-being of all children and young people in eight areas. The well-being indicators state that children and young people will be: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included. (the indicators are referred to as SHANARRI indicators)

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The SYFA is fully committed to protecting the welfare of all players in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and protect players from harm, abuse and exploitation.

This policy outlines the SYFA commitment to protect players and is based on the following player's rights:

The rights to:

- a safe environment;
- not to be illegally discriminated against;
- protection against harm or the risk of harm;
- protection against all forms of abuse including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, neglect and bullying;

- express opinions and to have those opinions considered in all matters that concern their wellbeing;
- all actions concerning the child will be in his/her best interests;
- have all suspicions and allegations taken seriously and actioned as appropriate.

The SYFA shall:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in grassroots football safely;
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of players;
- Promote and implement appropriate guidelines to protect the welfare of players and protect them from abuse;
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff and officials to adopt best practice to protect players from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves;
- Ensure all staff and registered officials know that they have a responsibility to keep children safe;
- Ensure staff and officials adopt and abide by this Player Protection Policy and Procedures;
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of players in line with this Policy and procedures and implement, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures;
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy and procedures;
- Annually review this policy to ensure it is kept up to date with changes in legislation;
- Ensure that all staff, registered officials and volunteers are PVG registered.

In February 2011, through the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, the Scottish Government introduced a new membership scheme- (PVG). SYFA is supported by the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS) in making applications for PVG membership.

PVG will:

- Help to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour
- Be quick and easy to use, reducing the need for PVG Scheme members to complete a detailed application form every time a disclosure check is required
- Strike a balance between proportionate protection and robust regulation and make it easier for employers to determine who they should check to safeguard their client group.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Assessments by professionals will consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not SYFA staff, officials or volunteers responsibility to investigate or decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone, however it is our responsibility and duty, as set out in these procedures, to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child that where there are concerns about. Children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred

Some of the main types of abuse are: **Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse and Neglect**

Although bullying is not defined as a separate form of abuse there is clear evidence that it is abusive and has been included in this policy due to the type of roles that are undertaken by the SYFA.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life and any. Injuries should always be interpreted by their developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbow, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body.

Within grassroots football, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the young person's immature and growing body.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

- bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- cigarette burns, scalds or other burns;
- human bite marks;
- broken bones.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts/moods;
- flinching when approached or touched;
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- withdrawn behaviour.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person and may cause children to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled and can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Within grassroots football this may occur when the young person is constantly criticized, given negative feedback or expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- being unable to play;
- fear of making mistakes;
- sudden speech disorders;
- self-harm;
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour;
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities or watching sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts and is carried out by men, women and other children/young people.

In grassroots football activities which might involve physical contact with players could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain, itching or bleeding in the genital area;
- stomach pains;
- discomfort when walking or sitting down;
- pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which may also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn;
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- nightmares and bedwetting;
- running away from home;
- sexual knowledge/language/behaviour which is beyond their age, or developmental level;
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia;
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about;
- substance or drug abuse;
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence).

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It can involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or seeking access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It also includes neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet can have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

Signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, scavenging/stealing food from other children;
- constantly dirty or 'smelly' loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time;
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments;
- having few friends;
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

The effects of bullying are frequently underestimated and can cause considerable distress to children in all aspects of their lives.

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms. A child may encounter bullying attacks that are:

- physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats;
- verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing;
- emotional: excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating;
- cyber bullying: internet, Facebook, social media.

The following are a list of the effects of persistent bullying:

- low mood;
- low self-esteem;
- shyness;
- isolation;
- threatened or attempted suicide.

Signs that a child may be being bullied can be:

- cuts and bruises;
- torn clothes;
- falling out with previously good friends;
- moody/bad tempered or aggressive towards others;
- not wanting to attend football training or games;
- Anxious or becoming quiet and withdrawn.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING BULLYING

Players may be bullied by adults, their peers and in some cases by their families

Action to Help the Victim(s) and Prevent Bullying:

Take all signs of bullying very seriously.

Encourage all players to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim(s) to speak out and tell you by creating an open environment.

Take all allegations seriously and take action to ensure the victim(s) is safe. Discuss with the Protection Officer about what action to take next: e.g. speaking with the victim, bully(ies) and the parents.

Reassure the victim(s) that you can be trusted and will help them, **DO NOT PROMISE THAT YOU WILL NOT TELL ANYONE ELSE.**

Discuss with your Protection Officer that bullying is occurring and ensure that you record the incident using the SYFA recording form.

Action towards the Bully(ies):

Following discussion with the Protection Officer and agree what the actions will be, this may include the bully(ies) recognising and understanding the consequences of their behavior, being monitored for changes in behavior or being asked to leave the club.

ALWAYS inform the bully's parents/guardians.

If appropriate, insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensates the victim.

Impose sanctions as necessary and monitor changes.

Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.

Complete the SYFA incident recording form of action taken.

OTHER SIGNS THAT MAY LEAD TO ABUSE

Domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse - takes the form of actions that can result in physical, sexual and psychological harm and suffering for women/men and children. The impact of domestic abuse varies and it is widely unreported. It is crucial that those involved with SYFA are aware of the signs of domestic abuse and report any concerns to their protection officer. Further information can be found at Police Scotland:

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/advice-for-victims-of-crime/domestic-abuse/>

Racism

Children from British minority ethnic communities (and their parents) may have experienced harassment, racial discrimination, and institutional racism. Although not formally recognised as a form of child abuse, racism can be emotionally harmful to children. Some racist acts also involve acts of physical violence towards individuals or groups.

SYFA will not tolerate any form of racism and appropriate actions will be taken to address this. See **advice sheet number 5** for further information.

Harassment

An essential characteristic of harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient. It is for individuals to determine what behaviour is acceptable to him or her and what they regard as offensive.

Children may experience harassment or negative discrimination because of their race or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, culture, age, disability, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs. This can have a detrimental effect on a child.

Parental alcohol and drug misuse

The risks to and impacts on children of parental problematic alcohol/drug use are well-researched and can result in sustained abuse, neglect, maltreatment, behavioural problems, disruption in caregiving, social isolation and stigma of children. There may also be a lack of structure and discipline in family life. Any concerns of parental problematic alcohol or drug use must be discussed with the Protection Officer.

Disability

Deaf or disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse and this can be related to poor communication skills with neglect being the most frequently reported form of abuse, followed by emotional abuse.

It is imperative that all SYFA staff are aware of the needs of deaf and disabled children and are vigilant to issues of abuse that may be unreported. This is discussed further within **advice sheet number 5**.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure the safety of all players, all concerned must function as a unit with defined roles.

ROLE OF THE PLAYER'S PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- Take all measures necessary to protect their children from harm or the risk of harm whilst at SYFA events;
- Ensure that they are satisfied with the club and the club's officials that their child proposes to join;
- Must sign their sons'/daughters' SYFA/SFA player registration form;
- Make their own arrangements for the transportation of children to and from the activity;
- Ensure that they have notified officials of any specialist medical or other assistance arising in relation to an existing medical condition or disability to allow the club to ensure the safety of their child during any grassroots activities.

ROLE OF THE CLUB OFFICIAL

Ensure that:

- All steps are taken to protect all players and officials from abuse, harm or risk of harm during all football activities under the jurisdiction of SYFA and report any suspected or alleged breaches of the SYFA Protection Policies & Guidelines to the relevant Protection Officer;
- All registered secretaries, protection officers, first aiders and officials who meet the requirements of the PVG Scheme are PVG registered within 6 months of commencing with their club;
- All officials seeking membership of the SYFA complete an SYFA Self-Declaration Form. (the form is available on the SYFA website downloads section under protection see also SYFA forms at the end of this policy) and if directed by The SYFA Protection Panel submit or resubmit a fully completed SYFA Self-Declaration Form;
- All SYFA Self-Declaration Forms, where the answer to Part A, (have you any convictions), is **YES**, are sent to the SYFA National Protection Officer at Scottish Youth FA, Hampden Park, Glasgow, G42 9BF within an envelope clearly marked **PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**. This will only be viewed by SYFA Protection Panel;
- All SYFA Self-Declaration Forms, where the answer to Part A, (have you any convictions), is **NO**, are sent to the SYFA Club Protection Officer and safely stored by the club;
- **All appointments, changes or resignation of club officials are notified to the Chief Executive in writing within 7 days;**
- They are fully conversant with club Protection Policies, SYFA Protection Policy, club's Constitution and Rules and the SYFA Articles of Association and the SYFA Supplementary & Playing Rules;
- They display high standards in respect of behaviour and appearance **AT ALL TIMES** and project an image of health, cleanliness and efficiency in respect of the function for which they have responsibility;
- They observe the SYFA registration procedures in respect of age group and maturity of their players and must promote the FIFA initiative on fair play;
- They have the appropriate coaching qualifications for ability of players they are coaching subject to the SYFA Supplementary & Playing Rules;
- Inform all player's parents/guardians, players and other officials of the name and full contact details for the club's protection officer.

Club Officials will not be eligible for membership if they:

- **Refuse to submit a fully completed SYFA Self-Declaration.**
- **Submit an SYFA Self-Declaration Form and provide false information or omit information which later comes to light.**

Club Officials will have their membership terminated:

- If they are charged with any criminal offence and do not report this charge to the Chief Executive (this must be immediately reported to the Chief Executive in writing)

ROLE OF THE CLUB:

Ensure that:

- They appoint Club Officials to undertake the responsibilities as previously listed and they are registered with the SYFA and PVG scheme.
- The club takes all steps, to protect all players and officials from abuse, harm or the risk of harm during all football activities
- Immediate notification is made to the Chief Executive in writing if an official is charged with any criminal offence. Any club who do not report a charge will have their membership of the association immediately terminated.
- They appoint a Protection Officer (this includes community clubs) and ensure they undertake the Protection Officer Training as provided by the SYFA. This will ensure a single point of contact for anyone with concerns about a player, a consistency of response to any concerns, secure handling of information and co-ordination of referrals to other agencies. This is further explained in **advice sheet number 4**
- When seeking membership the official online membership application is completed ensuring they tick the declaration box. This will ensure all club officials are PVG checked.
- That club members, players and players' parents/guardians are advised of who the club Protection Officer is.
- They consider having more than one Protection Officer as this will help to share the workload, avoid reliance on one person, provide cover during sickness and holidays and generate a support system for those acting in the role.
- They include or refer to the SYFA Player Protection Policy within their Constitution.
- They carry out relevant checks on ALL club officials before they are offered membership of the club e.g. identification - they are who they say they are. Checks to be carried out in accordance with the **SYFA Application/Selection Procedures**.
- Their registered officials attend league meetings for PVG Scheme checking plus complete SYFA Self-Declaration Forms for ALL officials. Forms will be supplied by the local SYFA Additional Signatory at the meeting.
- All officials are fully conversant with their club's Protection Policies, SYFA Player Protection Policy, club's Constitution and Rules and the SYFA Articles of Association and the SYFA Supplementary & Playing Rules.
- The club is committed to eradicating bad practice and to implement all proposals or amendments in respect of player protection policies.
- In cases of reported abuse, maintain total confidentiality as guided by the Club Protection Officer.

ROLE OF THE SYFA LEAGUE OR ASSOCIATION:

All League's/associations must take all steps to protect players and officials from abuse, harm or risk of harm during all activities.

- On seeking membership of the SYFA must complete the online membership application ensuring they tick the declaration box to enable all club officials to be PVG Scheme checked. The names, addresses and dates of birth of all league/association officials shall be submitted by the league/association when seeking membership and upon annual renewal. All league/association officials will be subject to PVG Scheme checking procedures and must adhere to the terms of the Scottish Youth FA Player Protection Policy. Any official who does not agree to be PVG Scheme checked or is deemed unsuitable by the SYFA Protection Panel will not be eligible for membership of the league/association or the SYFA;
- ensure that all officials acting for or on behalf of the league are registered with the SYFA;

- A league/association official in membership of the association who is charged with any criminal offence must immediately report this charge to the Chief Executive in writing. A league/association official who does not report a charge will have their membership of the association immediately terminated;
- **All appointments, changes or resignation of club officials must be notified to the Chief Executive in writing within 7 days;**
- All leagues/associations must hold PVG Scheme checking meetings and ensure registered officials attend these plus complete SYFA Self-Declaration Forms for ALL officials. Forms will be supplied by the local SYFA Additional Signatory at the meeting;
- Review and approve all Club Membership Application Forms and advise the Chief Executive in writing of any officials whom the League consider be PVG Scheme checked as a matter of urgency;
- Following any alleged incidents of abuse, inform of the actions taken to the Chief Executive or in his absence the SYFA National Protection Officer at Hampden Park and ensure that the incident report form is completed;
- **MUST** appoint a Protection Officer for protection issues and an Additional Signatory for PVG checking and inform all league officials and member clubs of the official responsible for Protection within the league and their contact details. For more information please see **Advice Sheet 4**

Additional Signatories carry out all duties of the Protection Officer plus:

- Check that all PVG Scheme Forms are completed properly, witness identification documentation and send all fully completed and approved PVG Scheme Forms to the SYFA Chief Executive at Hampden Park;
- Ensure any officials highlighted as top priority by either their club, league or associations are prioritised for PVG Scheme checking;
- Request the relevant PVG Scheme Forms on behalf of their members which are obtained from the Chief Executive or the National Protection Officer.

ROLE OF THE SYFA PROTECTION PANEL:

- Take all reasonable steps, where possible, to protect all players and officials from harm or the risk of harm during all activities under the jurisdiction of SYFA;
- Ensure that the Board of the SYFA is fully informed regarding all protection procedures;
- Receive up-to-date information about child protection good practice, legislation, guidance and training and pass it on to those who need to know in the clubs, leagues, associations and regions;
- Ensure that ALL SYFA officials are PVG Scheme checked;
- Ensure that officials highlighted as top priority by their club, league or association are prioritised for PVG Scheme checking;
- make decisions on membership of the SYFA for officials and clubs and inform all relevant parties of decisions taken;
- Maintain a register, in a safe and secure environment, of all expelled persons;
- In cases of reported abuse, maintain total confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis i.e. with people who need to know to ensure the child's health, welfare and development;
- Deal with all cases reported in accordance with SYFA Protection Panel Procedures;
- Monitor the implementation of the SYFA Player Protection Policy and Guidelines and ensure that this is reviewed on an annual basis.

All decisions of the SYFA Protection Panel shall be in accordance with the Protection Panel Procedures.

ROLE OF THE SYFA LEGISLATIONS WORKING GROUP:

- Make any recommendations regarding all protection issues to the SYFA Board for their approval;
- Reduce the risk of legal action against the SYFA by ensuring that all legal duties have been fulfilled and that all reasonable steps have been taken to protect and promote the health, welfare and development of players;
- Ensure that the Player Protection Policy is available to all member clubs, club officials, leagues, associations and regional committees and provide support and guidance as and when required;
- Ensure implementation by all member clubs, club officials, leagues, associations and regional committees of SYFA protection policies and procedures;
- Monitor usage of all SYFA protection policies and procedures as required. Review on an annual basis and recommend any required actions and/or changes to the Board for approval;
- To appoint a Protection Collator with responsibility for liaising with VSDS and/or Disclosure Scotland covering all SYFA PVG Checks;
- Advise all member clubs, leagues, associations and regions of the Collator responsible for Protection within the SYFA plus his/her contact details.
The SYFA Protection Collator is David Little, Chief Executive, SYFA, Hampden Park, Glasgow, G42 9BF, 0141 620 4590.
- Appoint a National Protection Officer for protection issues and inform all member clubs, leagues, associations and regions of their contact details.
The SYFA National Protection Officer is Hazel Killen, SYFA, Hampden Park, Glasgow, G42 9BF, 0141 620 4590.

SYFA is under a duty to refer an individual who has undertaken regulated work for them to Disclosure Scotland in certain circumstances. Further information on this is available within the **Procedures for making a referral to Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG).**

3. ADVICE SHEETS, CHECKLISTS & RISK REGISTER

By the introduction of good practice throughout the SYFA it is possible to reduce harm or the risk of harm during all activities under the jurisdiction of SYFA.

A series of advice sheets have been produced and must be read in conjunction with this policy. These advice sheets have been introduced to provide practical guidance for all SYFA Officials /volunteers working with players within the SYFA to keep all players safe and promote a safer operational environment for all members.

The Advice Sheets are as follows:

- 1. Top Ten Tips – Protection Basics**
Introduces our top ten tips for protecting all participants at grassroots football events involving a SYFA member and gives basic guidelines for protecting players or adults at risk of harm at any football competition or tournament whatever the event level.
- 2. Creating a Safe Environment for SYFA Players**
Describes the steps you should take when planning any festival or tournament to minimize the chances of concerns and incidents arising.
- 3. Protection Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4. Responding to Protection Concerns**
Everyone involved in delivering any type or size of event should know what to do if a protection concern comes to their attention
- 5. Specific Practice Guidance**
Guidance for events where consideration if required for:
 - Deaf or disabled participants;
 - Adults at risk of harm;
 - Elite young athletes;

- Players from minority ethnic groups;
 - Interpreters;
 - Chaperones;
 - E-technology: social media, mobile phones and the internet.
6. **Away Fixtures, Day Trips and Overnight Stays**
Guidance to regions, leagues, or clubs away fixtures or day trips, including overnight stays with accommodation where this applies.
7. **Travel Abroad and Hosting**
Guidance for international activities, tournaments or friendly challenge matches.

The Checklists are as follows:

5. **SYFA Checklist for Trips with Overnight Stays – Before Booking a Trip**
A checklist for regions, leagues, or clubs with advice on considerations that they require to make before they booking a trip.
6. **SYFA Checklist for Trips with Overnight Stays – Before Travelling/During a Trip**
A checklist for regions, leagues, or clubs with advice on considerations that they require to make before they travel or during their trip.
7. **SYFA Checklist for Trips with Overnight Stays – After Returning from a Trip**
A checklist for regions, leagues, or clubs with advice on considerations that they require to make after returning from a trip.
8. **SYFA Checklist for Trips with Overnight Stays – Documentation and Equipment for a Trip**
A checklist for regions, leagues, or clubs with advice on considerations that they require to make for trip documentation and equipment.

The Risk Strategy/Register is as follows:

3. **SYFA Risk Strategy for Trip**
This strategy gives information on how to carry out a risk appraisal for trips
4. **SYFA Risk Register for Trip**
This register gives information on issues that need to be considered before any trips

The **ADVICE SHEETS, CHECKLISTS & RISK STRATEGY/REGISTER** can be found at www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk then **SELECT “INFORMATION DOWNLOADS”** and then **CLICK** on **“PROTECTION INFORMATION”**

ALL PROTECTION OFFICERS MUST ENSURE THAT ALL OTHER SYFA OFFICIALS ARE GIVEN THIS INFORMATION ON BEING APPOINTED. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROTECTION OFFICER TO ENSURE ALL OFFICIALS RECEIVE THESE AND ADHERE TO THEM WITHIN THEIR WORK UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SYFA.

4. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the purposes of this policy confidentiality shall include, but shall not be limited to the following where officials:

- Must not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to the SYFA or any persons using the SYFA’s service or in respect of which the SYFA owes an obligation of confidence to a third party during or after any appointment except in the proper course of the appointment or as required by law;
- Must not during the course of any involvement with SYFA or a member, bring the SYFA or any member into any form of disrepute;
- Must not remove any documents or tangible items, which belong to the SYFA or a member, or which contain any confidential information from the SYFA’s premises at any time without the proper advance authorisation;

- Must return to the SYFA or a member upon request and in any event upon the termination of any appointment all documents and tangible items which belong to the SYFA or which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in your possession or under your control;
- Must, if requested by the SYFA, delete all confidential information from any re-usable material and destroy all other documents and tangible items which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in your possession or under your control;
- Must understand that access to all confidential information is granted on a need-to-know basis. Need-to-know is defined as information access that is required in order to for you to perform in your role.

Breach of Confidentiality:

SYFA reserve the right to escalate to a disciplinary process as a result of any apparent breach of this confidentiality policy or all relevant rules, paragraphs and sub paragraphs of the SYFA articles of association, supplementary & playing rules, standing orders, protection policies and all related policies, disciplinary procedures and any amendments thereto.

If there is a reasonable concern that a player may be at risk of significant harm, this will **always** override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. It is good practice to inform parents and players about the kind of situations which may lead to them having to share information with other agencies.

DEFAMATION

Concerned adults are sometimes reluctant to report concerns about abuse for fear that the person suspected will sue them for defamation if the allegation turns out to be unfounded.

To be defamatory a statement must first of all be untrue. Even if subsequently shown to be untrue, the statement will be protected by ‘qualified privilege’ if it is made to the appropriate authority “in response to a duty, whether legal, moral or social or in the protection of an interest.” (Norrie K, Defamation and Related Actions in Scots Law, 1995).

Unjustified repetition of the allegations to other persons will not be protected by privilege.

The qualification on privilege refers to statements made by malice. If a statement, even to the appropriate authority, can be shown to be motivated by malice, then an action of defamation could be successful.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

These procedures apply to all SYFA officials, clubs, leagues/associations and/or regions.

Concerns about the General Welfare of a Child (NOT involving concerns about child abuse)

The SYFA is committed to working in partnership with parents whenever there are concerns about a player. Parents have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children.

In most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a player, concerns should be discussed with parents. For example, if a player seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents, which cause concern about the welfare of a player, should be recorded on the SYFA Protection Incident Record Form and reported to SYFA National Protection Officer as soon as possible. Parents should also be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

Advice should be sought from the SYFA National Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general welfare of a player.

Any breaches of these guidelines may result in the matter being referred to the relevant Disciplinary Committee.

What to Do if a Player Tells You about Abuse

No member of SYFA shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a player has been abused.

Allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. If a player says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a player is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure.

Respond:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the player
- Listen to the player and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief
- Reassure the player they are not to blame and were right to tell someone
- Be aware of interpreting what a player says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable
- Avoid projecting your own reactions onto the player
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the *possibility* that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other players

Avoid:

- Panicking;
- Showing shock or distaste;
- Probing for more information than is offered;
- Speculating or making assumptions;
- Making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made;
- Approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made;
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets and giving a guarantee of confidentiality;
- Where there is uncertainty about what to do with the information, the SYFA Chief Executive or the SYFA National Protection Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action.

If the SYFA Chief Executive or the SYFA National Protection Officer is unavailable or an immediate response is required the police and social work services must be consulted for advice. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and they may already hold other concerning information about the child. Record any advice given.

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of the player:

Take whatever action is required to ensure the player's immediate safety.

Pass the information immediately to the police and seek their advice.

Record:

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the SYFA Protection Incident Record Form, completing as much of the form as possible. A form is available for downloading from the SYFA website downloads section under protection (see also SYFA forms at the end of this policy).

The following information will help the police and social workers decide what action to take next:

- Player's name, age and date of birth;
- Player's home address and telephone number;
- Any times, dates or other relevant information;
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person;
- The player's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred using the player's own words;
- The nature of the concern (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location);
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioral signs, indirect signs (do not physically examine the player);
- Details of any witnesses;
- Whether the player's parents have been informed;
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them;
- If it is not the player making the report, whether the player has been spoken to, if so what was said using the player's own words;
- The player's views on the situation.

If completing the form electronically, do not save copies to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete immediately. Pass the record that day to the SYFA Chief Executive or the SYFA National Protection Officer. If unavailable or an immediate response is required the police and social work services should be contacted.

Sharing Concerns with Parents

Where there are concerns that the parent(s) may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parent(s) may place the player at further risk. **In such cases advice must always firstly be sought from the police or social work services as to when and who informs the parents.**

MEDIA

All media enquiries relating to the conduct of an SYFA Player, Official and/or Member of Staff will be referred to the Chief Executive of the SYFA.

5. GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

The following are some key words and phrases that have been included within the document:

Adversity	Difficulty or misfortune (<i>Source: Oxford Dictionary</i>).
Child Protection Committee	The key local bodies for developing and implementing multi-agency child protection strategies within each local authority area.
Club	Any football team in membership of the SYFA and includes all players and officials.
Consent	Permission or agreement.
Counter signatory	An individual within a registered body nominated by the registered person (a.k.a. lead signatory) to countersign standard, enhanced or PVG scheme disclosure requests on behalf of their organisation..
Disclosure	The act of a child (or adult) making information about abusive or harmful experiences known to others. In many cases the child will have been keeping the information secret.
Disclosure record*	Disclosure record means any Scheme Record, Scheme Record Update or Scheme Membership Statement issued under the PVG Scheme.
Disability	A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Source: Section 6 Equality Act 2010)
Duty of Care	Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that an adult (16 years or over) who has care or control of a child under the age of 16 has the responsibility to “do what is reasonable in all circumstances to safeguard the child’s health, development and welfare.”
FIFA	Federation of International Football Associations.
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child – Scottish Government’s framework for every child in Scotland to have the opportunity to be Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included.
Grooming	The term given to the process of forming a relationship with a child and significant people in the child’s life with the ultimate aim of exploiting the relationships by sexually abusing the child.
Incidental activity	Some, but not all, activities with children or protected adults are excluded from being regulated work if the activity is occurring incidentally to working with individuals who are not children or protected adults.
Institutional racism	<i>“The collective failure by an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service to people on account of their race, culture and/or religion.” MacPherson Inquiry Report on Stephen Lawrence.</i>

Inter- agency	Where more than one agency is working together.
League/Association	A group of teams at the same age level(s) constitutionally formed into an administrative body for the purpose of issuing of fixtures and dealing with disciplinary matters affecting or relating to the group of teams. Leagues can administer groups of teams at various age levels.
Misconduct	Unacceptable or improper behaviour (<i>Source: Oxford Dictionary</i>).
Official	Any person who whether registered for a member club or not, acts on behalf of a member club by being in the dressing room, enters the field of play on behalf of a member club, acts as an assistant referee on behalf of a member club, is in a member club's technical area, or assists in the running of said club. A club official may only be a member of 1 club.
Opportunity (for contact)	Opportunity for contact means that there is a reasonable expectation, but not necessarily certainty, of contact with children/protected adults.
Parents	Those who have parental rights and responsibilities in relation to the child also covers carers, guardians, co-habitees and others who have the primary responsibility for the care of the child.
Partnership	Where more than one person, agency, professional or community are working together towards shared and agreed aims and share responsibility for decisions and actions.
Player	A player up to the age of 22 participating in Association Football under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Youth Football Association.
Protection Officer (PO)	A paid or voluntary position whose remit generally involves co-ordinating the implementation of the SYFA Player Protection Policy and guidelines within the organisation. All clubs, leagues or associations in membership must have a PO.
Policy	A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation.
Poor Practice	In this context can be described, as but is not confined to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour or practices which are contrary to the behaviours or practices set out in the Code of Conduct • Behaviour which is not in keeping with professional standards or leadership as defined by the sport • Practices which, if not challenged, result in risks to the safety, development and welfare of children or a group of children • Behaviour which fails to meet the required standard of performance or conduct where the shortfall is of a minor nature
Precautionary Suspension SYFA	A suspension placed on an official who has been the subject of an allegation of child abuse. This suspension is designed to safeguard the child and the official concerned and will not be part of the disciplinary procedures. Advice may be sought from the police and/or SYFA lawyer before placing an official under a Precautionary Suspension.
Protected adult	A person (aged 16 or over) protected by the PVG Act because they are receiving certain services as set out at section 94 of the PVG Act and regulations.

PVG	Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 or Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme.
Qualifying voluntary organisation	Volunteers doing regulated work for qualifying voluntary organisations are eligible for PVG Scheme membership and disclosure records at no charge. A qualifying voluntary organisation is defined in regulations as an organisation which is not a further education institution, a school, a public or local authority, or which is not under the management of a public or local authority; and
Racism	Conduct, words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be subtle or overt, intentional or unwitting and occur at different levels: individual, cultural or institutional (<i>Source: Scottish Executive</i>).
Regulated work*	Regulated work means regulated work with children or regulated work with adults. Regulated work with children is defined at schedule 2 to the PVG Act (Annex A) and regulated work with adults as defined at schedule 3 (Annex B).
Resilience	Ability to cope with adverse circumstances.
Rights	Entitlements enshrined in treaties, legislation or regulation.
Risk Assessment	The process of identifying hazards and who might be affected by them and determining what action needs to be taken to reduce and manage the hazard.
SGB	Scottish Governing Body of sport.
Sectarianism	A form of religious bigotry which manifests itself in the form of prejudice, discrimination or harassment of an individual or a group of people on the grounds of their religious beliefs (<i>Source: Scottish Executive</i>).
Statutory Responsibilities	A responsibility enshrined in treaty legislation and/or regulation.
Umbrella body	An umbrella body is a registered body that countersigns disclosure applications for organisations which are not themselves registered bodies.
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The UK is a signatory to this international document which states the rights of all children under the age of 18. see www.unicef.org/crc/
Unsuitable	An individual who is found to be unsuitable to do regulated work with children and/or adults following consideration for listing will be listed on the corresponding list(s).
Unsupervised contact with children	Unsupervised contact with children is defined at paragraph 1A of schedule 2 of the PVG Act.
Volunteers	Someone offering services in an unpaid capacity for an organisation. For more information on volunteering see www.volunteerscotland.net
Welfare	The health, happiness and fortunes of a person or group. Action or procedure designed to promote the basic physical and material well- being of people in need.

Appendix A

SYFA Self-Declaration Form

The **SYFA Self-Declaration Form** can be found at www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk then **SELECT** “**INFORMATION DOWNLOADS**” and then **CLICK** on “**PROTECTION INFORMATION**”

SYFA Protection Incident Record Form

The **SYFA Protection Incident Record Form** can be found at www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk then **SELECT** “**INFORMATION DOWNLOADS**” and then **CLICK** on “**PROTECTION INFORMATION**”

All other SYFA Protection Policies and Procedures

All other SYFA Protection Policies and Procedures can be found at www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk then **SELECT** “**INFORMATION DOWNLOADS**” and then **CLICK** on “**PROTECTION INFORMATION**”

USEFUL CONTACTS

David Little, Chief Executive SYFA or Fiona Murray, SYFA National Protection Officer SYFA Limited

Hampden Park
Glasgow
G42 9BF
Tel: 0141 620 4590
Fax: 0141 620 4591
e-mail: syfaprotection@scottish-football.com
Playing it Safe: playingitsafe@scottish-football.com
Website: www.scottishyouthfa.co.uk

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

Tel: 0800 800 5000
www.thecpsu.org.uk

Children 1st

83 Whitehouse Loan
Edinburgh
EH9 1AT
0131 446 2300
www.children1st.org.uk

Childline

0800 1111 (free)
www.childline.org.uk

Parentline Scotland

08000 28 22 33
parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk

The Samaritans

116 123 or Ask the operator to connect dial 100

Frank

(Confidential advice on drugs)

0300 123 6600
www.talktofrank.com

Volunteer Scotland

01786 479 593
www.volunteerscotland.net