



Stockport County Football Club

Matchday Safeguarding Procedure

Procedure to cover all home matchdays held at

Edgeley Park
Hardcastle Road
Stockport
Sk3 9DD



EDGELEY PARK

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Revision	Initial Release	Review
Date	December 2023	09/08/2024
Description	Matchday safeguarding procedure – Initial document	Matchday safeguarding procedure – First review
Prepared	Amy Heaton	Amy Heaton
Approved by the Board	Jonathan Vaughan - CEO	Jonathan Vaughan - CEO



Purpose of the plan: Introduction and approach

The Safeguarding plan applies to all match day home games and summarises the arrangements specifically relating to safeguarding. The purpose is to ensure that effective processes and procedures are agreed and implemented in order to safeguard all those involved in the match day events, whether as staff, participant, spectator or player.

It is important to have procedures in place to ensure there is a clear, effective and consistent response for dealing with concerns of possible abuse and harm to children and adults at risk.

This plan applies to the Safeguarding of children (U18's) and adults at risk. In an event environment it is recognised it may not be immediately apparent whether older teenagers may be aged U18 and are therefore a child or whether an adult, has care and support needs and may be handling the incident or concern and should seek advice where required from the club safeguarding representatives (details in the next section).

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – we must all play our part.

Safeguarding roles – Contact details



Tom Mahon - Chief Operating Officer

Board member with Safeguarding Responsibility

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Ground Control

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Safeguarding Matchday Assistants

Ben Norton

Lauren Marchment



Stadium & Spectators

Stadium Activity – Including child involvement

The home fixtures will be held at Edgeley Park and will involve men's adult first teams.

Spectator demographic will be widespread but will include organised groups e.g. schools and grassroots clubs. Such groups must follow their own safeguarding procedures and ensure that they have adequate numbers of adults as supervisors / chaperones and arrangements in place to manage the group.

There is potential for incidents occurring inside and outside the stadium to which Safety Officers / Stewards are alerted. In the event of ANY safeguarding concerns arising from such issues, the control room should be contacted to advise on next steps. This may also include situations where an adult is ejected from the stadium but has responsibility for under 18s within their party. Stewards should inform control of the incident, via their supervisor, who will radio the control room.

It is noted that there is a reported increase nationally of pitch incursions, particularly involving U18 spectators. Safety Officer to emphasise these issues at pre-event briefings.

- Child involvement within the stadium operations for this event, includes:
- Ball assistants – sourced from Stockport County Academy
- Ball assistants along with the required number of supervisors, will be led by Stockport County FC staff.
- Imagery / Videography consent is in place for these young people – along with relevant medical information obtained.

Supervisors must have access to the medical and emergency contact details for the children they are responsible for at all times and will be responsible from drop off to the point they are handed back to parents / carers.

Team activity

U18 players selected for the fixture remain the responsibility of the club and will first and foremost be safeguarded under the specific safeguarding policies, including codes of conduct and behaviour expectations. These are detailed in the clubs guidelines.



Child Mascots

Children will be with a parent, supervised and guided by Club Rep.

Club reps are:

- Katie Myott
- Jamie Reding

The Club Rep will have spoken to the parents of mascots in advance of the event to check any additional needs of the child.

Known medical conditions will also be identified in advance and the mascot will be cared for accordingly.

Arrival/Departure & Changing Arrangements.

The ball children and mascots will be met at the club shop by the Club Rep, if they have a kit they will arrive in their kit, if not they will change in the shop changing area, with their parents. Parents are with their children at all times.

The Mascot club rep will remain outside changing area doors. Parents and children have been informed no photos to be taken in changing facilities.

Whilst carrying out mascot duties, the Club Rep will escort them and their parents around the stadium.

The children will be escorted down the tunnel with the club rep and will then go on to the pitch with the players. Following this, they will meet their parents at the corner of the Together stand.

During and after the match, the club mascots should follow procedures alongside other fans and as directed by stadium staff.

Furry Mascots

Furry mascots have their own club guidance, which will be followed at all times.

Roles & Responsibilities

Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead

The Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead will be present during the match, to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood and managed. The Safety Officer will provide pre-event briefing to key operational managers and supervisors.

The Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead will be present in the stadium and will liaise with the Safety Officer, Deputy Safety Officer, Ground control, Chief Medical Officer, Match Commander [Police], Ambulance Service and Fire Service to ensure safeguarding concerns are responded to by the most appropriate person / agency.

The Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead will support staff in the process of recognising, responding to and recording safeguarding incidents, receive reports of safeguarding concerns and disclosures and ensure these are recorded in line with the Club Event Safeguarding Processes. The incident report can be seen below in Appendix A.

Managing all immediate external referrals where necessary. Liaise with the Safety Officer regarding any ongoing safeguarding matters.

Provide guidance to staff to ensure the immediate well-being of any potential victim/s.

Specialists [Safety Officer, Police, medical]

Will consult with Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead / Safety Officer to agree appropriate response to report of possible safeguarding incidents / concerns.

Venue Stewards

First response to recognise and respond to safeguarding incidents and concerns.

Safeguarding stewards are available during the event and will be 'first responders' in the case of a safeguarding concern.

All stewards will have the relevant DBS check, completed by the club.

Venue Reporting Structure

A safeguarding concern is identified or reported to a venue steward.



The Steward should inform ground control via their supervisor of incident. This will be via their radio.



Concern reported by ground control, using contact details above, to the Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead who will determine the appropriate response and ensure the concern is recorded.



Managing Safeguarding Concerns & Incidents

- Including Third Party Organisations and External Medical Support

Remember – IT IS NOT the responsibility of Staff to decide if abuse has taken place, but IT IS everybody's responsibility to act on any concerns.

If the victim is in need of urgent medical treatment, the person raising the concern needs to contact the medical team or emergency services immediately – not the Club Safeguarding Officer.

The medical team or emergency services should be advised that there is a potential Safeguarding issue. Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead should then be informed by the medical team or steward.

Note: whilst external medical providers will have their own safeguarding policies it is important that they also comply with the safeguarding plan and ensure the Club Safeguarding personnel are informed of a safeguarding concern.

All steward supervisors and external contract managers will be given a matchday safeguarding handbook for quick reference in the case of any concerns.

Searching of Under 18's (U18's)

Stewards should always identify themselves and provide proof that they are authorised event steward for this event. Any steward searching U18s will be DBS checked to the appropriate level.

Good practice is to have two stewards present for the search, who should both give their name and job title.

- U14 to only be searched if there is genuine intel around them such as being part of the at-risk groups or they are seen with any prohibited items. If they are U14 we will need adult consent for a search and to ask them to follow the procedure for searching minors below. If they refuse then they can be refused entry. A member of the matchday safeguarding team to be present for search and CCTV should be requested to protect staff from allegations and protect young people from abuse. Any U14 with no intel or concern will not be searched.
- 14-17 year olds can be subject body scans with a wand - if the wand identifies concerns, we will again have to make sure safeguarding are present and CCTV is requested, before beginning a body search in the same way as above.
- It is vital to discuss any 'at risk' intel in terms of away or home fans that may involve anyone U18 at the pre-match meeting so the safeguarding team can plan accordingly.

The club procedure is to guide the child or young person to demonstrate that they are not carrying / hiding any prohibited items. Staff should be explaining to any U18 why they are being searched and should always ask their permission, if they are with an adult then always ask permission of the adult. Always ask the child beforehand if they are carrying anything dangerous or prohibited.

Staff should only search those the same gender as themselves.

Stewards step by step procedure is as follows:

1. Explain the reason for the search
2. Ask the child for permission to undertake the search, explain that the person has a right to refuse. If an adult is present with the child, obtain their permission to conduct the search.
3. Ask the child if they are carrying anything which may be dangerous, prohibited or that they plan to use to celebrate during the match.
4. Ask the child if anyone else has asked them to carry anything for them.
5. Explain what they think they may find in the search.
6. Ask the child to empty and turn out their pockets.
7. Ask the child to take off any outer jacket[s] and pass them over to the other steward for searching.
8. Ask the child to turn up their trousers to their knees and roll down their socks.
9. If wearing trousers, ask them to pull out the shirt at the waist and visually ensure there is nothing in the trouser belt area.
10. Request that they replace all clothing before moving on and check they are okay.
11. Only search people of the same gender as themselves.
12. Follow the correct Stadium procedure when finding unauthorised items and explain these procedures to the people involved.
13. Keep people only for as long as necessary.

Bag Checks

Anyone who is under 18 can have their bags checked at the turnstile. Permission should be sought and children should be asked if they will open their bag for the staff member. If there are any concerns in the content of the bag then the matchday safeguarding officer will be contacted for support.

Lost / Missing Children

Lost and / or missing children / vulnerable persons will be managed by stewards, who will inform ground control. Two stewards should stand with the child and CCTV should be requested. Ground control will then assist to reunite the child with their parent/ carer.

The Club Matchday Safeguarding Lead should be notified if the circumstances of an individual being lost and / or missing raise a potential safeguarding concern. For example, if the parent / carer is intoxicated and the child has been lost due to the actions of the parent / carer.

In the case of a child reported missing in the stadium, the safeguarding team will be informed, and decisions will then be made alongside the ground safety officer on any lockdown procedures, any tany announcements and whether the police are to be informed, which will depend on the amount of time they have been missing.

The club have 'Keep Me Safe' wristbands available for anyone who would like one. This will display contact information for parents or carers in the event of the wearer becoming lost.

Challenging Under 14's at Turnstiles

The minimum unaccompanied age for entry to the Ground is 14 years of age. All persons under this age will be required to attend and sit within close proximity (determined at the absolute discretion of the Club) to an adult (aged 18 and over).

On matchday, turnstile operators will challenge any young people who they believe to be under 14 and unsupervised by an adult (over 18). A steward will be placed near the turnstiles to support.

If a child being under 14 is suspected to be entering the ground unsupervised, the turnstile steward will radio to ground control for assistance. The steward will wait with the young person until assistance arrives.

Ground control will then contact the matchday safeguarding officer, who will go to the turnstile.

The safeguarding officer will explain to the young person that they cannot watch the game unsupervised;

Parents / carers will be contacted and asked to come and collect their child and the child will wait with the safeguarding officer or a safeguarding steward, until collected.

The safeguarding officer is to establish how tickets were bought and if determined, will feed this back to supporter services.

Ground control will record incidents on a match day log and the safeguarding officer will record on the clubs recording system following the game.

Any stewards around the ground who see young people unsupervised should also be vigilant to under 14's and challenge appropriately.



Banning / Ejecting U18's

Search & eject team must be wary of anyone who could be under 18 when ejecting.

Fan being ejected should be asked age when they are in ground control and if they are under 18 the matchday safeguarding officer should be informed. Safeguarding will then make sure U18 is treated fairly and gets home safely. Parents/ Carers may have to pick up their child or may consent to the child returning home on their own.

Discriminatory Language

If stewards hear any discriminatory language, they should report this to their supervisor immediately, who should then inform ground control. Safeguarding officer may be required depending on nature of the language used and age of the person using it.

Quiet Room / Sensory Bags

The club have made available some services for those who struggle within a loud and busy environment. The quiet room is available as a safe space to help a person with sensory overload. This is available through the supporter liaison team or matchday steward, who will then contact the community trust or matchday safeguarding officer to assist. The club also have matchday sensory bags and noise cancelling headphones available through supporter services.



Fan Zone & Activities

At Edgeley Park, we have a court yard at the front of the facility with a capacity 1,500. This is manned by stewards and the safeguarding team carry out checks throughout opening hours to ensure the space is safe and any issues involving young people or vulnerable adults can be raised and followed up.

The clubs family stand is based in blocks 1 & 2 of the Together Stand and there is a junior supporters zone in the concourse of this stand. This involves sweet sellers, face painters and a stage with entertainment and activities. During these times, stewards are based in this area and will alert the safeguarding team of any concerns. The safeguarding team will also carry out checks in this area during peak times.

All staff working in this section are appropriately DBS checked.

Stockport County Incident Report

Match Details

Fixture _____

Date _____

Time _____

Please Tick Appropriate

- Pre Match
- During Match
- Post Match

Incident Details

- Fire
- Damage assault
- Racism
- Disorderly conduct
- Object/Missile Thrown
- Pitch Invasion
- Smoking
- Persistent Standing
- Other (please state below)

Please Tick Appropriate Stand

- North Stand
- East Stand
- South Stand
- West stand

Has the incident been reported to Ground Control?

- Yes
- No

Action

- Arrest
- Caution
- Ejection

Offender Details

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Date of Birth _____

Ticket Info

Season Ticket Holder Yes No

Stand _____

Block _____

Row _____

Seat _____

Incident Report completed by

Name _____

Position _____