



GRAVESBERIE FC

Safeguarding Policy

Affiliated to Cheshire FA

Status: APPROVED — SIGNED OFF BY COMMITTEE, READY FOR CIRCULATION TO PARENTS/CARERS

Version 1.0 | Date of issue: 18 August 2026 | Next review due: August 2027

Policy statement

Gravesberie FC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and young person involved in the club. The club recognises that anyone under the age of 18 is a child and adopts The Football Association's safeguarding children policy and procedures as the basis for its own arrangements.

The club is committed to providing a safe, positive and enjoyable football environment for all children and young people. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration; all children have the right to be protected from abuse regardless of their background or characteristics; all concerns and allegations will be taken seriously and responded to promptly; and safeguarding depends on effective partnership working with parents, carers and relevant agencies.

As a new junior football club affiliated to Cheshire FA, Gravesberie FC will ensure that safeguarding is embedded into governance, recruitment, training, coaching practice and day-to-day club activity. The club will work in line with FA safeguarding requirements and Cheshire FA processes for reporting and managing concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to all children and young people taking part in football or related activity under the authority of Gravesberie FC. It also applies to all adults acting on behalf of the club, including committee members, coaches, volunteers, team managers, matchday helpers and any other person in a position of trust or responsibility.

This policy sits alongside the club's Anti-Bullying Policy and Equality Policy, which are maintained as separate documents in line with FA guidance. Together, the three policies set out the club's full approach to keeping children safe, treating them fairly, and responding to poor behaviour.

Key principles

- The welfare of the child is and must always be the paramount consideration.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and inaction is not an option when concerns arise.
- All children and young people have the right to football in a safe and inclusive environment, free from abuse, bullying, harm, discrimination and exploitation.
- Concerns about poor practice, abuse, neglect, bullying or exploitation will be addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Safer recruitment, appropriate checks and suitable training are essential preventative safeguards in youth football.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion underpin every part of this policy: no child's protection depends on their background, identity or circumstances.

Responsibilities

Club committee

The committee is responsible for ensuring that the club has appropriate safeguarding arrangements, adopts and reviews this policy, supports the Club Welfare Officer, and makes sure safeguarding is considered in decision-making, communications and operations. The committee must also ensure that relevant club officials complete the training and vetting required by The FA and Cheshire FA.

Safeguarding will be a standing item on every committee meeting agenda, and the Club Welfare Officer will attend committee meetings to report on safeguarding matters, in line with FA guidance for Welfare Officers.

Club Welfare Officer

The club will appoint a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) in line with FA requirements. The CWO is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of a child or young person, will liaise with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, and will maintain appropriate records of concerns and actions taken.

The Club Welfare Officer should:

- Be clearly identified to players, parents, carers and volunteers.
- Be appropriately trained and supported through FA and/or County FA safeguarding training.
- Manage poor practice concerns and seek advice where necessary.
- Refer more serious concerns to Cheshire FA, Children's Social Care or the police as appropriate.

A Deputy Club Welfare Officer has been appointed so that concerns can still be raised and acted on promptly if the CWO is unavailable. Where the Deputy also holds a coaching role, as is currently the case, any concern about that person's conduct in their coaching capacity must be escalated to the Club Welfare Officer rather than the Deputy, so that reporting is never routed through the individual it concerns.

On appointment, the Club Welfare Officer (and Deputy) will sign up to and adhere to The FA's Welfare Officers' Code of Conduct, and must confirm they meet the criteria set out in The FA's Suitability Checklist for Welfare Officers before taking up the role. Failure to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct may result in action by the club, league, Cheshire FA or The FA, up to and including removal from the role.

Coaches, volunteers and adults in positions of trust

All adults involved with the club must model appropriate behaviour, follow FA codes of conduct, complete any role-specific training and checks required by The FA, and act immediately on any safeguarding concern. Adults must never assume someone else has reported a concern.

Where a club officer holds more than one role — for example, a committee member who also coaches or manages a team — each role must be assessed and checked separately, since coaching or managing carries direct contact with children regardless of the person's other responsibilities. Where such a dual role exists, any safeguarding concern involving that person must be escalated straight to the Club Welfare Officer (or Deputy, if the concern involves the CWO) rather than through the person's other club role, so that reporting is never routed through the individual it concerns.

Parents, carers and players

Parents, carers and players are expected to support a safe and respectful club culture, follow club rules and codes of conduct, and report any concern about welfare, behaviour or safety to the Club Welfare Officer or another appropriate agency where necessary.

Safer recruitment and training

The club will adopt safer recruitment practices for all eligible roles involving children. This includes making sure appropriate individuals complete FA DBS checks where required, complete the relevant FA safeguarding training, understand their role boundaries and are suitable to work with children.

No person will be permitted to undertake a role that requires checks or training until the club is satisfied that the relevant requirements have been met. The club will maintain records of appointments, checks and training completion.

Roles requiring an FA-standard DBS check and safeguarding training include, at minimum: all coaches, assistant coaches and team managers with regular or unsupervised contact with players; the Club Welfare Officer and Deputy; and any other

volunteer with regular access to under-18s. Matchday helpers without unsupervised access should still complete basic safeguarding awareness training.

The club will monitor Enhanced DBS compliance for all eligible roles via The FA's online Whole Game System, ensuring checks remain valid and are renewed before expiry.

Reporting concerns

Anyone worried about the welfare of a child or young person must report the concern without delay. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and inaction is not an option.

Concerns should normally be reported to the Club Welfare Officer. The Club Welfare Officer will:

- Manage concerns about poor practice or seek advice from the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Refer more serious concerns about possible abuse to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer and, where necessary, to the police or Children's Social Care.
- Keep clear and confidential records of the concern, the action taken and any advice received.

Safeguarding concerns should be recorded and reported using The FA's Safeguarding Referral Form, submitted in line with Cheshire FA's reporting procedures. The Club Welfare Officer will ensure this form, and the club's wider reporting procedures, are accessible to all club members.

If the child needs immediate medical treatment, the club will call an ambulance or take the child to hospital and make clear that it is a child protection concern. The Club Welfare Officer and the relevant safeguarding authority should then be informed as soon as possible.

If the Club Welfare Officer is unavailable, or the matter is clearly urgent or serious, any person may contact Cheshire FA's Designated Safeguarding Officer, The FA Safeguarding Team, the police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC directly.

Whistleblowing

Any adult or young person with concerns about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust within football may raise the concern through the club's safeguarding process or by contacting The FA Safeguarding Team directly on 0800 169 1863 or by email at Safeguarding@TheFA.com. Concerns may also be raised directly with the police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC where appropriate.

Bullying, poor practice and online safety

Bullying, intimidating behaviour, discriminatory language, hazing, inappropriate physical conduct and harmful online communication are not acceptable at Gravesberie FC. All incidents will be taken seriously and responded to promptly, with serious or repeated concerns referred through the safeguarding reporting route. Full detail on preventing and responding to bullying is set out in the club's separate Anti-Bullying Policy.

The club will promote safe use of digital communication and social media by adults, parents and players. Communication with children should be transparent, age-appropriate, role-appropriate and, where possible, copied to parents or carers in line with FA good practice.

The Club Welfare Officer will track repeated incidents of poor behaviour or poor practice, and will liaise with the committee and, where necessary, the league and Cheshire FA, rather than treating each incident in isolation.

Complaints process

Separately from the safeguarding reporting route, the club will maintain a clear and accessible process for parents, carers, players and volunteers to raise general complaints about club matters. Where a complaint raises or touches on a welfare concern about a child, it will be handled through this safeguarding policy rather than the general complaints process.

Photography, filming and use of images

The club will only use photography or filmed material in ways that are appropriate, lawful and in the best interests of children. Consent arrangements, supervision and the purpose of image use will be managed carefully, and any concern about image misuse will be treated as a safeguarding matter.

FA Charter Standard

Gravesberie FC intends to pursue FA Charter Standard accreditation as part of its wider development. Charter Standard is a national quality mark that requires clubs to demonstrate an adopted, in-date safeguarding policy, a named and trained Club Welfare Officer, and evidence of safer recruitment in practice. Keeping this policy current and properly implemented is therefore a direct prerequisite for Charter Standard status, and for the funding and league benefits that come with it, not just good practice in its own right.

Premises safety and shared use of the facility

Where the club uses or takes on a ground or facility that has been unused or is shared with other organisations, the committee will ensure a basic site safety check is carried out before children train or play there, covering matters such as boundary fencing, secure access, and known trip or fall hazards.

Where the facility is used by third parties — including local schools for PE or inter-school sport — a written site-user agreement will set out supervision responsibilities, access arrangements and safeguarding contact points for each user group. Visiting groups remain responsible for the safeguarding and supervision of their own children and staff while on site, but any concern arising on club premises, regardless of which organisation is present, should still be reported to the Club Welfare Officer without delay.

Confidentiality and records

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis for the protection of children and the proper management of concerns. The Club Welfare Officer will maintain secure, accurate and timely safeguarding records.

Implementation

As a newly established club, Gravesberie FC has completed the following implementation steps ahead of the start of football activity:

1. A named Club Welfare Officer and Deputy have been appointed, and their contact details have been circulated internally.
2. Coaches, team managers and relevant volunteers have completed the required FA safeguarding training and DBS checks.
3. Related codes of conduct for adults, parents and young players have been adopted and circulated.
4. Incident reporting, record-keeping and escalation arrangements with Cheshire FA have been put in place.

5. A schedule for reviewing training, recruitment and safeguarding compliance at least annually has been agreed.

These steps have been reviewed and confirmed as complete by the club committee. This policy is now ready for circulation to parents, carers, players and volunteers.

Contact details

At the date of issue, the following club-specific details should be inserted before adoption:

Name	Role(s)	Phone	Email
Sean Dowd	Club Welfare Officer	—	welfare@gravesberiefc.co.uk
Dane Griffiths	Deputy Club Welfare Officer; Coach	—	deputywelfare@gravesberiefc.co.uk
Ian Langton	Secretary; Manager / Coach	—	info@gravesberiefc.co.uk
David Brigden	Treasurer; Coach	—	finance@gravesberiefc.co.uk
David Lett	Chair	—	info@gravesberiefc.co.uk

Contact club officers through the club email addresses above. Personal phone numbers are shared with parents and carers directly and are not published online.

Cheshire FA Designated Safeguarding Officer	Lystra Landon
Cheshire FA Address	Hartford House, Hartford Moss Recreation Centre, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 4BG
Cheshire FA Telephone	01606 871 166
Cheshire FA Email	info@cheshirefa.com
Cheshire FA Website	www.cheshirefa.com
Emergency	999
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000 / text 88858 / help@nspcc.org.uk
The FA Safeguarding Team	0800 169 1863 / Safeguarding@TheFA.com

Committee sign-off

By signing below, each committee member confirms they have reviewed this policy, agree with its content, and confirm that the implementation steps set out above have been completed. This sign-off represents the final approval step before the policy is shared with parents, carers, players and volunteers.

Name	Role(s)	Signature	Date
Sean Dowd	Club Welfare Officer	<i>Signed</i>	2.9.26
Dane Griffiths	Deputy Club Welfare Officer; Coach	<i>Signed</i>	2.9.26
Ian Langton	Secretary; Manager / Coach	<i>Signed</i>	2.9.26
David Brigden	Treasurer; Coach	<i>Signed</i>	2.9.26
David Lett	Chair	<i>Signed</i>	02.09.26

Review

This policy has been approved by the committee and is reviewed at least annually, and sooner if FA or Cheshire FA safeguarding requirements change or if a safeguarding incident indicates that amendments are needed.

Version	1.0 (final — for sign-off)
Date of issue	18 August 2026
Approved by committee on	2 September 2026
Next review due	August 2027 (no later than 12 months from approval)

This policy is designed as a practical club document based on FA safeguarding templates and guidance. Club officeholders should complete all placeholder details and ensure alignment with the latest Cheshire FA affiliation and welfare requirements before formal adoption.