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Anti-Bullying Policy

Maldon & Tiptree Football Club

Policy owner	Club Welfare Officer
Chairman	Jamil Trofder
Club Secretary & Welfare Officer	Garry Neave-Houghting
Safeguarding contact	garry.mtfc@gmail.com | 07538 973069

Status: Approved | Issue: November 2026 | Next review: November 2027 (or sooner if required)

1. Policy statement

Maldon & Tiptree FC is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive and respectful football environment. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory abuse and retaliation are unacceptable. Everyone has the right to participate in football free from fear, humiliation and harm. The club will take concerns seriously, respond promptly and proportionately, and put the welfare of children and adults at risk first. This policy supports, and must be read alongside, the club's Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Codes of Conduct, Social Media Use Policy and Complaints Procedure.

2. Scope and responsibilities

This policy applies to players (including under-18s), coaches, managers, officials, employees, volunteers, parents/carers, spectators, contractors and anyone representing the club, at matches, training, club premises, travel, online and at club-related activities. The Chairman and committee are accountable for a culture of safety and appropriate action. The Club Welfare Officer (CWO) coordinates safeguarding responses and referrals. Coaches and team managers must model respectful behaviour, challenge bullying and report concerns without delay. All participants must behave respectfully and report bullying they experience or witness.

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that intentionally hurts, intimidates, humiliates or excludes another person, often involving repeated conduct and/or an imbalance of power. A single serious incident may still require immediate safeguarding or disciplinary action. Examples include physical aggression or threats; name-calling, insults or ridicule; deliberate exclusion, rumours or humiliation; coercion, hazing or initiation rituals; discriminatory bullying relating to race, disability, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other characteristics; sexual harassment; and online abuse, impersonation, harmful images or abusive group messages. Bullying can occur between peers or involve adults, and may happen in person or through digital platforms.

4. Prevention and club culture

The club will communicate clear standards at induction and through its Codes of Conduct; provide age-appropriate information about raising concerns; promote inclusion and reasonable adjustments; maintain appropriate supervision; address abusive language and conduct early; brief staff and volunteers on safeguarding responsibilities; and review patterns of complaints or incidents. Team selection, playing time, performance feedback and legitimate disciplinary decisions must be handled fairly and must not be used to humiliate or target individuals.

5. How to report a concern

Anyone experiencing or witnessing bullying should tell the Club Welfare Officer, a trusted coach/manager or another club official as soon as possible. Reports may be made verbally or in writing. For safeguarding concerns contact Garry Neave-Houghting at garry.mtfc@gmail.com or 07538 973069. If the concern involves the CWO, report it to the Chairman or directly to Essex FA safeguarding / The FA safeguarding team or statutory services,

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as appropriate. Children and adults at risk must be able to report without needing permission from the person they are concerned about. Do not promise absolute confidentiality.

6. Immediate safety and safeguarding escalation

If someone is in immediate danger or a crime is in progress, call 999. Where a child may be at risk of significant harm, promptly refer to children's social care and/or police, with advice from the CWO or County FA safeguarding team where safe and appropriate. Where an adult with care and support needs may be experiencing abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves, consider referral to the relevant local authority adult safeguarding service. Concerns about a person in a position of trust working with children may also require consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Do not investigate suspected abuse yourself or delay a statutory referral while awaiting an internal meeting.

7. Response to a bullying report

The receiving adult should listen calmly, take the report seriously, reassure the person that speaking up was right, establish immediate safety, and make an accurate factual record (including dates, people involved, witnesses and any relevant messages). The CWO will assess whether the matter is a safeguarding concern, possible criminal offence, discrimination issue or conduct complaint, and decide appropriate referral and club action. Where appropriate and safe, the club will hear from those involved separately, avoid forced face-to-face mediation, document findings and decisions, and communicate outcomes on a need-to-know basis. Any internal investigation must not prejudice police or statutory safeguarding enquiries.

8. Support and protective measures

The club will consider practical support for those affected, such as a named contact, adjustments to training or supervision, separate arrangements, support to report online abuse, signposting to specialist services and regular check-ins. Protective measures must be proportionate and should avoid unfairly penalising the person who reported the concern. Parents/carers should normally be involved for under-18s unless doing so could increase risk or conflict with safeguarding advice. The wishes, feelings and communication needs of the person affected should be considered.

9. Outcomes and disciplinary action

Depending on severity and evidence, actions may include education, restorative approaches only where voluntary and safe, formal warnings, behaviour agreements, increased supervision, suspension, removal from a role or club activity, and referral to The FA, Essex FA, police or statutory safeguarding services. Allegations against staff or volunteers will be handled under the club's safeguarding and disciplinary procedures, with appropriate external advice. Retaliation against a person who reports a concern or participates in an enquiry is prohibited and may itself result in disciplinary action.

10. Cyberbullying and digital conduct

The same standards apply to WhatsApp, social media, gaming platforms, direct messages and other digital communication. Adults must follow the club's rules for communicating with under-18s, including appropriate group arrangements and parental/carer visibility where required. Do not circulate humiliating, sexualised or abusive images or messages. Preserve relevant evidence (such as screenshots, dates and URLs) securely; do not forward indecent images of children. Report harmful content to the platform and seek police or safeguarding advice where necessary.

11. Confidentiality, records and data protection

Reports and decisions must be recorded factually, dated, securely stored and accessible only to authorised people who need the information to protect welfare or meet legal duties. Personal information should be shared lawfully, proportionately and without unnecessary delay when safeguarding requires it. The club will follow its data protection and retention arrangements and applicable UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018 obligations. Information should not be shared through informal team chats or public statements.

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12. Training, communication and review

The club will make this policy accessible to staff, volunteers, players and parents/carers; include it in relevant inductions; and ensure role-appropriate FA safeguarding education. The CWO will monitor concerns and recurring themes and raise relevant issues with the Chairman/committee. The policy will be reviewed at least annually, following a serious incident, or when FA guidance or legislation changes. Risk assessments and club procedures should be updated where lessons are identified.

13. Useful contacts

Club Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting — garry.mtfc@gmail.com — 07538 973069. Emergency services: 999. Police non-emergency: 101. NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000. Childline: 0800 1111. For non-emergency statutory safeguarding referrals, use the current Essex County Council children's or adults' safeguarding referral arrangements (or the relevant authority where the person lives). Check the current Essex FA / FA safeguarding contact details before publishing this policy.

14. Approval and sign-off

This policy takes effect only when formally approved by the club. Signing confirms review and adoption; it does not replace any FA, league or statutory safeguarding obligations.

Role / name	Signature	Date
Chairman — Jamil Trofder	Signed by: 32EBD88F89AF41C...	12th November 2026
Club Secretary & Welfare Officer Garry Neave-Houghting	Signed by: 7AE83006EE7D429...	12th November 2026

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Reference framework: The FA safeguarding guidance and Codes of Conduct; Working Together to Safeguard Children; Children Act 1989/2004; Care Act 2014; Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Confirm current FA/Essex FA guidance before formal adoption.