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Matchday Safeguarding Policy

Maldon & Tiptree Football Club | Approved| November 2026

Chairman	**Jamil Trofder**
Club Secretary & Welfare Officer (CWO)	Garry Neave-Houghting
Safeguarding email	garry.mtfc@gmail.com
Safeguarding telephone	07538 973069

1. Purpose, scope and commitment

The Club is committed to making matchdays safe, welcoming and inclusive for children (anyone under 18), adults at risk, players, staff, volunteers, officials, visitors and supporters. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to home fixtures and Club-organised matchday activity, including arrival, warm-ups, hospitality, changing areas, media activity, departure and related online communication. It complements the Club's safeguarding, anti-bullying, social media, photography and filming, and codes of conduct policies.

2. Principles and legal framework

The Club will act in the best interests of children, listen to concerns, treat everyone with dignity and take proportionate action without discrimination. Adults should be involved in decisions about their safety wherever possible, taking account of consent, mental capacity and statutory duties. The Club will work in line with applicable FA safeguarding guidance and Respect expectations, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Care Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and UK data protection law, as applicable. This document does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures.

3. Matchday accountability

The Chairman provides board-level oversight, ensures suitable resources and reviews significant safeguarding risks. The CWO is the principal safeguarding contact, advises on concerns and referrals, maintains restricted safeguarding records and liaises with the County FA and statutory agencies as appropriate. The matchday operations lead coordinates stewards, entry arrangements, restricted areas and emergency response. Team managers, coaches, medical personnel, photographers and volunteers must follow this policy and report concerns promptly. The Club must identify a named safeguarding contact and deputy/cover arrangement for each fixture; if the CWO is absent, this must be communicated before gates open.

4. Pre-match risk assessment and briefing

Before each home fixture, the matchday lead must consider anticipated attendance, visiting supporters, vulnerable participants, under-18 players, ball assistants and mascots, accessibility, transport, changing arrangements, media activity, known restrictions and weather or venue hazards. Record significant risks, mitigations and named owners. Brief stewards, turnstile staff, coaches, volunteers, medical personnel and relevant contractors on reporting routes, lost-child procedures, emergency access, prohibited behaviour and safeguarding boundaries. Escalate unmitigated risks to the Chairman/CWO; postpone or change an activity if it cannot be delivered safely.

5. Children in matchday activities

Mascots, ball assistants and other children participating in Club activities must have an identified coordinator, appropriate parent/carer information and consent, safe arrival and collection arrangements, appropriate supervision, clear boundaries and access to welfare facilities. Staff/volunteers in eligible roles must complete appropriate safer recruitment, DBS checks and safeguarding training in accordance with current FA rules and

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law. Do not leave a child alone with an unrelated adult in isolated areas. Children must not be asked to undertake unsafe duties, enter confrontation zones or access inappropriate adult-only spaces.

6. Under-18 players in open-age football

Team managers must identify under-18 players and agree proportionate safeguarding arrangements with the player and parent/carer where appropriate, including travel, changing, medical consent and emergency contacts. Under-18 players must be offered safe, private alternatives to changing or showering with adults and must never be pressured to share facilities. Adults must maintain professional boundaries; no initiation rituals, humiliating treatment, alcohol-related pressure or inappropriate messaging. The CWO should be accessible to players throughout the fixture.

7. Changing rooms, toilets and restricted areas

Changing rooms, treatment spaces and toilets must have controlled access. Only authorised individuals may enter player, official or medical areas. No photography, filming or live streaming in changing rooms, showers, toilets or treatment areas. Ensure reasonable privacy, including for children, adults at risk and visiting participants. Medical treatment should follow professional standards, consent and appropriate safeguarding arrangements; avoid unnecessary one-to-one isolation.

8. Spectator conduct and stadium safety

The Club will communicate behavioural expectations and challenge discriminatory abuse, threatening behaviour, harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, intimidation of officials and unsafe conduct. Stewards must respond proportionately, summon appropriate support and record serious incidents. Where necessary, spectators may be refused entry or removed in line with venue procedures and the law. Safeguarding concerns must be referred to the CWO; criminal matters or immediate danger must be referred to police. Staff should not attempt unsafe physical interventions.

9. Photography, filming and digital communications

Official photography, filming and livestreaming must follow the Club's photography/filming and social media policies, relevant competition rules and UK data protection requirements. Obtain and record appropriate permissions for organised child-focused activities; consider any safeguarding restrictions and requests not to publish images. Never publish sensitive personal information, children's precise locations or identifying details that could create risk. Avoid private one-to-one messaging with children; use approved, transparent channels with parents/carers or designated adults included where appropriate.

10. Missing child or vulnerable person

Immediately notify the matchday lead and CWO, obtain a description and last known location, and coordinate a calm, proportionate search of safe areas. Maintain supervision of other children and protect the person's privacy. Do not publicly broadcast identifying information unnecessarily. If there is immediate risk, suspected abduction, serious vulnerability or the person cannot be located promptly, call 999. When found, verify safe reunification with the appropriate parent/carer or responsible person; record the incident and review controls.

11. Recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns

Concerns may include disclosures of abuse, grooming, exploitation, neglect, discrimination, bullying, inappropriate adult conduct or unsafe practices. Listen calmly; do not promise secrecy, investigate, ask leading questions or confront an alleged perpetrator. Record the person's own words, time, date, witnesses and immediate actions as soon as practicable. Report promptly to the CWO. If someone is in immediate danger or a crime is in progress, call 999. Where a child may be at risk of significant harm, contact children's social

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care/police without delay; where an adult has care and support needs and is at risk of abuse or neglect, seek advice/referral through the relevant adult safeguarding route. If the concern involves the CWO or cannot safely be handled internally, contact the County FA safeguarding team or statutory services directly. Do not delay urgent referrals while seeking Club permission.

12. Allegations against staff, volunteers or officials

Any allegation that an adult working with children has harmed or may have harmed a child, committed an offence against a child or behaved in a way indicating risk must be escalated immediately through the appropriate statutory/County FA route, including the local authority designated officer (LADO) process where applicable. The Club must not conduct its own investigation before appropriate advice is obtained. Manage immediate safety, confidentiality, evidence preservation and any precautionary restrictions fairly. Allegations concerning adults at risk must follow the relevant local authority adult safeguarding process and employment/disciplinary procedures.

13. Medical emergencies and incident management

Call 999 for life-threatening emergencies and follow the venue Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP). The matchday lead must ensure first-aid provision, emergency vehicle access, the location and operability of the defibrillator, and the contact details of trained responders are confirmed before kick-off. Record injuries and safeguarding concerns separately as appropriate, and share information only on a lawful need-to-know basis. The MEAP, access routes, first-aid contacts and nearest emergency department must be verified for each venue and reviewed after changes.

14. Information handling, training and review

Safeguarding records must be factual, dated, securely held with restricted access and retained under the Club's retention schedule and applicable law. Share information when necessary and proportionate to protect a person, even where consent cannot safely or reasonably be obtained. Matchday personnel must receive role-appropriate induction and refresher guidance. The CWO and Chairman will review incidents, near misses and patterns, and this policy at least annually or after a serious incident or material FA/legal change.

Matchday safeguarding checklist

☐ Named CWO or safeguarding cover and matchday lead confirmed and contact details briefed

☐ Fixture-specific safeguarding risks reviewed and mitigations assigned

☐ Children's activities: consent, staffing, supervision and collection arrangements confirmed

☐ Under-18 players: changing, travel and medical arrangements checked

☐ Restricted areas, toilets and changing-room controls checked

☐ Stewards and staff briefed on behaviour, reporting and lost-person procedures

☐ First-aid cover, defibrillator and emergency access verified against MEAP

☐ Photography/filming arrangements and safeguarding restrictions communicated

☐ Incident reporting and secure record-keeping arrangements available

☐ Post-match incidents and improvement actions reviewed

Quick response and reporting

Immediate danger or emergency: 999. Non-emergency police: 101. Club Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting | 07538 973069 | garry.mtfc@gmail.com. For safeguarding referrals, use current Essex

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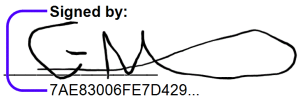
children's/adult social care and Essex FA safeguarding contact details; verify and display those numbers in the matchday operations pack before each fixture. NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (advice about children).

Approval and document control

Document owner	Club Welfare Officer
Version / issue	1.0 / November 2026
Chairman approval	Jamil Trofder Signature:  Date: 12th November 2026
CWO acknowledgement	Garry Neave-Houghting Signature:  Date: 12th November 2026
Next review	November 2027, or earlier if required

Adoption note: This is a club-drafted, FA-aligned policy, not an FA-issued or FA-certified document. The committee should verify current FA/Essex FA guidance, competition requirements, venue-specific arrangements and referral contacts before approval.