Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Maldon & Tiptree Football Club

Policy owner	Club Child Welfare Officer
Child Welfare Officer	Garry Neave-Houghting
Safeguarding email	garry.mtfc@gmail.com
Safeguarding telephone	07538 973069
Club Chairman	Jamil Trofder
Document status	Approved
Issued	11 November 2026
Next review	November 2027, or earlier following a serious incident or change in FA guidance

IMPORTANT: If a child is in immediate danger, call 999. Do not wait for the Club Welfare Officer to respond.

1. Our safeguarding commitment

Maldon & Tiptree FC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, positive and enjoyable football environment for every child and young person under 18 who participates in, attends or is affected by club activities, including where 16- and 17-year-olds take part in open-age football. The welfare of children is paramount.

We adopt the principles of The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, safeguarding regulations and relevant guidance, and will comply with applicable legislation, County FA requirements and football disciplinary processes. Every child has the right to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and harmful conduct, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Children will be listened to, taken seriously and involved appropriately in decisions affecting their safety. No adult or volunteer may investigate suspected abuse independently.

2. Scope and accountability

This policy applies to the Chairman, committee, directors, employees, coaches, managers, welfare personnel, medical staff, volunteers, matchday personnel, contractors, players, parents/carers and anyone acting for the club. It covers training, fixtures, travel, tours, changing areas, online communication, club events and activities at third-party venues.

The Chairman, Jamil Trofder, has overall leadership accountability for ensuring safeguarding is resourced, embedded and reviewed. The committee must monitor compliance, respond to risks and support independent escalation. The Child Welfare Officer (CWO), Garry Neave-Houghting, is the first club point of contact for safeguarding advice and referrals, maintains appropriate confidential records, promotes training and works with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

The CWO must be appropriately appointed, trained and checked in accordance with current FA requirements. The Chairman and relevant committee officers must complete required FA safeguarding education. All staff and volunteers must cooperate with the CWO and relevant statutory or football authorities.

3. Recognising safeguarding concerns

Concerns may include physical, emotional or sexual abuse; neglect; grooming; exploitation; coercive or controlling behaviour; bullying or cyberbullying; discrimination; hazing; inappropriate relationships or abuse of positions of trust; online harm; self-harm risks; unsafe supervision; or poor practice. Harm may occur in person, at home, in football or online.

Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

A concern can arise from something seen or heard, a disclosure, an allegation, patterns of behaviour or an online communication. Do not dismiss a concern because there is no proof or because the alleged person is respected or senior.

4. Reporting and responding to a concern

IMMEDIATE DANGER: Call 999 (police or ambulance) and take reasonable steps to protect the child without putting others at risk. Where appropriate, contact local authority Children's Social Care. Then inform the CWO and County FA DSO as soon as safely possible.

OTHER CONCERNS: Report promptly to Garry Neave-Houghting at garry.mtfc@gmail.com or 07538 973069. If the concern involves the CWO, the CWO is unavailable, or the reporter feels unable to use club channels, contact the County FA DSO or The FA Safeguarding Team directly at safeguarding@thefa.com. Anyone may report directly to police or Children's Social Care.

When a child tells you something: remain calm; listen without leading questions; reassure them they did the right thing; do not promise secrecy; explain information will be shared only with people who need to protect them; record their own words, date, time, context and any immediate action; and pass the record securely without delay. Do not confront the alleged person, interview witnesses or circulate the allegation.

The CWO will assess immediate safety, consult or refer to the County FA DSO, The FA and statutory agencies as appropriate, preserve relevant information, agree protective measures and maintain a restricted chronology. Allegations about adults working with children must be referred through appropriate safeguarding channels; statutory LADO processes may apply. The club will not undertake its own fact-finding that could compromise an investigation.

The FA states that reporting duties concerning child sexual abuse have changed under the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Anyone receiving relevant information must seek immediate guidance from statutory agencies / the County FA DSO on applicable mandatory reporting requirements and must not rely on internal reporting alone.

5. Safer recruitment, DBS and training

Roles involving children must be clearly defined, advertised or appointed fairly, with appropriate identity verification, interview/discussion, references and suitability checks. The club will follow current FA safer recruitment guidance and keep an auditable record of checks and induction.

All individuals in eligible roles must have an in-date FA-accepted Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List check where required, and complete role-appropriate safeguarding training before undertaking unsupervised activity, subject to the FA's current renewal rules. DBS checks do not replace supervision, references or safeguarding culture.

Coaches, managers and relevant personnel must be registered against their teams in FA systems as required. The CWO and committee will periodically audit DBS, training, qualifications and role eligibility, and prevent ineligible personnel from carrying out restricted duties.

6. Standards of behaviour and professional boundaries

All adults must follow The FA's codes of conduct and the club's rules: treat children with dignity; use positive, age-appropriate coaching; maintain clear professional boundaries; avoid favouritism, humiliating discipline, threatening behaviour and inappropriate physical contact; and challenge discrimination or abusive language.

Adults must not pursue sexual or romantic relationships with under-18s, misuse positions of trust, exchange sexualised messages, share inappropriate images, or use private one-to-one communication with children. Any necessary contact must be football-related, transparent and normally include a parent/carer or authorised club channel.

Where one-to-one coaching or support is necessary, conduct it in an observable, accountable setting, with parental awareness and an appropriate risk assessment. No adult should arrange secret meetings or give personal gifts or lifts that create dependency.

Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

7. Anti-bullying, inclusion and listening to children

The club has zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disability discrimination and victimisation. Reports will be listened to, recorded, assessed and addressed through safeguarding and/or disciplinary routes as appropriate. Retaliation against reporters is prohibited.

Children and parents/carers will receive accessible information about the CWO and how to speak up. Coaches should provide age-appropriate opportunities for players to express concerns and feedback. Reasonable adjustments and individual safeguarding plans will be considered for children with additional needs.

8. Supervision, facilities, medical needs and transport

Each activity must have an appropriate written risk assessment, adequate adult supervision, safe arrival and collection arrangements, emergency contacts, first-aid provision and clear incident procedures. The club will obtain necessary parental/carer consents and record relevant medical, accessibility and emergency information securely.

Changing rooms and toilets must be managed to preserve privacy and dignity. Adults must avoid being alone with children in changing facilities, and photographs or filming are prohibited there. Arrangements must take account of age, disability and mixed-age participation.

Transport, away fixtures, tours and overnight stays require advance planning, parental permission, appropriate supervision, emergency arrangements and adherence to current FA travel guidance. Private lifts by one adult with one child should be avoided unless properly authorised and risk assessed.

9. Photography, video, social media and digital safety

The club will obtain and record appropriate permissions for photography and video, explain intended uses and respect any restrictions or safeguarding concerns. Do not publish identifying details alongside images that could expose a child to risk. Images must be appropriate and stored, accessed and deleted securely.

Official club communication with children must use approved, transparent channels. Adults must not use disappearing messages or private social media contact to bypass oversight. Online abuse, grooming or sexual exploitation concerns must be reported immediately via safeguarding routes and, where appropriate, police/CEOP.

10. Confidentiality, information sharing and records

The CWO will maintain accurate, factual, dated safeguarding records in restricted-access storage, separating them from routine coaching records. Information will be shared only on a lawful need-to-know basis with safeguarding professionals, statutory authorities and relevant FA bodies. Data protection law does not prevent necessary and proportionate sharing to protect a child.

Records must distinguish fact, allegation and opinion; note decisions, referrals and follow-up; and be retained and disposed of in line with applicable legal and FA guidance. Staff must not discuss cases in public, team chats or social media.

11. Complaints, whistleblowing and disciplinary action

Safeguarding concerns must never be diverted into an ordinary complaints process when a child may be at risk. Non-safeguarding matters such as team selection may be handled under club complaints procedures. Anyone who believes a concern is being ignored may report directly to the County FA DSO, The FA, police or Children's Social Care.

The club may implement proportionate interim protective measures while a matter is assessed, without presuming guilt, and will cooperate with external investigations. Breaches may result in training, restrictions, suspension, removal from role or referral to relevant authorities, consistent with fair process.

Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

12. Monitoring, implementation and review

The committee will formally adopt and publish this policy, ensure contact details are visible, brief staff and parents, and review it at least annually. The CWO will provide anonymised safeguarding assurance to the committee, including training/DBS compliance, risks, actions and learning, without disclosing unnecessary personal details.

The policy must be reviewed sooner after a serious incident, changes to legislation or FA rules, or significant changes in club activities. Any accompanying risk assessments, consent forms and codes of conduct must be kept current.

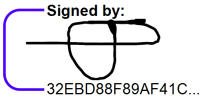
Safeguarding contacts and escalation

Emergency police / ambulance	**999**
Club CWO — Garry Neave-Houghting	07538 973069 | garry.mtfc@gmail.com
The FA Safeguarding Team	safeguarding@thefa.com
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline (for children and young people)	0800 1111
County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer	Obtain current details via the relevant County FA website / The FA safeguarding directory
Local authority Children's Social Care	Use the relevant local authority's current referral or emergency duty contact
Online child sexual exploitation	Police / CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk

Adoption and approval

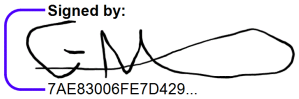
This policy is submitted for formal adoption by Maldon & Tiptree FC. Signature confirms committee approval and commitment to implementation; it does not certify external FA approval.

Chairman: Jamil Trofder

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Child Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Committee approval date: 12th November 2026 Next review date: 12th November 2027

Reference framework

- The FA — Football's Safeguarding Framework: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-1-footballs-safeguarding-framework
- The FA — Reporting Concerns: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-2-reporting-concerns
- The FA — Safer Recruitment and DBS: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-3-safer-recruitment-and-dbs-checks
- The FA — Safeguarding guidance and policy downloads: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-11-the-complete-downloads-directory

Implementation note: This club-specific policy is aligned to published FA guidance but is not an FA-issued or FA-accredited document. Before adoption, the committee should confirm the correct FA template for the club's youth/open-age structure, current County FA contacts, training and DBS compliance, and local statutory referral arrangements.