

## **DIAMONDS IN THE COMMUNITY – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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## **1 Introduction**

Diamonds in the Community (DitC) will ensure that all steps are taken to protect children and young people who participate in activities organised.

This Child Protection Policy and Procedures covers all children, young people and adults involved in all activities associated with DITC.

## **2 Diamonds in the Community - Child Protection Policy Statement**

### **The Aims of the Policy are to:**

- Develop a positive and pro-active approach concerning the protection of all children and young people involved in all DITC activities, allowing them to participate in a safe environment.
- Demonstrate a commitment to best practice in the area of child protection.
- Promote high standards of professional practice throughout all levels of Diamonds in the Community.

DITC recognises that it is everyone's responsibility to help protect children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, and from all forms of neglect, harassment or bullying.

### **The Key Principles underpinning the Policy are:**

- The welfare and safety of Children and Young People is the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- That it is essential to work in partnership with parents/carers, as well as local Social Work Departments, Police, Child Protection Committees, and Education and Welfare Agencies.

### **Responding to Concerns**

DITC will take appropriate action and will deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse. All information concerning conduct or behaviour which could be harmful to a child or young person, or pose a risk of harm, or constitute behaviour which is improper, will be treated seriously.

DITC recognises that child abuse is an emotive and difficult issue. If an allegation or concern about abuse or potential harm occurs, those involved will be expected to manage their own

feelings and reactions to abuse, not allowing these to interfere with the actions that need to be taken and the decisions that need to be made.

### **3 PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children are in need of support and protection when their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development. They may also be considered to be at risk of different types of harm or abuse from a parent, sibling or adult.

It is recognised in Scotland that everyone has some level of responsibility to identify and respond to children who are at risk of significant harm, neglect or abuse

#### **Defining a Child**

Under Scots Law a Child is defined as a person under 16 years of age.

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, which dictates the need for PVG Scheme Membership for all adults (people over 16) who are working with children and young people, defines a child as any person under 18 years of old.

This Policy therefore, covers all children and young people under the age of 18, who are involved in any aspects of youth football development throughout the Academy.

#### **Types of Harm and Abuse**

The four main types of harm and abuse are neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. When children's basic needs are not being met, or they are being abused, they may be suffering from a combination of these types of harm and abuse.

#### **Neglect**

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including depriving a child of health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger or harm the

child. Neglect includes accidents which occur when a child has been left unattended or inadequately supervised. It also includes circumstances in which an adult pursues, or allows a child to follow, a lifestyle inappropriate to the child's developmental needs or which is jeopardising the child's health. These can occur within a playing or coaching context.

### **Physical Abuse**

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Physical abuse may be a matter of a single serious incident or a series of minor incidents. Physical injuries encompass bruising, fractures, shaking, scratches, burns or scalds; deliberate poisoning; attempted drowning or smothering; attempted strangulation; factitious illness; or injury, including unreasonable physical chastisement.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Failure to provide for a child's emotional needs, which might have a severe effect on the child's behaviour or the development of the child. This may include situations where, as a result of persistent inappropriate behaviour by any relevant person, or any person looking after the child, children are rejected, denigrated or scapegoated; inappropriately punished; denied opportunities for exploration, play and socialisation appropriate to their stage of development or encouraged to engage in anti-social behaviour.

It may include circumstances in which the child is likely to be put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety by the use of threats or practices designed to intimidate them. It can include the behaviour of a person looking after a child, alone or with others, whose behaviour, whilst not directed at the child, nevertheless impacts on the emotional well-being of that child. Violence by one adult against another is an example of such behaviour. It can include isolation from normal social experiences, preventing the child from forming friendships.

## Sexual Abuse

Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour.

Sexual abuse may include activities such as incest, rape, sodomy or vaginal intercourse with children; lewd and libidinous practices or behaviour towards children; indecent assault of children; taking indecent photographs of children or encouraging children to become prostitutes or witness intercourse or pornographic materials.

The salient issues are where there has been a lack of consent; where there are inequalities in age, developmental stage, physical strength or size; where there is a power relationship; and, where actual or threatened coercion has been used. There is evidence in most s that this type of behaviour can take place through an abuse of trust by an adult in a coaching position.

Recognising child abuse is not always easy and it is not a coach or academy official's responsibility to decide whether or not a child has been harmed or abused. It is however, his or her responsibility to pass on concerns to the local Child Protection Service.

It is considered unhelpful to provide lists of signs and symptoms for these types of harm and abuse as a decision or diagnosis requires a level of specialist knowledge beyond that which is expected of coaches or academy officials.

## Examples of Poor Coaching or Teaching which can be potentially abusive

In a Sports context, forms of **physical abuse** may be deemed to occur where:

- the nature and intensity of training disregards the capacity of a child's immature and growing body, or predisposes him to physical injury due to fatigue or exhaustion.
- a child is asked to train in unreasonably adverse climatic conditions while unsuitably clothed or on surfaces where they are liable to slip or injure themselves.

- a child is asked to perform physical tasks beyond his capabilities, such as lifting heavy objects or undertaking a repetitive exercise which causes overuse of muscles.

**Neglect** can occur when the basic physical and emotional needs of young players are ignored. This can happen when proper supervision is not provided and they are asked to play or train in an unsafe or dangerous environment. Advising a young player to use a drug or other stimuli to enhance performance or disguise the effects of injury can also be deemed abusive.

**Emotional Abuse and Bullying** can occur when young players are threatened or frightened by a coach or leader. Bullying a young person, by subjecting them to excessive shouting, belittling or teasing is unacceptable. Undermining a young player's efforts, by constantly criticising their performances, or over emphasising the result of a game, or consistently failing to appreciate their efforts, can lead to stress and a loss of confidence. In contrast, giving a young player too much praise and attention for their efforts, and being singled out for exceptional rewards is inadvisable. Young players should not be asked to shoulder responsibilities beyond their years.

**Bullying** can have a devastating effect on a young player, leading to withdrawn, insecure and overly cautious behaviour. An atmosphere where bullying is unacceptable should be established. Any suspicions or allegations of bullying will be dealt with. It can be difficult to detect bullying as it can happen away from others and victims don't always tell. The person who is bullying should be challenged to explain the consequences of his behaviour. An apology from the person bullying to the person who has been bullied should be sought. Both parties, along with parents/guardians should be informed and sanctions imposed as necessary, to encourage the bullying behaviour to change.

**Racial Abuse** : all leading Sports organisations, such as the SFA, are raising awareness of **racism** throughout sports. Diamonds in the Community are committed to challenging institutional and individual racism. Children from minority ethnic groups can experience harassment, discrimination and institutional racism. This type of racism should be treated as a form of bullying and emotional abuse, and dealt with by the charity.

**Sexual Abuse** : Some individuals deliberately target s activities in order to gain access to children and young people. These individuals tend to ignore the Codes of Conduct and use physical contact within a coaching role to mask inappropriate touching of children. Their main aim is to form trusting relationships to groom young players.

## **Photographs, videos or other types of images of children**

Photographs, videos or other types of images of children must not be taken without permission and with consent from the child and his / her parents / carers. Parental Consent Forms, used within each type of activity, include information and guidance for parents / carers who do not want their child to be photographed, etc.

## **4 Responding to Concerns about Children & Young People**

This section provides guidance for coaches and DitC staff or volunteers on the action that must be taken if there are any allegations or suspicions of abuse or harm about a child or young person.

### **Disclosure of Abuse or Harm by a Child**

If a disclosure is made by a child or young person the following is recommended:

- React calmly and try to be in control of the situation
- Listen to the child, young person or adult sensitively, not showing any disbelief
- Tell the child that he/she is not to blame, that he/she was right to talk and take what the child says seriously,
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- If you need to clarify, ask open questions, keeping them to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Do not introduce personal information about your own experiences or other children's.
- Reassure the child and acknowledge the information received.
- Try to discuss the information with DitC's Child Protection Officer and if appropriate the parents/carers of the child.

|                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Where potential or actual harm or abuse is disclosed or alleged, all concerns must be passed to local Child Protection Service as soon as possible: Telephone 01236 757000.</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### **Responding to allegations against a member of staff**

Allegations against a member of staff can be made in a number of ways:

- A child alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe with a member of staff
- An anonymous allegation is received
- A child appearance, behaviour or statements cause suspicion of abuse or misconduct
- A child, young person or adult reports an alleged incident of historic abuse
- A third party makes an allegation of misconduct or abuse

If there is a serious allegation against a member of staff or volunteer then advice from the Police should be sought, concerning the level of information about the allegation that the staff member should be told. Where this occurs the Charity will decide if the staff member or volunteer should be suspended whilst an investigation, or an internal review, is carried out.

This type of precautionary suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. Notification of the suspension and the reasons for it will be conveyed in writing to the staff member or volunteer within 3 working days of being informed of their suspension.

It is important that any internal review carried out by the Charity does not compromise the work of the child protection agencies, or involve questioning the child or young person about the alleged abuse. This is the responsibility of the child protection agencies once a referral has been made.

### ***Allegations of Historical Abuse***

Where an allegation of historic abuse is made about a current member of staff, the charity should follow the above procedures and report the matter to the Police. This is because other children may still be at risk from this person.

### ***False or Malicious Allegations***

Where an investigation of abuse has been conducted and is proven to be unfounded, the staff member will receive an account of the circumstances and of the investigatory process. A letter should be issued confirming the outcome and the conclusion of the matter. Where, after reviewing the details of the account of the circumstances or the investigation, it is clear that the allegation has been malicious or unfounded, the person may wish to seek legal advice.

The Academy should take all reasonable steps to support the individual in this matter and in these circumstances the Charity reserves the right to discontinue a child's access to Charity activities.

### **Keeping a Record of any disclosure, incident or allegation:**

A written record of what was seen, heard or told should be made as soon as possible. All facts must be properly recorded because the allegations may result in legal action.

**DITCs' Child Protection Incident Report Form (Form C) should be completed and passed to DITCs' Child Protection Officer.**

If a form is not available, the following should be noted:

1. The child / young person's name, address and date of birth.
2. Date and time of the alleged incident(s) and/or nature of the allegation(s).
3. Any observations e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the child.
4. Any visible bruising or injuries.
5. The child's account, if appropriate, about what allegedly happened.
6. Any action or advice that you have taken or given.
7. Whose concerns are being recorded and a summary of the basic facts.

**This information should also be passed to the Charity's Child Protection Officer.**

The Charity's Child Protection Officer is the first point of contact and he will decide if specialist advice or guidance is required.

#### **Contact Details**

**DITC Child Protection Officer: Rebekah Graham**

**E-mail: [childprotectionofficer@diamondsitc.com](mailto:childprotectionofficer@diamondsitc.com)**

## 5 Safe Recruitment and Selection Procedure

This is the Charity's *Safe Recruitment and Selection Procedure* for positions which involve any form of contact with children and young people (under 18 years of age) on behalf of Diamonds in the Community. The following steps will be taken when new staff or other relevant volunteers or assistants are recruited and selected:

1. All employees / volunteers will be made aware of and asked to familiarise themselves with DitC child protection / vulnerable adults policy and procedures.
2. The candidate will be asked to read and sign the Child Protection Commitment Consent Form (Child Protection: Form A)
3. The Candidate will become a member of the PVG Scheme (Disclosure Scotland) This will be provided by the DitC PVG Counter-Signatory Officer.
4. If all of the above is satisfactory, the appointment of the Candidate will be confirmed.
5. Each new Candidate will follow an Induction process, completing the commitments agreed to within the *Child Protection Commitment Consent Form*, which they have agreed to when signing the Form (as at 3 above).
6. New Candidates will follow the DitC's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

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### Change Record

| Date of Change: | Changed By: | Comments:                       |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 01/07/2025      | DA          | Policy approved by the Trustees |
|                 |             |                                 |
|                 |             |                                 |
|                 |             |                                 |

## **FORM A: CHILD PROTECTION COMMITMENT CONSENT FORM**

Diamonds in the Community are committed to protecting all children and young people who participate in sport. All candidates, for positions involving any form of contact with children and young people, under 18 years of age, must carefully read and, if they agree with the conditions listed below, sign this form.

### **I agree to:**



Completing a Diamonds in the Community Self Declaration Form



Complete PVG Scheme Membership (Disclosure Scotland)



DITC contacting my referees to ascertain my suitability for the position applied for

### **If appointed I agree to:**



Read and abide by DITCs' Codes of Conduct



Read and abide by DITCs' Child Protection Policy and Procedures



Accept support and supervision to help comply with the above two conditions



Take appropriate action, if I receive any information or have any concerns about actual or potential harm to a child or young person, as defined in the Child Protection Policy and Procedures



Advise Diamonds in the Community if I am charged or convicted of an offence after the commencement of my position with DITC; recognising that failure to do so will lead to my immediate suspension and possibly the termination of my services with DITC



Not using, or being under the influence, of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst having responsibility for children and young people



Always providing a safe environment, by using any machinery, vehicles or equipment in a safe and responsible manner

**I have carefully read the above conditions and agree to follow and abide by them.**

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

**This form once agreed and signed must be forwarded to DITCs' Child Protection Officer.**

**PART 2: Previous Police / SW Investigations (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)**

|                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of investigation:                                                               |
| Police Division involved:                                                            |
| Investigation(s) details:                                                            |
| Please give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to your investigation: |
| Disposal (if known):                                                                 |

**PART 3: Known to Social Work or any Disciplinary Action**

**Are you, or have you ever been, known to any Social Work Department as an actual or potential risk to children:**

**YES/NO**

**If yes, please provide details:**

**Disciplinary Action**

Have you ever had a disciplinary action relating to inappropriate behavior with children?

**YES/NO**      If yes, please provide details:

**DECLARATION:**

**I hereby declare and represent that, except as disclosed above, I have not at any time, whether in the United Kingdom or abroad, been found guilty and sentenced by a court for a criminal offence.**

**I certify that the information contained in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I realise that false information or omissions will lead to my immediate suspension and possibly the termination of my services.**

**Signed:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_**

**This form once signed must be forwarded to the Charities' Child Protection Officer.**

## **Form C: Diamonds in the Community Child Protection Incident Report Form**

This form must be completed where there is a concern about, or an incident has occurred, involving a child or young person. This form must be completed as soon as possible after the incident and must be passed to the DitC's Child Protection Officer.

**Note:** Confidentiality must be maintained at all times, with information only being shared on a need to know basis.

### **Details of person making report**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| Name:                     |
| Position:                 |
| Contact telephone number: |

### **Details of Child**

|                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Name:                                         |
| Date of Birth:                                |
| Address:                                      |
| Contact telephone number:                     |
| Names and address of parents/guardian/carers: |

**If you are reporting concerns on behalf of someone else, please provide details of that person**

|                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Name:                                                    |
| Position:                                                |
| Address:                                                 |
| Contact telephone number:                                |
| Date this person advised you of their concerns/incident: |

### **Details of the incident or concerns:**

|                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date incident or concern arose:                                                           |
| Time                                                                                      |
| Place                                                                                     |
| Names and addresses of other people who may have information about the concerns/incident: |
| Describe in detail what happened:                                                         |

|                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Describe in detail visible injuries/bruises and any concerning behaviour of the child if any (use diagrams if this helps you to describe):                                     |
| Was the child asked about the incident: YES/NO<br><br>If yes, record exactly what the child said in their own words and any questions asked if the situation needed clarified: |

**Details of action taken**

|                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Detail what action, if any, has been taken following receipt of this information: |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Record any other information you have about this matter<br>(it is important that all information is passed on even that which you think is not important or helpful). |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Continue on a separate sheet of paper if required and attach securely to this form.

**This form once signed must be forwarded to DITCs' Child Protection Officer.**

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