



WELFARE

BEST PRACTICE & GUIDANCE
MARCH 2017

This document has been produced as guidance and supports The Children Act 2004.

The purpose of this guidance is to protect the interests of all members of The Football Association (FA) and The Referees' Association (RA) with a focus on meeting the needs of u18s and fulfilling legal safeguarding requirements.

If anyone has any concerns with regards to safeguarding these must be reported to the FA/RA Welfare Officer. Any serious concerns must be reported to the police.

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General Principles

- The health, well-being, safety and welfare of the u18s is paramount.
- Be a positive role model and offer praise to promote the objectives of the FA/RA at all times.
- As an official/mentor/coach/observer you have a 'Relationship of Trust' and a 'Duty of Care' towards an U18 to ensure they remain safe, have fun and enjoy their officiating. When offering advice take time to explain and ask if they have clearly understood.
- Consider the health, well-being and safety of u18s before their development of performance and never exert influence for personal benefit or reward.
- Encourage and guide members to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Treat all u18s fairly and listen to their opinions to ensure they feel valued, avoiding impartiality at all times.
- Members must not discriminate on the grounds of religious beliefs, race, gender, sexual orientation, social classes or physical disability. Report all forms of racial, homophobic, verbal abuse or Hate Crime towards members, or by members, to the FA/RA Welfare Officer.
- Do not accept or allow any form of bullying, whether it is verbal or physical, or the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour.
- Medical issues, accidents or injuries should be recorded in writing and brought to the attention of the FA/RA Welfare Officer. Should the need arise; first aid should be administered and where possible undertaken by a qualified first-aider in the presence of others. Avoid one-to-one situations with u18s unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure you have access to a telephone/mobile phone should there be a need to contact the emergency services, parents/carers/guardians.

- Incidents and allegations of abuse and poor practice must be recorded and referred to your FA/RA Welfare Officer who in turn will liaise with the appropriate Statutory Agencies.
- Never use sanctions that humiliate or harm u18s. Misconduct or disciplinary breaches or sanction must be processed through the correct channels in accordance with FA/RA disciplinary proceedings.

Communicating with u18s

Communication is a vital and integral part of the FA/RA and all of its members. This section covers advice and guidelines on all types of communication (personal, telephone, text, e mail, social media) between an adult and u18s.

- Recognise u18s are not adults and, as such, communication should reflect this. Any inappropriate communication between an adult and an u18s should be reported immediately to the FA/RA Welfare Officer.
- Mobile phone and contact details for u18s must be held securely and used only for official FA/RA duties, with the express written consent of the parent/carer/guardian and not hosted on any social media that can be accessed by the public.
- Parents/carers/guardians and u18s should be made aware why contact details are kept and for what purpose they will be used. Where possible use group texts or e mails to u18s, copying in the parent/carer/guardian and a designated adult.
- Communication must be kept to official FA/RA business only. Do not request u18s to follow or add you as friends on social media or engage in text messages or e mails involving inappropriate language, pictures, jokes or items of a personal nature that is derogatory, sexist, racist, threatening, abusive or sexualised.

Communication Guidance for u18s

- Find out the name and contact details of the FA/RA Welfare Officer and pass their details onto your parent/carer/guardian.
- Do not give out personal details, mobile numbers or e mail addresses to people you do not know, and do not invite adults in a 'Relationship of Trust' (referee/mentor/observer/coach) to become friends on social media.
- Do not post, text or e mail inappropriate language, pictures, jokes or items of a personal nature that are derogatory, sexist, racist, threatening, abusive or sexualised.
- Advise the FA/RA Welfare Officer if an adult asks you to become friends on social media or you receive an image that you find upsetting, threatening or offensive. If possible copy and save the image for evidence and report the matter immediately to the FA/RA Welfare Officer.

Match Days, Tournaments and Fitness Sessions

- Be aware of an u18s development and avoid over-training and the potential for injuries.
- Ensure the safety of all u18s by providing effective supervision, age appropriate training plans and sessions, allocation of games based on age, ability, experience and potential for any conflict.
- Match officials/mentors/observers/coach's must avoid any one-to-one situations with U18s in changing facilities and must ensure there is another adult present at all times. Where there are separate changing facilities available these should be used. If facilities are not available U18s should change on their own or with other u18s, either before or after the adult officials. For mixed gender activities, separate facilities should be available if possible.
- Any advice offered to u18s should be fair, positive, constructive and aimed at their learning and development.
- Best practice is for the parent/carer/guardian to stay for the duration of the tournament/match/fitness session to offer additional supervision, help and support.

Travel, Trips and Overnight Stays

Considerations when booking travel, trips and overnight stays

- A risk assessment must be completed and approved.
- What Insurance cover is required?
- Supervision - There should be at least one adult room on each floor.
- Smoking in rooms. Consideration to those who have asthma and any potential fire situations.
- Alcohol - If there is a bar, what rules apply for adults and those u18?
- Social time - What is planned when not officiating football and does the Insurance policy cover those activities i.e. swimming/theme parks?
- Medical conditions – What medication is going to be taken? Are there any personal issues that need to be disclosed and managed, and can the venue deal with these discretely?
- If self-catering, who will do the cooking? Agree refreshment stops/menu/dietary requirements before trip/travel.
- Sharing rooms – ensure the rooms have single beds and discuss privacy issues. Is there a mini bar containing alcohol? Does the TV have the ability to access inappropriate material? Is there a safe available for the security of personal items?
- What are the venues emergency procedures? Ensure everyone is aware.
- What are the arrangements if an u18 goes missing/gets injured/sickness?

- Produce and distribute an information pack to include programme of events, departure dates and return times, contact names and numbers of the organisers, leaders, helpers, welfare officer, first aider, if abroad the point of contact at home, information on International clearance if applicable, accommodation name and contact details, rules (to include conduct), kit and clothes required, pocket money, personal items and security arrangements i.e. mobile phones, iPads and laptops, food and any dietary needs, consequences of damage to venue.
- Arrange a meeting with parents/carers/guardians/officials and run through the information pack including the opportunity to address any questions or concerns. Obtain written parental/carer/guardian consent for u18s to travel including medical information and emergency contact names and numbers.
- Where travelling with u18s one-to-one situations should be avoided unless in exceptional circumstances, with parent/carer/guardian permission.
- As 'Good Practice' a Female holding a valid FA Criminal Records Check (CRC) should be present on trips U18 females are attending.
- There should be an appropriate adult/child ratio (usually 1:8) involving u18s.
- Never share a room with an u18 unless you are their parent/carer/guardian.
- Adults must not buy alcohol, cigarettes or drugs for u18s whether or not they are permitted within a host country.
- Conduct a risk assessment on arrival at the venue. Check that all windows and doors are safe and the venues emergency procedures. Immediately report any defects or damage found.

Transportation

Driving to and from events/venues:

- Parents/carers/guardians of u18s must give written consent that they agree to their child traveling with an adult. Avoid one to one situations. Best practice is 2 x u18s per adult.
- Ensure the vehicle being used is road worthy, taxed, insured and suitable for transporting passengers. Seat belts must be available and worn at all times.
- Ensure the driver has a valid driving licence, is fit, well and suitable to drive, and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Ensure the contact details of those u18s are known and readily available In the case of emergencies i.e. vehicle breakdown.
- Inform parent/carer/guardian of the planned route, and how long the journey is expected to take.

Photography, Video & Social Media

The ability to take photos and videos is easy in today's world of modern technology and social media.

- It is not illegal to take photos/video in a public place. However, everyone has the right to politely check and challenge and should report any serious concerns to the police.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the FA guidance on taking images as these should focus on the activity and not the individual.
- Ensure written parent/carer/guardian consent is obtained before the taking of photos or use of video equipment and never publish without their consent.