Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

STUDIO FOOTBALL LIMITED

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Version 2.2 — 26 October 2026

Company number: 17443093

Registered office: 5 Rochford Lofts, Pollards Close, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1GB, United Kingdom

Website: www.studiofootball.co.uk | Email: play@studiofootball.co.uk

OUR COMMITMENT AT A GLANCE

Every child under 18 should be able to enjoy Studio Football safely, be listened to and be treated with respect. The child's welfare comes first. We will take concerns seriously, act promptly, record accurately and refer concerns to the appropriate safeguarding agencies rather than investigate suspected abuse ourselves. This policy applies to our filming, challenges, birthday and match experiences, whether on our home pitch or at an external venue.

1. SCOPE, PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to Studio Football's director, coaches, camera operators, editors, contractors, volunteers and anyone acting for us. We will provide inclusive experiences regardless of disability, race, sex, religion or other background, make reasonable adjustments where appropriate and challenge bullying, harassment, discrimination and inappropriate conduct. Parents, guardians and organisers will receive clear arrangements before sessions. An organiser's booking does not remove Studio Football's safeguarding responsibilities. This is an activity-provider policy written in line with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2023) and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit standards; any applicable FA, County FA, league or venue safeguarding requirements are also followed where relevant.

2. NAMED SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Michael Woollard

Direct safeguarding contact: safeguarding@studiofootball.co.uk | 07791 315590 (direct safeguarding telephone).

Independent reporting route (no deputy appointed): If a concern involves the DSL, the DSL is unavailable, or internal reporting is inappropriate, contact Essex Children and Families Hub directly on 0345 603 7627 (Monday–Thursday 8:45am–5pm; Friday 8:45am–4:15pm), asking for the Priority Line for urgent safeguarding concerns. Out of hours and bank holidays: Essex Emergency Duty Team 0345 606 1212. If a child is in immediate danger, call police on 999. Allegations about an adult working with children: Essex Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), 03330 139797; lado@essex.gov.uk. For a LADO referral, first email lado@essex.gov.uk with subject 'Intention to Refer' and follow the secure-link instructions returned. Official guidance: https://www.essex.gov.uk/contact-children-and-families-hub and https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/concerns-about-the-welfare-of-a-child/allegations-management-in-the-childrens-workforce/.

Where the concern involves the DSL, the DSL is unavailable or the response is inadequate, report directly to children's social care or police. Nobody must be required to report an allegation about the DSL to the DSL first. A deputy may be appointed later only if they agree to the role and their contact details and responsibilities are confirmed. The director is responsible for ensuring the lead has suitable training, capacity and authority, and that all workers know how to report concerns. The contact arrangements must be published to parents before sessions begin.

The external contact details in this section were checked against the official Essex County Council and Essex Safeguarding Children Board sources on 30 September 2026 and are rechecked at each annual review of this policy.

3. BEFORE A CHILD'S SESSION

Obtain booking details, each child's parent/guardian and emergency contact; explain that one parent/guardian must stay for an individual experience, while a group or party child may be entrusted to a specifically authorised parent or responsible adult who stays on site; document the named adult, their agreement, the children they cover and collection arrangements. Obtain the relevant participation and filming permissions and check essential safety or accessibility information using the participation and filming form, in which the parent or guardian confirms that they have parental responsibility for the child, and any information given through the separate optional medical form. Confirm who may collect the child and any restrictions communicated lawfully. Complete a documented site and activity risk assessment, including the enclosed pitch, rebound walls, goals, equipment, weather, floodlights, parking, access routes and any external venue. Agree staffing and supervision for the actual age, number, needs and activities; do not assume one adult is sufficient simply because a session is small. Confirm first-aid arrangements and access for emergency services. Do not start a session where appropriate supervision or safety controls cannot be provided.

4. SUPERVISION, ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION

For individual children's experiences, at least one parent or legal guardian must remain on site throughout the session. For larger group experiences and birthday parties, a child's parent or guardian may leave only after identifying another parent or responsible adult who agrees to remain on site and take responsibility for that child. The child's parent or guardian must authorise this arrangement in advance or at a documented handover; Studio Football must record the named responsible adult, their contact details, the children covered and collection arrangements. The designated adult must remain on site for the whole period they are responsible, be able to respond to the child's needs and must not be assigned more children than they can reasonably supervise. A party organiser's presence alone is not automatic authorisation for every child. Studio Football retains its own duty to run the activity safely, maintain appropriate staffing and safeguarding controls and intervene in any concern; assigning a parent does not transfer away these responsibilities. Record attendance and agreed arrival and collection arrangements. Avoid isolated one-to-one situations and keep activities observable. Release each child only to the authorised collecting adult or under a separately documented, age-appropriate departure arrangement. If the designated adult needs to leave, agree and record a replacement before they go; otherwise pause the child's participation and contact their parent or guardian. For delayed collection, ensure the child remains safely supervised, contact the agreed adults and follow the escalation procedure. Do not take a child home without an appropriate documented arrangement. Because Studio Football is run by one person, Michael Woollard is never alone with a child out of sight of the parent or responsible adult: sessions take place on the open pitch in view of the accompanying adults, he does not accompany children into toilets or changing areas, and he does not transport children.

5. BEHAVIOUR AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Use respectful, age-appropriate language and instructions. No humiliating language, threats, bullying, favouritism, sexualised comments, inappropriate physical contact or punishment through exercise. Physical assistance must be necessary, explained and appropriate, with the child's agreement wherever possible. Do not exchange private social-media messages with children, arrange personal meetings or give secret gifts. Communicate about bookings and sessions through parent/guardian or authorised organisational channels. No alcohol or illegal drugs during activities. Adults must not photograph or film children on personal devices. A coach or instructor is in a position of trust towards participants aged 16 and 17 under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as extended to sports coaches in 2022), and any sexual activity or relationship with a participant under 18 is a criminal offence as well as a breach of this policy. Adults must report boundary concerns even where the behaviour has not yet caused obvious harm.

6. CHANGING FACILITIES AND TOILETS

The toilet, changing and shower facilities in the outbuilding, the customer route to them and the exclusion of the swimming pool are described in section 4 of the Safeguarding Operating Procedures and are checked before every session. Adults must not enter a child-occupied changing or toilet area except where genuinely necessary for safety or an agreed accessibility need, following an appropriate safeguarding procedure. No cameras or filming in toilets or changing areas. Make clear who accompanies younger children, how privacy is maintained, and how any assistance with changing or personal care is agreed with parents and the child. External venues' arrangements must be checked separately.

7. FILMING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND ONLINE SAFETY

Filming is part of the booked experience but is explained in advance and covered by appropriate permissions and privacy information. Check permission arrangements for every relevant participant, including opponents in match filming; do not assume a team organiser's agreement automatically covers all children. Respect any filming restrictions and provide a workable alternative or decline filming if consent/other required permissions cannot be established. Do not publicly livestream children's matches. Never film in changing or toilet areas, capture deliberately intrusive images, identify a child's home/school or publish sensitive personal details. Store and deliver footage using restricted access, with only authorised recipients. Separate, optional written permission is required for Studio Football's own promotional use; refusal does not prevent purchase. Follow the Privacy Notice and agreed 30-calendar-day active-storage deletion policy for delivered videos and raw footage; safeguarding records are handled separately.

8. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Michael Woollard’s role at Studio Football sessions is filming. He gives the instructions needed for filming and may demonstrate or correct a drill for the purposes of the film, but Studio Football does not provide coaching, and a parent or an authorised responsible adult remains on site and responsible for each child throughout the session. On that description of the role, uCheck advised on 8 October 2026 that it is eligible for a basic DBS check only, and Michael holds a basic DBS certificate (section 13). A basic check discloses unspent convictions only; it is not an enhanced check and does not include a check of the children’s barred list. Michael is an FA-qualified coach, but that qualification does not change the duties described here. Before the role changes in a way that may bring it within regulated activity with children (for example coaching, sessions where no parent or responsible adult stays, or teaching, training or instruction beyond what filming needs), Studio Football will reassess eligibility and obtain the check the new role allows, including an enhanced check with children’s barred list check where the role is eligible, before the changed activity starts. Any requirement of the insurer, The FA, a County FA, a club or a venue for a particular level of check is met before the activity concerned. Michael completed the FA Safeguarding Children in Football course on 17 September 2026 and refreshes that training before it expires.

Before engaging any other adult to work with children, Studio Football defines the duties, verifies identity and suitability, takes references, and obtains an enhanced DBS check with children’s barred list check where the role is regulated activity. Since 1 September 2026 the supervision exemption no longer applies: anyone who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight, is in regulated activity even if supervised, and that applies to volunteers as well as paid workers. It is a criminal offence to engage a person in regulated activity knowing they are barred, and a DBS certificate alone is not proof of suitability. Role-appropriate safeguarding training, first-aid provision and understanding of this policy are confirmed and recorded before work starts; FA or venue requirements are checked where they apply. Contractors follow the same safeguarding and filming rules, including reporting concerns immediately.

9. INJURY, ILLNESS, MISSING CHILD AND EMERGENCIES

Stop activity and provide appropriate first aid within the responder's competence. Call 999 for a serious injury, immediate danger or other emergency. Contact the parent/guardian as soon as appropriate and record the incident and action taken. If a child is missing, immediately check the agreed location safely, maintain supervision of other children, contact emergency services when risk warrants it, inform the parent/guardian and preserve relevant facts. Do not delay an emergency response to obtain internal approval. Weather, equipment failure or an unsafe environment may require stopping or postponing the session.

10. RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO A CONCERN

Concerns may arise from something seen or heard, a disclosure, bullying, inappropriate communication, an injury, neglect or an allegation about an adult or another child. Listen calmly; take the child seriously; do not promise secrecy, ask leading questions, confront the alleged person or conduct your own investigation. Explain that information must be shared with people who can help. Make an accurate factual record as soon as possible, using the child's own words where practicable, noting date, time, people present, observations, immediate safety action and whom you contacted. Keep opinions clearly separate from facts. Share only with those who need to know.

11. REPORTING AND ESCALATION

IMMEDIATE DANGER OR SERIOUS INJURY: call 999. Otherwise report a safeguarding concern promptly to Michael Woollard (DSL) at safeguarding@studiofootball.co.uk or 07791 315590, who must assess immediate safety and seek advice or refer to the appropriate local authority children's social care or police as needed. For urgent safeguarding concerns in Essex, contact the Children and Families Hub on 0345 603 7627 and ask for the Priority Line; outside office hours or on bank holidays call 0345 606 1212. Anyone may contact statutory services directly, especially if the DSL is implicated, unavailable or does not act. Do not wait for certainty or an internal investigation. If Studio Football is operating within an FA-affiliated activity, also follow applicable club, County FA and FA reporting pathways. For independent advice, contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk. Allegations against a person working with children may require referral to Essex LADO within 24 hours: 03330 139797 or lado@essex.gov.uk; follow Essex's 'Intention to Refer' secure-link procedure. Obtain advice promptly and do not delay emergency action. Keep a dated record of referrals, advice, decisions and follow-up.

12. COMPLAINTS, WHISTLEBLOWING AND SUPPORT

Children and adults may raise concerns without retaliation. Ordinary service complaints follow our complaints procedure, but any indication of risk or harm to a child must be treated as safeguarding and escalated under this policy. If internal reporting is inappropriate or ineffective, contact children's social care, police, relevant governing-body safeguarding team or NSPCC directly. Support the child and affected people, respect confidentiality and do not promise an outcome or undertake a private disciplinary investigation that could interfere with statutory processes.

13. RECORDS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND REVIEW

Keep safeguarding records factual, securely restricted and separate from routine marketing footage and general customer correspondence. Share information lawfully and proportionately to protect a child; privacy rules do not justify failing to act on an immediate safety concern. Safeguarding records are kept in line with the Data Retention Schedule: until the child concerned reaches 25, and longer for a record of an allegation against an adult working with children; the ordinary 30-day footage rule never applies to them. Studio Football Limited is registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), registration reference ZC275378. The director will review this policy at least annually and following a serious incident, change in activities, law or guidance. Staff and contractors must acknowledge the current policy before working with children. Michael Woollard’s basic DBS certificate was issued on 12 October 2026; its number is kept in Studio Football’s restricted records. FA Safeguarding Children in Football: completed 17 September 2026, expires 17 September 2028. FA Introduction to First Aid in Football: completed 18 September 2026, expires 18 September 2029.

SOURCES AND GUIDANCE

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit: https://sport.nspcc.org.uk/help-advice/putting-safeguards-in-place/

NSPCC reporting guidance: https://sport.nspcc.org.uk/resource-library/policies/reporting-safeguarding-concerns-in-sport-or-physical-activity/

The FA safeguarding framework and guidance: https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding

The FA reporting concerns:
https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-2-reporting-concerns

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, December 2023)

DBS guidance: Regulated activity with children — removal of the supervision exemption from 1 September 2026 (GOV.UK)