



SECTION	SAFEGUARDING
POLICY/PROCEDURE	UNDER 18'S PLAYING UP POLICY
DATE OF ISSUE	JULY 2025
DATE OF REVIEW	JULY 2026
VERSION	2

1. INTRODUCTION

All staff that work with young players are in a position of trust. Young players, parents and carers must have confidence that any professional football club working with children will ensure that they provide a professional, trained workforce that understands their roles and responsibilities when working with U18 players.

A senior/first-team match is not an activity specifically designed for U18 players therefore some safeguards should be considered, however, these will not be as stringent as if the Club is planning for an activity that is wholly targeted at U18 players. When inviting a young player under 18 to a senior or first-team game the Club shall consider all the risks and put in place appropriate safeguards.

In general terms, open-age football is for anyone over the age of 16 years. As a club, we have a 'duty of care' to ensure that we put in place appropriate safeguards to protect those young people who are under 18. Young players under the age of 18 are defined in law as a child and adults working with children need to not only protect those young players but also demonstrate standards of behavior that do not leave the adults open to allegations against themselves.

As soon as the Club DSO is made aware of the U18 player being included in the first-team squad, the Club shall arrange a meeting with the U18 player's parent/guardian which shall include the Club DSO. The Club DSO will then discuss the position regarding showering and changing facilities with the U18 player's parent/guardian, together with other issues such as betting logos and social media and the risks associated with this.

The Club DSO should be informed as soon as possible that a player is playing up in the senior/first team squad and a travelling member confirmed as having an in-date DBS.

2. TRAVEL

If the debut of the young player is going to occur during an away game, then good practice would be to ensure that at least one person travelling has a DBS/CRC certificate. Changes to the DBS/CRC process mean that the certificate is now workforce-specific. This means that the document will state if the person has clearance for work with the children's workforce or for work with the adult workforce. Those medical professionals who work with both adults and with U18s will require '**child and adult workforce**' on their DBS/CRC certificate.

The Club shall also ensure that a point of contact is named as the primary point of contact for away travel. This may (or may not) be the same person who holds the DBS. For example, this may be the First Team Coach, or person operating in a similar role, e.g. First Team Goalkeeper Coach. In addition, the Club shall ensure that an appropriate 'buddy' is assigned to guide and assist the young player (where to sit on the team coach, whom to sit with to eat pre-match food, where to go in the changing rooms, etc.) This may be the First Team Captain or another senior player.

It is important to ensure that everybody understands that no single person is solely responsible for the care of the young player. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, all of those involved should be made aware of their personal responsibilities when a young player is making his debut for the first team.

3. ACCOMMODATION

The under-18 player will be in a hotel room alone and will not be sharing with any of the other players. The only exception to this would be if two U18 players are travelling with the first team, in which case those two U18 players can share a room.

4. MATCHDAY

Unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the U18 player have signed a relevant consent form confirming their agreement for the U18 player to change and shower with the senior/first team, the Club shall provide a separate shower/changing facility for the U18 player. Where U18 players share the same changing room with first-team players, U18 players shall shower and change in a separate area from the first-team players where this is possible. Alternatively, where this is not possible, all players may be asked to wear shorts to shower.

If the U18 player has been selected to play for the Club in a senior/first team away fixture, the Club shall enquire whether separate shower/changing facilities are available at the host club, and the Club shall ensure that the host club have suitable people in place to support a child in an adult environment. It is the responsibility of the Club DSO or club secretary to inform the host club if there is an U18 player travelling in the first team squad. The host club shall in turn make the match referee aware of this fact.



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5. GENERAL

Players and staff should not encourage U18 players to engage in any inappropriate activities such as gambling; the use of alcohol or other inappropriate or illegal substances; or watching or engaging in any inappropriate adult behaviours.

Regardless of what experiences they, as experienced older players, may have encountered in the past, especially on their debut for the first team, all players and staff should recognise the vulnerability of U18 players and the risks associated with encouraging young players to engage in inappropriate activities.

INTERNAL SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

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01522 782111

Out of Hours Emergency

01522 782333

Police

If you have concerns requiring the Police's immediate action, dial 999.