

# FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials



The FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials is a 90-minute course that can be undertaken by anyone interested or involved in football.

On completion of the course content and the end-of-course quiz, you'll be awarded a **FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials digital badge and certificate of completion.**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Who is this course for?

This short course on Safeguarding Essentials is designed to support people involved in football in a voluntary or paid role either for FIFA; a national football association; for a club or as a Safeguarding Officer, a coach, manager, agent, referee, or through another important role such as an Academy Director, physiotherapist or medic.

The course is designed for people like you from grassroots to talent development and high-performance football. The course explains how safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and you can complete it at your own pace.

This course is free and open to all, and you are welcome to study it without enrolling. However, if you want to earn a FIFA/Open University digital badge for your learning, you'll need to enrol on the course. Nominated FIFA Learners will earn a FIFA certificate of completion in addition to the digital badge.

This course supports the delivery of the FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football educational programme and is the first in a collection of five free FIFA online courses that anyone can do.

If you're a Nominated FIFA Learner and successfully complete all five courses, you will be able to claim the FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Diploma.

If you are a Global Football Community Learner or Open Learner and successfully complete all five courses, you will be able to claim the FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football Award.



## *Learning outcomes*

As a result of studying this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe what is meant by safeguarding in football.
2. Recognise safeguarding risks in football and how you can help to reduce risks.
3. Understand how to report safeguarding concerns so that they can be responded to properly.
4. Start making plans for how to take your next steps in safeguarding.

## *Your welfare*



During this course you will be asked to think about different types of harm that children experience. You may have your own lived experience of harm and abuse and may find some of the content in this course difficult and upsetting.

Please make yourself aware of the support services that are available to you through your line manager, your Member Association or within your community before starting the course, so that you know how to access this support if you need to.



## WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

### Getting started

Welcome to this short course.

You start by considering what is safeguarding and why is it needed?

Watch this video which shows a grassroots football programme and one of the players, Philip.

As you watch the video, think about if Philip has been harmed or abused?

**Trigger warning:** The following animation contains content related to abuse in football which some viewers may find difficult or distressing.



A transcript of this video is available below.

### GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL – PHILIP'S CASE STUDY

**NARRATOR:** Philip plays in a grassroots programme and lives for football.

**PHILIP:** I really love playing football. I train midweek and play every weekend.

**NARRATOR:** Phillip's best friend is Julie and she also dreams of becoming a football star.

**JULIE:** I want to be a star, just like Marta.

**NARRATOR:** The programme is run by a very well-respected teacher who volunteers as a part-time coach.

**[WHISTLE]**

**PHILIP:** Our coach is strict, but he knows a lot and I want to do well.



**COACH:** No, not like that! The inside of the foot. Try again.

**PHILIP:** Best to listen and keep practising.

**NARRATOR:** Sometimes the coach makes him feel sad and worthless and uses aggressive language in training.

**PHILIP:** I don't like it when he picks on me. He always says I'm not concentrating and gets me to do more. Sometimes, he shouts at me. I don't like it.

**JULIE:** I don't know what happened, but one day, the coach shouted at Phillip. And then he hit him in front of everyone! Philip started crying and everyone laughed at him. He wouldn't talk to me about what happened. After a couple of weeks, he stopped going to football. He doesn't play for the team now. We don't have kickabouts anymore.

In the first part of this course, we discover:

- What safeguarding means.
- What safeguarding includes.
- Why safeguarding is so important.

*Everyone has the right to play football in a safe and supportive environment, especially children*



In this part of the course, you find out what safeguarding means, what it includes and why it is important.

You will also see how you can identify risks to players' wellbeing before something bad might happen.

In the following section you explore what safeguarding is and then consider how it applies to Philip.



## What is safeguarding?



**‘Safeguarding’ is sometimes used as an umbrella word: but what does it include?**

Let’s first explore the meaning of safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding – in simple words**

Have you heard the word safeguarding before?

What do you think it means?

You may have heard ‘child protection’ used before. Safeguarding and child protection are closely linked but they mean different things.

Safeguarding means: (click or swipe each slide for a definition)





The things we do to minimise risk. It means doing everything possible to prevent any kind of harm or abuse from happening, such as physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, trafficking and exploitation (later in the courses we'll explore the meaning of these and other terms).



The things we need to do when we're concerned that someone is at risk or is suffering harm or abuse.

Quite often the term 'protection' or 'child protection' is used to describe the response – the action taken when there are concerns for a child (or adult) who may be suffering harm or abuse or is at risk of suffering harm or abuse.

## *Who is responsible for providing safe football environments?*



Everyone in football has a duty to make sure activities are delivered as safely as possible. This is part of our safeguarding responsibility.

Next, we're going to look again at the grassroots football programme featuring Philip.





## What does safeguarding mean in practice?



## Has Philip been harmed or abused?

Think about this question for a moment while watching the video again.

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**NARRATOR:** The programme is run by a very well-respected teacher who volunteers as a part-time coach.

**[WHISTLE]**

**PHILIP:** Our coach is strict, but he knows a lot and I want to do well.

**COACH:** No, not like that! The inside of the foot. Try again.

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**PHILIP:** I don't like it when he picks on me. He always says I'm not concentrating and gets me to do more. Sometimes, he shouts at me. I don't like it.

**JULIE:** I don't know what happened, but one day, the coach shouted at Phillip. And then he hit him in front of everyone! Philip started crying and everyone laughed at him. He wouldn't talk to me about what happened. After a couple of weeks, he stopped going to football. He doesn't play for the team now. We don't have kickabouts anymore.

**Has Philip been  
harmed or abused?**



- Yes, Philip has been harmed and abused
- Both 'aggressive language' and being hit can cause physical and emotional harm
- These are examples of poor coaching practice and are a form of abuse
- Philip will probably remember being humiliated in front of others forever.



The appointment, training and management of Philip's coach, even if he is a volunteer, should be in line with clear safeguarding standards. For more information, see the **FIFA Guardians Child Safeguarding Toolkit** below.



**Child safeguarding toolkit for member associations.pdf**



Later in the course we'll look at the importance of agreed behaviours in preventing and addressing poor practice.

### *What is safeguarding about?*



Safeguarding is about the things we can do to prevent Philip's coach behaving like he does, and the way we respond if we find out a player like Philip is at risk of harm.

Next, we'll move on to consider 'what does safeguarding include?'



## What does safeguarding include?



Safeguarding includes much more than just addressing poor coaching practice.

### Which of these statements fall under safeguarding?

Look at the 12 statements below and tick all those that apply to safeguarding.

- Proper recruitment processes are used when employing people to work with children.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers agree to clear codes of conduct and ethical standards.
- Making sure equipment and facilities are safe to use, in line with local health and safety guidelines.
- Having medical or allergy information for children when you take them away on trips.
- Providing safe transport and accommodation arrangements when travelling.
- Having rules about which kit to wear for home and for away matches.
- Making sure you have enough adults to supervise children.
- Ensuring safeguarding requirements are included in all contracts with local service providers.
- Not training in extreme weather conditions.
- Having clear rules about the use of social media and communicating with children.
- Having clear rules on the safe use of changing rooms and showering facilities.
- Having a requirement for players to do three media events per year.



### Result feedback

Safeguarding includes all of the statements above except for:

- Having rules about which kit to wear for home and for away matches. Although the kit needs to be clean, the colour or design are not safeguarding issues.
- Having a requirement for players to do three media events per year. Although media appearances need to be managed well, the requirement of three per year isn't a safeguarding issue.

*Did you notice that general health and safety policies are also part of safeguarding?*



This is because, if we do not follow general health and safety policies, children's wellbeing is put at risk.

We've now seen how broad our safeguarding responsibility is. You're doing well and we're now halfway through the first part of the course.

Next, we'll think about why there is a call for safeguarding action in football now.



## Why is safeguarding in football important?



There is a saying about 'the tip of the iceberg' only showing a small part of what is underneath the water.

Is this true for abuse and harm in football?

As the world's most popular sport, football is an important part of daily life for many people. However, there are unfortunately many examples of where people have suffered abuse in football.

Let's now look at three news headlines that are based on true events.





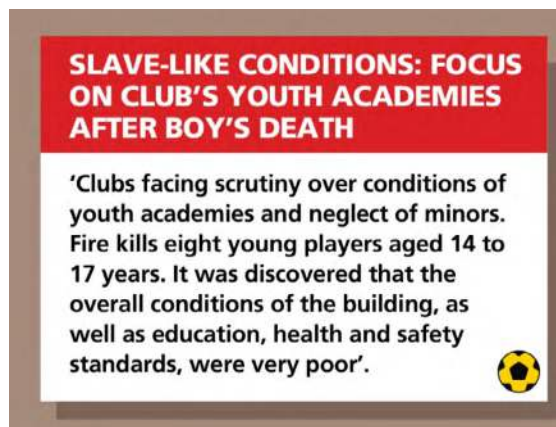
## Why is safeguarding important?

Using the arrows, read through these headline stories and complete the following activities.

1



2



3



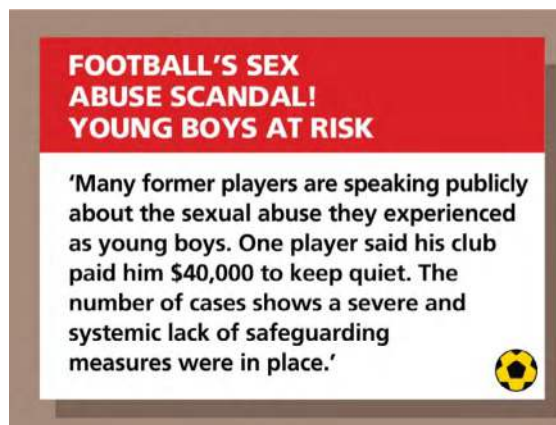
4



5



6








# FIFA GUARDIANS



7



Thinking about the overall experience of headlines like these being widely reported, respond to the following questions by selecting 'Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe'.

8

Who has been harmed?

Use your mouse to slide the button to yes, no, maybe.

The children  No

The staff  No

The organisation  No

The journalists  No

The children's family  No

**SUBMIT**

9

What is the longer-term impact of these headline stories?

Children's health and wellbeing – parents' trust in the sport is reduced  No

Reputational damage – football not being seen as a safe sport  No

Cancelled sponsorship and reduced money coming into football  No

Community support for the club or federation is reduced  No

Continuing negative press coverage of the club or federation  No

**SUBMIT**

10 Well done, you've completed this activity.

Please continue with the course.

## Are talented players more at risk of suffering abuse?



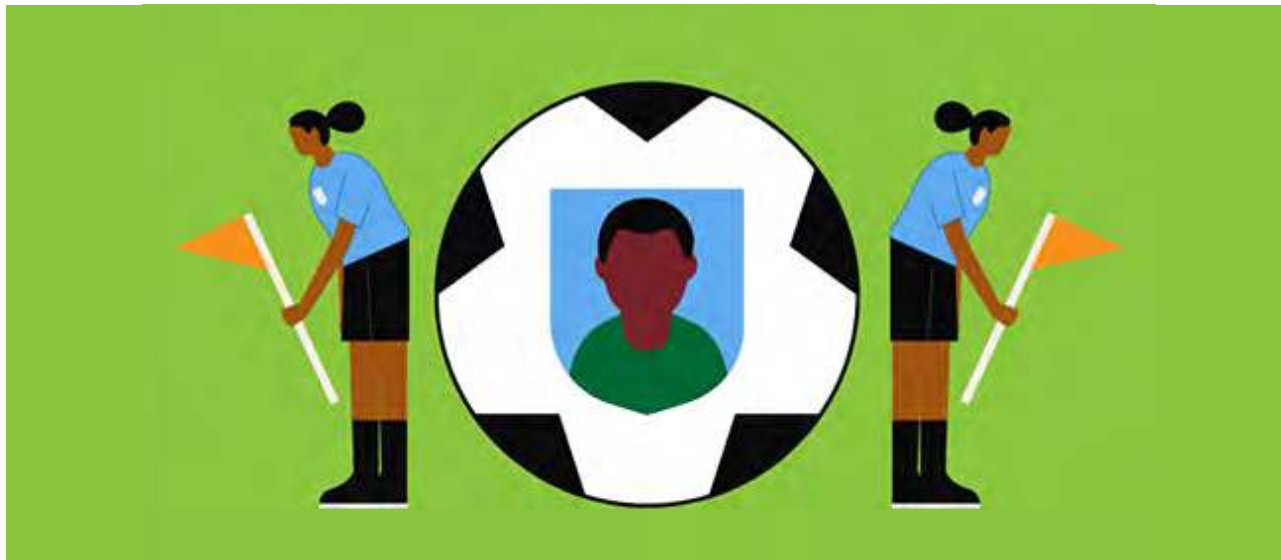
Research shows that football is not free from the problem of abuse. It's also clear that the risk of abuse rises as a player progresses up the talent ladder and that children themselves can also cause harm to other children, especially bullying, but also peer-to-peer sexual harassment and abuse.

This suggests that what we see in the news is only 'the tip of an iceberg'.

The failure to safeguard not only hurts individuals, but it can also undermine the growth of the game and its integrity. We all need to think about how to put safeguarding at the centre of what we do in football.



Can we identify risks before something bad happens?



*Is identifying different risks key to safeguarding?*



An important part of safeguarding is to identify risks before they happen. Once you know the risks you can then plan how they can be prevented and managed.

## Living conditions at a youth academy

To explore identifying and preventing risks a little more, let's watch another video scenario.

While you watch the video, think about these two questions:

1. What three risks to the players at the youth academy can you identify?
2. How might these harm the players?

**Trigger warning:** The following animation contains content related to abuse in football which some viewers may find difficult or distressing.



## LIVING CONDITIONS AT A YOUTH ACADEMY

**MAN:** A Football Federation is building a youth academy and training facility. Project costs include construction, maintenance, and staffing, including an academy director, head of coaching, medical manager, a facilities manager, but no safeguarding officer.

**WOMAN:** Two years later, it has been reported by an investigative journalist who visited the academy that the living conditions for the children are substandard.

**MAN:** They do not have access to safe water.

**WOMAN:** And sanitation facilities. They have limited education opportunities.

**MAN:** And they are sleeping in overcrowded dormitories with minimal supervision.



## Discussion

You may have identified many types of risks and harm that could arise at the youth academy. Some of the risks include, but are not limited to:

### Limited education opportunities



Click to flip ↺

#### Risk

Harm to educational development

### Unsafe water and sanitation facilities



↺

#### Risk

Harm to physical health and development

### Lack of adult supervision and poor sleeping arrangements



↺

#### Risk

Harm to children's emotional and mental health

These are all forms of what is called 'neglect' of the children in the academy.

## What comes next if I identify risks?



Once the safeguarding risks have been identified, the next step is to plan how they can be prevented or managed.

The whole process is known as a safeguarding risk assessment. We will explore risk assessment in more detail later in the course.

Working through the first part of this course might have raised some concerns for you. If you have any concerns, report them straight away to your local football safeguarding officer or to your local police and child protection authority. This topic will be covered in more detail in the final part of the course.

Well done, you've almost completed the first part of this course.



## Closing thoughts and main messages



Now, as we finish this first part of the course, you can see why safeguarding is needed and why we all need to act now.

### *The four main messages to take away from this first part of the course*



1. Everyone has a right to play football in a safe environment, especially children.
2. Safeguarding is about taking proactive steps to prevent harm and being ready to respond if we're concerned that harm may be happening.
3. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone should be supported to take action that is right for their role.
4. Identifying safeguarding risks helps protect everyone involved in football.

In the next part of the course we explore managing risks a little further.

We'll also discover how our approach to safeguarding is shaped by our life experiences. You may be surprised how this is such an important part of understanding safeguarding.

Now go to the second part of the course.



## MAKING FOOTBALL SAFER FOR ALL

### Welcome to Part 2



#### *What further areas of responsibility should I be aware of?*



This second part of the course covers three further areas of your safeguarding responsibility. These are:

- Preventing harm by managing risks.
- How your beliefs, values and life experiences influence your approach to safeguarding.
- The importance of having codes of conduct which everyone in your organisation follows

Learning about these areas will help you understand safeguarding better and will make football safer for everyone.

Next, we'll look at managing risk.





## Managing risk



In the first part of this course we identified three risks that were present in a youth academy. One of the identified risks was sleeping in overcrowded dormitories with minimal adult supervision.

Good safeguarding practice means assessing and managing this risk by making sure that every player has safe and clean living conditions.

But how can this be achieved?





## Q1

**Managing the risk of neglect**

As you click through each slide read the text about 'Action to manage risk' and 'Why it prevents harm'.

The text has a missing word(s).

Drag and drop the correct word(s) into the blank box.

There are 3 questions to be completed.

**Q1. Read the text below. Some of the text is missing.**

**Action to manage risk**

Check local health and safety legislation/guidelines. Agree a plan with management describing the expected sleeping arrangements for children, including the role and numbers of adults that are supervising them in the academy.

**Why it prevents harm**

A plan provides everybody with a clear expectation of the standards of player \_\_\_\_\_ and the responsibility of adults to supervise this.

Choose the correct missing word(s) from the options below and drag and drop it into the blank box above.

travel arrangements

tactical awareness

acomodation

## Q2

**Q2. Read the text below. Some of the text is missing.**

**Action to manage risk**  
When children share the same facilities and accommodation with adults, make sure adult supervisors attend safeguarding training and sign the code of conduct so that positions of trust are not abused and personal boundaries are not crossed.

**Why it prevents harm**  
Training and signing the \_\_\_\_\_ will help everyone to be clear on what is expected of them.

Choose the correct missing word(s) from the options below and drag and drop it into the blank box above.

players contract

application form

code of conduct

## Q3

**Q3. Read the text below. Some of the text is missing.**

**Action to manage risk**  
Use an independent and qualified agency to check the quality of the academy accommodation.

**Why it prevents harm**  
Through regular external inspections, the quality of the accommodation should be maintained. Checking \_\_\_\_\_ guidelines can ensure standards are maintained and there is no unauthorised access to children's sleeping areas, changing rooms, etc.

Choose the correct missing word(s) from the options below and drag and drop it into the blank box above.

player behaviour

training

health and safety

You've completed all of the questions.

Please continue with the course.



Preventing harm is a step-like process.



*What does the risk management process look like?*



Preventing harm is a step-like process, as illustrated in the diagram above.

This process seems very straightforward. However, it will be influenced by your experiences, beliefs and values.

This influence is explained further in the next section.



## How do beliefs and values influence your approach to safeguarding?



How you perceive the seriousness of the risks you identify, and the steps you take to manage these risks, is influenced by what you believe in and value.

### *Do you know the difference between your beliefs and values?*



Let us check our understanding of what is meant by our beliefs and values.

**Beliefs** – these describe things that we hold to be either:

- 'right' or 'wrong'.
- 'true' or 'false'.

For example, if you think it is 'right' that playing football should be enjoyable – then this is a belief, it is something you believe to be 'true'.

**Values** – these are things that are important to you. 'Respecting other people' is a value. If you feel strongly about this, you will protect and attach more importance to it.



Let us look at how your beliefs and values are shaped by life experiences.

## Understanding your beliefs and values

Listed below are five statements describing different behaviours.

Place each of the behaviours into an order by dragging each one across to the opposite column. Place what you believe is the most serious behaviour at the top and the least serious at the bottom.

Taking paper from work for personal use at home	Most serious
Driving above the speed limit in bad weather	▼
Failing to report an incidence of serious domestic violence between your neighbours to the police	▼
Stealing clothes from a washing line	▼
Sharing illegal drugs with your friends	Least serious

## Response

The way each of us responds to situations is not the same.

Many factors will influence how serious you felt each behavior is.

For example, you may have been injured in a road accident that was caused by another person driving over the speed limit in bad weather. This experience means you probably see this as being far more serious than the other statements.

***Your previous life experiences, beliefs and values influence your approach to safeguarding***



We do not all share the same beliefs and values. Therefore, how we identify the seriousness of risks and the actions we take to manage them will be different.

This is why it is important to develop codes of conduct, because they provide a way of describing common standards of behaviour which everybody understands and agrees to.



We will examine codes of conduct in more detail next.

## Agreeing behaviours for everyone in football



Because peoples' beliefs and values are different, a framework describing agreed standards of acceptable behaviour is needed.

Creating codes of conduct can achieve this and help your organisation to develop a good safeguarding culture, but what should these codes of conduct include?

### What should be included in a code of conduct?

Look at the 7 statements below and tick all the ones that should be included in a code of conduct.

- Never engage in bullying behaviour. Challenge any form of bullying behaviour among children.
- Communicate in a positive way with children that is right for their age.
- Never humiliate children.
- Never support rule violations.
- Never hurt, or threaten to hurt, a player physically, sexually or emotionally.
- Never exploit a player for personal and financial gain.
- Provide opportunities for children to share in decisions which affect them.

### Response

**All the statements above are typical of those that should be included in a code of conduct.**

Creating codes of conduct for your organisation will make sure that risks can be better identified. For example, when you see behaviour that your code of conduct identifies as unacceptable, then action can be taken to stop this behaviour and hold people accountable.



## Who do codes of conduct apply to?



Everybody in your organisation should know, understand, and sign-up to your code of conduct. Nobody, for any reason, is an exception.

In the next section we discover how a code of conduct could have helped prevent the players of a U-20 Women's team being harmed by different forms of abuse.

## How can codes of conduct help prevent harm?



An organisation committed to high safeguarding standards can help protect everyone from harm. The following example of an U-20 Women's team shows what can happen without a clear code of conduct.

## Reducing the risk of harm through an effective code of conduct

Watch the video below and then answer the questions that follow.

**Trigger warning:** The following animation contains content related to abuse in football which some viewers may find difficult or distressing.





A transcript of this video is available below.

## U-20 WOMEN'S TEAM CASE STUDY

[CHEERING]

**WOMAN 1:** Sixteen national teams have travelled with their delegations to the U-20 Women's World Cup.

**WOMAN 2:** It is really exciting meeting the teams from all over the world.

**WOMAN 1:** Some of the players are still children, and many of the teams are nervous and anxious, because it is the first time they have travelled abroad and represented their country.

[CHEERING ERUPTS]

The results on the pitch for one team do not go so well. Oh, it was really bad.

[WHISTLE]

**WOMAN 2:** We can play better than that. Some of the girls were crying.

[SOBBING] We lost all three of our group matches, so we were out of the tournament.

**WOMAN 1:** Off the pitch, they also had a tough time.

**WOMAN 2:** It was great winning. But later, I felt bad about knocking them out. After the match, we could see their coaches giving them a hard time.

**COACH:** [IN SPANISH] Our coaches just kept shouting at us and saying we'd let everyone down. It was horrible.



**[GIRL SOBBING]**

Some of them were using their phones. They posted the scoreboard and some horrible things, sending the names of the girls who had made mistakes.

**[PHONES CHIME, BUZZ]**

So, everyone started to get bad messages.

**[GIRL SNIFFLES, SOBS]**

**WOMAN 2:** We heard rumours that the players had to share mattresses in their hotel room. One of them said their mobile phones and passports were taken away, and that some of the girls were hit.

**WOMAN 1:** There were also rumours that the girls were being sexually abused by members of the team's entourage.

**WOMAN 2:** We even heard some girls were touched.

**Q1. In a footballing context, adults should avoid being alone with a child who is not their own child.**

Choose the best reason for this statement from the two choices below:

- A. This limits the likelihood of other players on the team feeling left out.
- B. This limits the opportunity for adults to sexually abuse.

**Response**

- A. Incorrect. Other players may feel left out, but the other answer is the best answer because it's much harder for adults to sexually abuse a child if there are other people around.
- B. Correct. That's correct, avoiding being alone with a child who is not theirs, limits the opportunity for adults to sexually abuse.

**Q2. Staff should never engage in sexual relationships with players.**

Choose the best reason for this statement from the two choices below:

- A. It is never acceptable for any kind of sexual 'relationship' between staff and players as, even if a coach is the same age as a player, it is still an abuse of power and position of trust.
- B. Having a sexual 'relationship' with a player can create problems in the future if the relationship breaks down and make it uncomfortable for everyone.

**Response**

- A: That's correct. Even if a coach is the same age as a player, it is still an abuse of power and position of trust.
- B: Incorrect. Whilst it may make it awkward in the future, the best answer is that staff (especially adult staff) have power over the players and they are in a position of trust. As a result, there is always a power imbalance and any staff engaging in a sexual relationship would be abusing this power and position of trust.



**Q3. Adults should speak to children respectfully and should not use sexualised language or humour.**

Choose the best reason for this statement from the two choices below:

- A. This prevents children learning bad words and using them against their coaches.
- B. This sets a positive example and prevents behaviour that can make it easier for more serious abuse to happen.

**Response**

- A: Incorrect. While we don't want children using bad words, the other answer is the best answer as it helps adults set the right boundaries and doesn't create a sexualised culture where sexual abuse can happen more easily.
- B: That's correct, speaking to children respectfully and not using sexualised language or humour sets a positive example and prevents behaviour that can make it easier for more serious abuse to happen.

**Q4. Sexual abuse and harassment are banned (in most countries it is a criminal offence).**

Choose the best reason for this statement from the two choices below:

- A. Banning sexual abuse and harassment makes it clear that football does not accept this behaviour in any form.
- B. Banning sexual abuse and harassment will make sure adults do not get into trouble with the police and parents of children.

**Response**

- A. That's correct. Banning sexual abuse and harassment makes it clear that football does not accept this behaviour in any form.
- B. Incorrect. The other answer is correct because sexual abuse and harassment are never acceptable, in any context. In most countries it is a criminal offence.

**Q5. Adults should not use their own social media accounts to communicate with children or make comments about a child.**

Choose the best reason for this statement from the two choices below:

- A. This prevents behaviour that could allow someone to have secret conversations with a child or make comments that harm a child's wellbeing.
- B. Many children have social media accounts and use them a lot, so this prevents adults' social media accounts being filled up with comments from children.

**Response**

- A. That's correct. It prevents behaviour that could allow someone to have secret conversations with a child or make comments that harm a child's wellbeing.
- B. Incorrect. The other answer is correct because it is a way of limiting opportunities for adults with wrong intentions to engage in private online discussions with children.



**Q6. How could a code of conduct, with statements like those in Q1–Q5 above, have helped manage the risks associated with the U-20 Women’s team at the tournament?**

Tick which one answer you consider to be correct from the two choices below. Tick both of the choices if you consider them to be correct.

- A. A code of conduct could have helped prevent the behaviours that were rumoured to have occurred.
- B. Everybody connected with the team would have known the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### Response

Both of these answers are correct.

### *Where can I find examples of codes of conduct?*



Developing codes of conduct is an important part of your organisation’s commitment to safeguarding and should be linked to a safeguarding policy.

Examples can be found in the FIFA Guardians™ Toolkit, where you will find a sample code of conduct for:

- Member Association staff and volunteers.
- Parents and carers.
- Children.



**Child safeguarding toolkit for member associations.pdf**





## Codes of conduct: a summary



### *Codes of conduct: What is their purpose?*



Codes of conduct are more than just a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

They can:

- Make people accountable for their behaviour.
- Demonstrate your organisation's commitment to safeguarding.
- Provide a point of reference to clarify if some behaviours are acceptable or not.
- Define standards of good practice.

Taking time to develop codes of conduct for your organisation is a necessary investment in making football safer for everyone.



## Closing thoughts and main messages



Congratulations, you are now two-thirds of the way through the course. By now you will realise that safeguarding is an important part of your role in football – it is not an optional extra.

### *The three main messages to take away from this second part of the course*



1. Identifying and managing risks helps to protect everyone involved in football.
2. Your beliefs, values and life experiences influence how you approach safeguarding.
3. Following agreed behaviours helps you reduce risks and identify concerns.

The final part of the course covers the response you and your organisation should follow when you have a safeguarding concern. Something might not seem serious, but the session shows why and how you should respond every time you have a concern.

Now go to the final part of the course.



## RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

### Welcome to Part 3



This final part of the course will help develop your knowledge about how you should respond to safeguarding concerns. As part of this session, you will also see how both power and fear influence who speaks up about possible harm or abuse.

First though, you need to understand what is meant by 'safeguarding concerns', how you find out about them and how you report them.

### What is a safeguarding concern?



Earlier in the course we discussed that safeguarding is about preventing any kind of harm or abuse from occurring. To do this it is important that we can recognise a safeguarding concern.



## *'A safeguarding concern': What does this mean?*



A safeguarding concern is when you are worried about the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult because of something that is seen or heard, or information which has been given to you.

It means a worry which needs to be reported.

Think back to the first part of the course and the scenario about the youth academy living conditions.



These types of risks were identified:

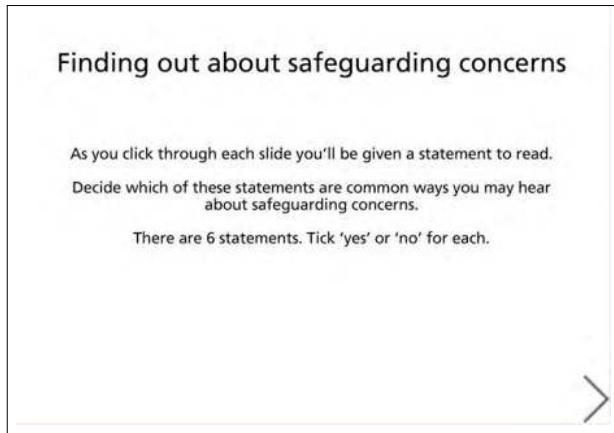
- Limited education opportunities for the children increasing the risk of harm to their educational development.
- Unsafe water and sanitation facilities increasing the risk of harm to physical health.
- Lack of care and effective supervision as well as sub-standard sleeping conditions increasing the risk of harm to children's emotional and mental health.

Concerns may be about actual harm or abuse, or they may be about situations that increase the risk of harm or abuse happening in the future.





## How do you find out about safeguarding concerns?



### Is the following statement a common way you may hear about safeguarding concerns?

- Q1. Media reports
- Q2. Staff notice behaviour that causes them concerns
- Q3. Players, including children, report that they are suffering harm
- Q4. Parents/carers making complaints about their children's experience
- Q5. Information that comes to light on a reference or criminal records check for a new coach
- Q6. Report received from another sport, football organisation or club

### Response

- Q1 **NO:** Incorrect. Media reports are sometimes the first that we hear about a safeguarding concern.  
**YES:** Correct. Sometimes this will be the first that we hear about a safeguarding concern.
- Q2 **NO:** Incorrect. Staff noticing behaviour that causes them concerns is very often the way we find out about safeguarding risks in our organisation.  
**YES:** Correct. That's right! you selected the correct response.
- Q3 **NO:** Correct. This is often very difficult for players to do. Especially children. They rarely talk if they are being harmed and often do not know what to do or where to go for help.
- Q4 **NO:** Incorrect. The correct answer is parents/carers making complaints about their children's experience. But often they do not know how to raise concerns about their children.  
**YES:** Correct. But often parents/carers do not know how to raise concerns about their children.
- Q5 **YES:** Correct. Recruitment processes need to be strong because they can help to prevent the wrong people from joining your organisation in the first place.
- Q6 **NO:** Incorrect. Sometimes a report received from another sport, football organization or club will be the first that we hear about a safeguarding concern and any information or report received should be treated confidentially and acted upon.  
**YES:** Correct. Yes! Sometimes this will be the first that we hear about a safeguarding concern and any information or report received should be treated confidentially and acted upon.



## *Should every concern be responded to?*



Notice how safeguarding concerns can come from a range of places.

An important principle to remember is that although safeguarding concerns will vary in

## Why are players not likely to speak out?

### Young players not speaking out

Watch the following video scenario and think about this question:

What stops these players from speaking out?

**Trigger warning:** The following animation contains content related to abuse in football which some viewers may find difficult or distressing.



A transcript of this video is available below.

### YOUNG PLAYERS NOT SPEAKING OUT

**WOMAN 1:** Carmen, you shouldn't be frightened to speak out. I know he's a senior manager in our federation.



**CARMEN:** But he's so powerful, and he gets to decide who plays and who doesn't.

**WOMAN 1:** I know he's powerful, but all the same. He's been touching you, sexually. That's just not right. And he's doing it to some of the others, you said.

**CARMEN:** I know. But we're all terrified. I'm scared for me. I'm scared for my family. What if he tried to hurt us?

**WOMAN 1:** But it can't go on.

## Discussion

Fear and being worried are often the main reasons.

For example:

- Fear of threats and negative actions (reprisals) against them and their family.
- Fear of being dropped from the team.
- Being worried that they will get the abuser into trouble.
- Fear that they will not be believed.
- Fear that other teammates would not believe what they say.

Many adults working in football are passionate, committed and responsible. Unfortunately, some may misuse their position of trust and power for personal gain.

It can be very difficult for players, especially children, to tell someone they are being abused and they will only tell people who they trust and feel safe with.

Sometimes during sexual abuse, abusers use 'rewards' like giving special attention, extra privileges, or gifts to certain players. This is part of a process called 'grooming'. The fear of losing these rewards is often very confusing for these players and can make it difficult for them to understand they are being abused or to tell someone about it.

It is important to note that many children who are abused do not speak out until they are adults or may not ever talk about their experiences. Experience of abuse as a child can have harmful long-term effects.



## *How can I recognise a safeguarding concern?*

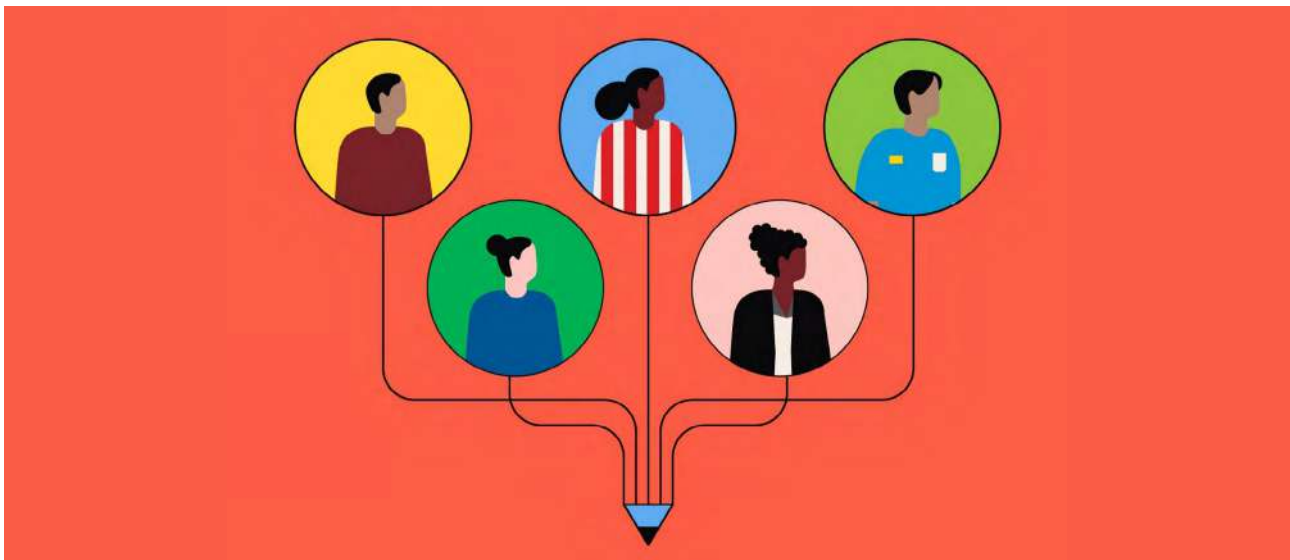


The least likely way you will find out about a child being abused is by a child telling you about it. Therefore, it is your responsibility to be alert and recognise and report safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Some signs of the possibility of child abuse include when a child:

- appears to have suffered an injury that cannot be explained.
- seems upset without obvious reason.
- shows changes in behaviour that cannot be explained.
- shows unusual or fearful responses to certain people such as a coach, manager or team doctor.

## Adults and reporting



Adults also face difficulties in reporting safeguarding concerns. . There are many reasons for this. Like children, adults may have fears such as:

- Fear that there will be negative consequences for them (for example, a loss of job).
- Fear of threats
- Fear that they will get a colleague into trouble.
- Fear that they will not be believed.



Fear keeps people silent, and silence allows harm to continue. Adults may also fail to report concerns when they think it is someone else's responsibility. But as we know, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone should be supported to take action that is right. You can play an important role and so you must speak up if you have a concern.

## What is 'poor practice'?



People often talk about 'less serious' safeguarding concerns as 'poor practice'. Poor practice is when people work in a way that falls short of expected standards as set out in a code of conduct.

The relationship between poor practice and abuse is an important one to understand.

The next section will help you think more about this.

## Poor practice or abuse?



## How serious are these behaviours?

Read the following groups of statements labelled A, B and C.

On the sliding scale, 10 is extremely serious and 1 is not serious.

For each statement, move the sliding circular marker to the right if you believe the behaviour should be rated more seriously, or to the left if you believe it should be rated less seriously.

In each group of statements, consider whether the next statement presented in the list becomes more or less serious than the previous one.

As you complete the activity the feedback will ask what may happen if the least serious behaviour is not responded to.



# FIFA® GUARDIANS



ID	Statement	Rating
A1	A coach shouts at the team once for a poor performance	5
A1		
A2	A coach shouts at the team after every match	5
A2		
A3	A coach shouts only at one particular player in front of the team after every match and uses discriminatory language that humiliates them	5
A3		
Open feedback		

## Feedback

A team being shouted at once might not seem serious, but it is still poor practice. What could happen if it continues over time and you do not respond to this behaviour?

ID	Statement	Rating
B1	The team manager ignores local health and safety guidance once	5
B1		
B2	The team manager regularly ignores health and safety guidance and tells others that it is for 'wimps'	5
B2		
B3	The team manager deliberately makes children play in unsafe weather conditions with poor facilities to prove his point	5
B3		
Open feedback		

## Feedback

You might believe that you do not need to respond to a team manager ignoring local health and safety issues on one occasion. But what are the consequences if a player was injured the one time the guidance was ignored?

ID	Statement	Rating
C1	A child player meets a coach after training on their own	5
C1		
C2	The coach sets up regular meetings with the child and tells them not to speak to the other players about it	5
C2		
C3	The coach tells the child if they want to stay in the team, they must do everything they tell them to	5
C3		
Open feedback		

## Feedback

If **poor practice** is not responded to it can become accepted as normal practice. This increases the risk of creating an environment where harm and abuse might occur.



## Discussion

What's important here is that the behaviours may not seem that serious at the start, but we should be concerned and respond to all behaviours that are not in line with the code of conduct and not just those we believe are the most serious. Remember, addressing what may seem like 'lower-level' concerns and poor practice can help serious harm from happening.

Even with behaviour that might seem less serious, if it becomes 'the normal way we do things', it can create an environment where abuse is more likely to happen. This is because everyone's normal standards of behaviour are lowered.

Remember, a good safeguarding tool to help prevent poor practice from becoming normal practice is the code of conduct you looked at in the second part of the course. This tool helps everyone know what good practice looks like.

## Why should I respond to lower-level safeguarding issues?



Responding to lower-level safeguarding issues can help prevent more serious issues happening.

## How should you report concerns in your organisation?



Every organisation should have a clear way for people to report concerns about poor practice or abuse.





## Why are internal reporting systems important?



As people become more aware of what safeguarding means in football, they will be more likely to raise safeguarding concerns, so internal reporting processes need to be ready for this.

Internal reporting processes must be linked to external expertise and the authorities (for example, police and child protection agencies) in each country. Poor practice concerns can be handled internally by the relevant disciplinary or ethics procedures of your organisation.

However, if a possible crime has occurred, it **must** be reported to the authorities.

## What process should you follow?

Follow each pathway through the slides below. Think about who from your organisation should be part of your reporting process.

1

**RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED POOR PRACTICE AND/OR POSSIBLE ABUSE**

If you have a concern about a child or concern about the behaviour of an individual towards a child, report it immediately or within 24 hours.

**NEXT ►**

2

To learn more about how to respond follow the two pathways below. One pathway is for **poor practice** and the other pathway is for **possible abuse**.

**CLICK HERE POOR PRACTICE**

**CLICK HERE POSSIBLE ABUSE**

3

**Is it poor practice?**  
(e.g. a coach repeatedly ignoring health and safety guidelines which puts children at an unacceptable risk of injury).

**PREVIOUS** **NEXT ►**

4

**Report concerns to the safeguarding officer** who can internally refer them as a possible misconduct issue.

**PREVIOUS** **NEXT ►**



5

**Possible outcomes of an internal member association review:**

- No case to answer
- Advice and warning as to future conduct
- Support and safeguarding training required
- Suspension



◀ PREVIOUS      NEXT ▶

6

**Is it possible abuse?**




◀ PREVIOUS      NEXT ▶

7

**Report concerns to the safeguarding officer** who will facilitate referral to statutory authorities/local agencies who can help.

Or, in their absence, report it directly to statutory authorities/local agencies.



◀ PREVIOUS      NEXT ▶

8

**Possible outcomes:**

- Child protection investigation by social services and/or the police
- Care and support provided to the child by local organisations/NGOs
- Criminal proceedings
- Internal investigation (where criminal or statutory investigation threshold is not met)



◀ PREVIOUS      NEXT ▶

## Discussion

If your organisation's process is unclear, or you don't have one in place yet, you should work with local experts such as social services, child protection organisations, the police and expert non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who can offer professional help to develop your safeguarding system and make sure cases are properly investigated.

## Who is responsible for investigating allegations of abuse?



Responding to and investigating allegations of abuse are the responsibility of the authorities and trained professionals, such as the police and child protection agencies.

Any internal investigation should be done **after** an official investigation by the authorities is complete.



This flow chart is only a starting point for a reporting process in your organisation. For more detail see this part of the FIFA Guardians Child Safeguarding Toolkit below.



**Child safeguarding toolkit for member associations.pdf**



## Closing thoughts and main messages



Congratulations, you have almost finished the course.

As you complete this final part of the course, you can see how you need a shared understanding across your organisation about how to respond to safeguarding concerns.

### *The four main messages to take away from this final part of the course*



1. Safeguarding concerns will vary in seriousness, but every concern should be responded to.
2. Responding to lower-level safeguarding issues can help prevent more serious issues happening.
3. As people become more aware of what safeguarding means in football, they will be more likely to raise safeguarding concerns, and internal reporting processes need to be ready for this.
4. Responding to and investigating allegations of abuse are the responsibility of the authorities and trained professionals such as the police and child protection agencies in each country.



If you have enrolled, to get your FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials digital badge and certificate of course completion, you need to have viewed each page of this course and you need to complete the end-of-course quiz.

## TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

### The next steps



You have now almost completed the FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials course. You just need to take the end-of-course quiz to achieve your digital badge and course completion.

By completing course you have started to think about what safeguarding is and the difference it should make to our game. Yet it can be difficult to know where to start in putting all this information into practice.

The FIFA Guardians™ Child Safeguarding Toolkit below has lots of clear information and examples to help you and this is laid out in five simple steps.



**Child safeguarding toolkit for member associations.pdf**





# THE FIVE STEPS

## TOWARDS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN FOOTBALL

**STEP  
01**

How are children involved in our game and what safeguards already exist?



**STEP  
02**

Set out and define your safeguarding policy



**STEP  
03**

Develop procedures and guidelines



**STEP  
04**

Communication and education



**STEP  
05**

How will you monitor, evaluate and review your policies, procedures and guidelines?





The toolkit also includes templates and resources to help you. But two important final messages are:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, so think about who else needs to be involved in this so that the actions are shared.
- Getting safeguarding right in your organisation will take time, so set yourself realistic timescales.

### *Remember*



Take the end-of-course quiz to achieve your FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding Essentials digital badge and certificate of course completion.

This course, Safeguarding Essentials, is the first in the [FIFA Guardians™ Safeguarding in Football](#) educational programme. The other courses are:

**Course 2:** Starting your Safeguarding Journey

**Course 3:** Developing your Safeguarding Effectiveness

**Course 4:** Embedding Safeguarding Practice

**Course 5:** Promoting Wider Safeguarding Change