



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(REVISED January 2025)

SoccerRockz works with children in education and community settings. The company is committed to the wellbeing and safety of every child we work with, and this Policy outlines the principles we work too. It is supported by a series of Good Practice Guidelines that cover every area of the company's work that involves children.

The Policy and Good Practice Guidelines apply to all staff and coaches who work for the Soccer Rockz, whether on permanent, temporary or freelance contracts, or working as volunteers. Organisations and individuals that wish to hire Soccer Rockz facilities are required to have their own Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place.

Vulnerable adults are included within this policy. Vulnerable adults are people, 18 or over, who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

John Fallon, Welfare Officer, has lead responsibility within the organisation for the protection of young children, young people and vulnerable adults and should be contacted in the case of safeguarding issues or concerns. John's number is 07718 639072 If he is not available, or if an accusation is to be made against him, Tom Cudworth, Director, should be contacted. Tom's number is 07964 223064.

Principles

In all our work with children we adhere to the following principles:

- The wellbeing and safety of each child is our primary concern.
- We respect the rights and dignity of every child we work with.
- Children are treated equitably and sensitively, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation or religion, in line with the Soccer Rockz's

Equal Opportunities Policy.

- Relationships between Soccer Rockz staff and coaches and the children they work with are based on mutual trust and respect.
- Soccer Rockz staff and coaches seek to achieve a balance between artistic outcomes and the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the children we work with.

- The feelings and concerns of any child or their parent/carer are listened to and acted upon.
- All Soccer Rockz staff and coaches who work with children have a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of any child with whom they come into contact. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Training in child protection will be offered to staff whose job involves working closely with children.
- Staff recruitment and selection processes will include appropriate DBS checks

Legal context

- SoccerRockz uses the word 'child' to refer to anyone under the age of 18, as defined by the Children Act 1989.
- The safety of the children we work with is our priority. Although not legally required to do so, we take every reasonable step to ensure a level of care that is comparable to the requirements of the Protection of Children Act 1999.
- SoccerRockz undertakes the Enhanced Disclosure process through the Data Barring Service on all coaches and staff who are actively involved in the education programme.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION WORK

These Guidelines have been developed to help staff and coaches who are involved in SoccerRockz's education programme. The Guidelines apply to all staff whether on permanent, temporary or freelance contracts or working as volunteers, and they should be read in conjunction with the SoccerRockz's Child Protection Policy and General Guidelines. SoccerRockz undertakes the Enhanced Disclosure process through DBS on all coaches and staff who are actively involved in the education programme.

A child-centred approach

SoccerRockz's General Guidelines make it clear that the children the SoccerRockz works with are valued and respected as individuals, and that their views and concerns are listened to. Staff must:

- treat children with respect
- offer encouragement and praise
- take time to listen to children's views
- where possible take children's views on board in any relevant decision-making process.

WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN ON EDUCATION PROJECTS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC THINGS THAT YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT, AND PROCEDURES YOU NEED TO FOLLOW.

Follow any relevant procedures required by schools or community groups

- □ For example, most schools will expect you to sign in on arrival and some require visitors to wear ID badges, to ensure that no unauthorised adults enter the premises.

Make sure that you arrive early enough to deal with these important administrative procedures before setting up for your workshop.

- Wear your Soccer Rockz T-shirt/sweatshirt This makes you more easily identifiable by school staff and students.
- When in schools, make sure you use the staff toilets not the children's
- When you arrive at the school, make sure that the staff show you where the staff room and toilets are. When working in schools it is essential that there is a teacher present at all times
- SoccerRockz always signs a contract with a school in advance, making it clear that this is a requirement. It is advisable to mention this to the relevant class teacher or named contact when you arrive at the school however, in order to reinforce its importance. If a teacher is not present you should not begin your workshop until they are. If a teacher leaves the room during a session you should carry on working rather than leave the children unsupervised, however if there are 2 or more coaches present one of you should find the head-teacher as soon as possible to inform him/her of the problem.

You should also let SoccerRockz know afterwards, so we can follow up with a letter to the school.

Where possible, another adult should be present during project work with children outside formal education

- As far as possible the SoccerRockz works to ensure that this is the case

Avoid being on your own with a child – if it is unavoidable, make sure that you are within sight or hearing of others

- If it is necessary to speak to a child about something individually, make sure that another adult is around. If you find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult in the room, make sure that the door is open and that someone else can see and/or hear what is happening. The need for openness to protect staff needs to be balanced with a need for a child's privacy however, to ensure that children have the opportunity to discuss things confidentially if they want to.

Do not have any unnecessary physical contact with children.

- In teaching soccer, it is sometimes necessary to touch a student. For coaches involved in the company's education work, there are some basic guidelines about touching children that you should always follow when teaching:
- Think about the action you are taking. Could the point you are trying to make be made clear in another way, e.g. by you or another student demonstrating? If it can, it is always preferable to use the alternative approach instead of physical contact.
- Children and young people must always be treated with respect and dignity. If it is necessary to touch a child therefore, it is important that there is an understanding and agreement to this taking place. With children and young people attending a workshop for example, an explanation of the teaching approach should be given to parents/carers and children, perhaps at the start of an individual session or at the beginning of each academic year.

- A touch can be misconstrued, so it is important that the child understands the intention behind your action. You should make sure that you touch in a firm, unambiguous manner
- it is important that you are neither too rough nor too delicate, both of which can be misunderstood.
- Be sensitive to a young person's feelings – if a child or young person says they do not want you to touch them, or if you sense that this is the case, respect that young person's feelings and find different approaches to teaching them. There could be many reasons for such a reaction - a child may have been bullied or abused for example, and young people going through the hormone changes of adolescence can be very embarrassed by touching. Keep your relationships with students on a professional level Remember that the law says someone is a child until they are 18. Regardless of the age of the student, a member of SoccerRockz staff is working in a professional capacity in an education project, and the relationship must be kept on that level. It is important that you do not arrange to meet a student outside the work environment.

Report any suspicions or allegations of abuse or bullying

- The separate Procedures document gives details of how to do this.

Good practice guidelines working with children

These guidelines have been developed to help all staff and coaches who work for the SoccerRockz to ensure the safety of all the children we work with. They are also designed to help protect staff: we know that children occasionally make false allegations of abuse and, although this is a rare occurrence, it is important that staff do not put themselves in situations where they might be vulnerable. These are general guidelines that should be read in conjunction with the SoccerRockz's Child Protection Policy. Our policy and guidelines apply to all staff, whether on permanent, temporary or freelance contracts or working as volunteers.

A child-centred approach

It is essential to the Soccer Rockz that the children we work with are valued and respected as individuals, and that their views and concerns are listened to. Remember that having an open and positive relationship with children is important, and contributes both to the success of the session, and to the outcomes in education work. Working with children in any context at the

Soccer Rockz, staff must:

- treat children with respect
- offer encouragement and praise
- take time to listen to children's views
- where possible take children's views on board in any relevant decision-making process.

Contact with children

You must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Work in schools should always take place in the presence of a teacher.
- As far as possible, work with children in other education contexts should take place in the presence of a teacher or chaperone.
- Avoid being on your own with a child – if it is unavoidable, make sure that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Do not have any unnecessary physical contact with children. If it is unavoidable or indeed desirable, for example if a child is distressed about something, the purpose of the contact must be made clear and it should only take place with the child's consent. Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, however well intentioned.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.
- Do not do anything of a personal nature for a child if they can do it themselves.
- Adults and children should not share changing and toilet facilities. Separate dressingrooms and toilets should be provided for children. When working in schools, make sure you use the staff toilets not the children's.
- It is not good practice to take children alone on car journeys, however short. If it is essential it must be done with the parents'/carers' consent, and insurance liability needs to be checked.

Relationships

Many people at the Soccer Rockz will develop relationships with children or young people through their work. This contact can lead to what is known as a "relationship of trust", i.e. a relationship that exists between an adult and a young person aged 18 years or under, where the adult has power or influence over that young person due to the nature of their role within an organisation. It is essential that such power is not abused in any way by anyone working for SoccerRockz. You should bear in mind:

- Young people aged 16 to 18 years can legally consent to some types of sexual activity, however in law they are still classified as children (The Children Act 1989). A young person's age does not necessarily reflect maturity and emotional development, and young adults may still be vulnerable to abuse. The law says that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse or engage in any other sexual activity with a person under that age, if the older person is in a position of trust in relation to the younger person.
- It is essential that you recognise your responsibility towards the children and young people The SoccerRockz works with, and that you do not abuse your position of trust.
- Do not meet with children outside your work with them, whether that work is taking place at SoccerRockz, in an educational institution, or elsewhere.

Children in employment

Occasionally young people of 16 or 17 are employed by the Soccer Rockz. A company relationship with any employee is governed by employment law, however where an employee is under the age of 18 we are mindful of the fact that they are still defined as a child in law. As far as is practically possible within their job role, the principles behind our Child Protection Policy are adhered to.

General:

- It is important that you challenge unacceptable behaviour. Sanctions or Soccer reprimands that are in any way humiliating, or make a child look or feel foolish in front of others, are not acceptable. Humiliating behaviour is equally unacceptable from an adult or another child.
- You must report any suspicions or allegations of abuse or bullying, whether by an adult or another child. The separate Procedures document gives details of how to do this.

Social networking

Interactive social media technology has revolutionised the way that people connect and interact. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, instant messaging and photo and video exchange sites are increasingly popular and provide an opportunity for the soccer world to connect with children and young people. However, the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to staff, children and young people. It is critical that our policies and guidelines keep pace with the raft of communication methods young people use. There are a number of potential risks to children and young people using social networking and other interactive services. These include cyber bullying, grooming and potential abuse by online predators, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content including self-harm, racist hate and adult pornography.

Guidelines

- Don't accept friend requests from children and young people
- Ensure that the content of Soccer Rockz Facebook and any other social networking sites related to The Soccer Rockz are suitable for children and young people
- Be aware that anything you post on your own site or profile can potentially be seen by anyone – consider keeping your profile private

If you have any worries

Recognising child abuse is not easy, however it is not up to individuals to decide whether or not abuse has taken place – if you have any anxieties it is essential that you report them using the Soccer Rockz's procedures (see separate document), and let the appropriate bodies investigate. This applies regardless of whether your concern relates to the behaviour of another Soccer Rockz employee, or the possibility that a child might be a victim of abuse at home or elsewhere.

Definitions of abuse

- It is generally accepted that there are 4 main forms of abuse:
- Physical abuse, including hitting, shaking, throwing and burning. Failure to act to protect a child is also considered to be physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse - the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, which can include making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate.
- Sexual abuse, which includes activities involving physical contact, or non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic material. Sexual activities with a child are abusive regardless of whether or not the child is perceived to consent.
- Neglect – the persistent failure to meet a child’s needs.

Things to look for and think about

- Most children acquire cuts and bruises during their normal daily life, but the location of bruises can be indicators of abuse – for example a bruise on a part of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. the face, can be a worrying sign. Bruises that reflect hand marks, or injuries where the explanation does not make sense, are other causes for concern, as are unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, but signs can include developmental delay, fear of making mistakes, self-harm, or a fear of their parent being approached regarding their behaviour.
- In cases of sexual abuse, it is usually the child’s behaviour which causes people to become concerned. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that any child who talks to you about this is listened to and taken seriously. Behavioural changes which can indicate sexual abuse include nightmares, sexual knowledge which is beyond a child’s age or development, eating problems, self-harm, drugs misuse.
- Neglect can be difficult to recognise, but physical signs can include hunger, loss of weight, inappropriate dress for the conditions. Children may also complain of being tired all the time, and talk about being left alone or unsupervised.

Bullying

- Bullying is not acceptable to Soccer Rockz, whether adult to adult, adult to child, or child to child. Bullying can include:
- Physical actions such as hitting and kicking;
- Name calling, humiliation, ignoring;
- Racial insults and gestures;
- Sexual comments and suggestions;
- Unwanted physical contact.
- If a child tells you that they are being bullied they must be taken seriously, and given support. Similarly, the bully needs to be supported, as they may well be a victim of bullying themselves.

- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the victim's and bully's parents or teacher.

(REVISED January 2025)

- Signed: *J. Cudworth*
- Dated: 13th January 2025