



BAFA Safeguarding Policy



Contents

1. Safeguarding statement
2. Definitions of abuse
3. Referral process
4. Poor practice concerns
5. DBS/PVG and safer recruitment
6. Governance and leadership
7. Safeguarding standards and expectations

Safeguarding statement

Our commitment

The British American Football Association acknowledges its duty of care to promote the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

- We are committed to making sure that clubs affiliated with BAFA meet our own safeguarding standards as well as complying with best practice and government guidance
- We undertake to regularly review and audit BAFA affiliated clubs to make sure that that required safeguarding standards are being adhered to
- We recognise that the safeguarding of children and adults at risk is paramount in all circumstances and we aim to make sure that they have a positive and enjoyable experience of participating in sport with BAFA and our affiliated clubs regardless of age, ability, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background
- We will make sure the environment offered by BAFA and our affiliated clubs is safe, child-centred, and suitable for adults at risk in order to protect vulnerable participants from abuse while they participate in activity involving British American Football
- We acknowledge that some children and adults at risk, including those with a disability or who are from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare

What we will do

- Our safeguarding policy requires BAFA affiliated clubs to promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk by valuing them, listening to them, and respecting them
- We will make sure that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation and that BAFA affiliated clubs adopt safeguarding best practice through their policies, procedures, and codes of conduct for staff and volunteers
- We will make sure that BAFA affiliated clubs understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and adults at risk
- We will provide training and quality assurance measures so that all players and volunteers know about BAFA's policies, procedures, and codes of conduct, and

are able to follow them confidently and competently to make sure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse

- We will offer support and guidance to any individual who raises or discloses a concern to make sure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office]
- We will prevent the recruitment or deployment of unsuitable individuals within BAFA by recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- We will require clubs to appoint a nominated designated safeguarding lead / welfare officer for children and young people, a deputy, and have a lead trustee/committee/board member for safeguarding
- We will share information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their parents/guardians to make sure they know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Our safeguarding policy and procedures will be widely promoted and will be mandatory for everyone involved in British American Football. Failure to comply with our policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in disciplinary action, dismissal or exclusion from the organisation
- Our safeguarding policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, in the event of relevant changes in legislation and/or government guidance, at the request of UK Sport and/or home country sports councils or as a result of any other significant change or event

This policy was last reviewed on 1 April 2023 and has been approved on 28 April 2023 by the BAFA board.

Key BAFA safeguarding contacts

Safeguarding team - Safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org

Richard Watson, Non-Executive Director and Safeguarding Lead

Definitions of abuse

Children who experience abuse may struggle to speak out, so it's vital that anyone working with children or young people is able to recognise the signs of abuse. The NSPCC website provides a [downloadable factsheet](#) setting out the different types of abuse and describes potential signs that a child is being abused.

Referral process

BAFA expects all our affiliated clubs to make sure they follow the required referral and recording systems in place to raise a safeguarding concern. This includes using the MyConcern online recording and reporting system to log and record any referrals that are received.

Poor practice concerns

Poor practice takes place whenever staff or volunteers fail to fulfil the highest standards of care and support in their working practice. Poor practice which is allowed to continue can cause harm and can become abuse. Poor practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action.

An individual may not be aware that poor practice or abuse is taking place, as they may deem the behaviour as 'acceptable'.

BAFA recognise the following as examples of poor practice. Please note - this list is not exhaustive, and any concerns of poor practice should be reported and recorded to BAFA as per the referral section of this policy.

General examples

- When insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (e.g., by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience, and ability of players)
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (e.g., a coach who ridicules and criticises players who make a mistake during a game)
- Allowing hazing practices to go unreported
- Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (e.g., inappropriate use by a coach of social media with a young player(s))
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g., allowing players to train/play without the correct medical care available or without the required protective equipment)
- Failing to adhere to BAFA codes of conduct (e.g., openly verbally abusing another participant)
- Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals

Specific examples for children and young people

- Physical abuse: indicators can include an explanation which is inconsistent with an injury, several different explanations provided for an injury, unexplained delay

in seeking treatment or reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

- Neglect: this is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Sexual abuse: when adults, of either sex, or other children, use children to meet their own sexual needs. It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- Emotional abuse: this may be difficult to recognise. It is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Specific examples for adults at risk

- Neglect: ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves. Neglect and poor professional practice may take the form of isolated incidents or pervasive ill treatment and gross misconduct. Neglect of this type may happen within a person's own home or in an institution/within an organisation/service. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional
- Physical abuse: includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate physical sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty
- Sexual abuse: includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. Additional symptoms include neglect, sexually transmitted disease, signs of sexual activity having taken place e.g. a woman who lacks the capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant, pain, soreness, itchiness. Person discloses fully or partially that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred in the past

DBS / PVG checks and safer recruitment

The British American Football Association will make sure that all affiliated clubs have a robust recruitment process to reduce the risk to all children and adults at risk from anybody who they may employ. This includes paid staff, agency staff, consultants or volunteers.

As part of BAFA's safer recruitment and selection process, offers of work for either paid or volunteer positions which involve 'regulated activity' when working with children and adults at risk are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check and appropriate references. All offers of work are subject to a satisfactory outcome of the screening process and until a satisfactory disclosure has been confirmed, the individual concerned will not be permitted to commence work.

All employees, workers, consultants, agency staff and volunteers engaged in 'regulated activity' within BAFA affiliated clubs in England and Wales will be required to undergo regular DBS disclosure clearances, normally every three years or earlier if requested. Pending DBS clearance and obtaining satisfactory references, they must not have unsupervised access to children and adults at risk.

BAFA affiliated clubs in Scotland should ensure that all employees, workers, consultants, agency staff and volunteers engaged in 'regulated activity' apply to join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. Pending PVG clearance and obtaining satisfactory references, they must not have unsupervised access to children and adults at risk.

Should an individual's DBS or PVG check reveal any convictions regardless of content, the club must immediately refer this information to BAFA Safeguarding team by email for advice. The BAFA Safeguarding team will then consider whether the nature of the offence/ offences renders the person concerned unsuitable for working with children and adults at risk. In these circumstances, where the nature of any disclosure must be considered, a risk assessment will be carried out to assess the information contained within the disclosure certificate. The individual may also be asked to attend an interview prior to a recruitment decision being made.

Governance and leadership

The British American Football Association has a safeguarding team that provides clear direction and addresses concerns relating to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

BAFA has a Board lead who oversees the delivery of the safeguarding strategic plan via the Safeguarding & Welfare Committee. The operational delivery of safeguarding is coordinated by the volunteer Safeguarding Team.

Each Club designated safeguarding lead / welfare officer is specifically responsible for providing localised expertise and support relating to the promotion and awareness of safeguarding within their club. All safeguarding concerns and issues

relating to children and adults at risk should be reported by the Club Welfare officer via the BAFA MyConcern system on the BAFA website. All safeguarding concerns must be reported within 24hrs of identifying a concern.

Safeguarding standards and expectations

The British American Football Association expects each BAFA-affiliated club to ensure they meet the six key areas of safeguarding standards that it enforces. These standards will be reviewed annually to make sure they reflect relevant and up to date legislation. These are detailed in full in the related document **BAFA Safeguarding Standards for Clubs** and are:

- 1 – Governance and culture
- 2 – Roles and responsibilities
- 3 – Prevention, policy and procedure
- 4 – Education
- 5 – Protection
- 6 – Listening culture

We will make sure that each BAFA affiliated club is audited on an annual basis by a safeguarding professional who will review evidence and the procedures used by the club to evidence they adhere to these standards.

Those clubs who fail to meet the BAFA required safeguarding standards will be supported by the BAFA Safeguarding team to improve identified areas of concern or failings.

BAFA affiliated clubs who fail the audit due to a concern that safeguarding standards are not being met, and where there is a risk to a child or adult at risk may be subject to disciplinary processes.