



# AIFF CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND FRAMEWORK

# PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Dear Stakeholders of Indian Football,

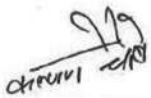
I am pleased to introduce our new Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework to you. We recognize the importance of providing a safe and fun environment for children and protecting them from all forms of harm, and we are committed to ensuring that the AIFF creates a safe and inclusive environment for children at all levels of the game.

We recognize the rights of the children according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and this document sets out our commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of Indian football, futsal and beach soccer.

The Federation will also work closely with parents, guardians, and children themselves to ensure that their voices are heard and their views are taken into account when decisions are made that affect them. We believe that this policy will help us to build stronger relationships with them and their families and contribute to the well-being of everyone involved.

Protecting children from harm in sports is the need of the hour and I urge all stakeholders to support it and work together to make Indian football, futsal and beach soccer a safe and welcoming place for children.

Sincerely,



Kalyan Chaubey,

President

# SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Colleagues of Indian Football,

I am pleased to share the AIFF Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework with you. As the Secretary General of the All India Football Federation, I believe that protecting children from harm is one of our highest priorities. This document demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all children who come into contact with football, futsal or beach soccer in India are safe and protected from harm.

We recognize that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility, and we will work closely with our staff, volunteers, and partners to ensure that they are aware of our policies and procedures. We will provide training and support to everyone who works with children, to help them understand the signs of abuse and how to respond appropriately.

The scope of this policy will involve anyone who works within the structure of Indian Football. We will be implementing this policy from governance to grassroots over a matter of time and have established a dedicated Safeguarding department within AIFF to embed safeguarding in all aspects of our sports.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this policy, especially our colleagues at FIFA, AFC, SAFF and NCPCR and I urge all colleagues in Indian football, futsal and beach soccer to support it and help us to create a safe and inclusive environment for children.

Sincerely,



Dr Shaji Prabhakaran

Secretary General

# INTRODUCTION

Football is the most popular sport in the world. People of all ages and abilities enjoy playing football, including the game's smaller versions like futsal and beach soccer. The sport provides an environment of fun, learning and friendship. This positive environment can be provided to everyone if they are made to feel safe, welcome and included. Safety is of utmost importance!

In India, thousands of children play football every day. They play with friends, family or teammates in clubs, academies, schools, communities or wherever they can find space to enjoy the game. Many children also get the opportunity to play elite-level football representing elite academies, clubs, state/union territory and national teams. It is the responsibility of every adult engaged with children in football to provide a safe environment for the kids.

The AIFF Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework provides guidelines to all staff and volunteers engaged in AIFF activities for children to provide such an environment, prevent any risks of harm to children and respond to concerns appropriately. The Policy and Framework were created after referring to the child safeguarding documents created by FIFA, UEFA, AFC and SAFF. We have also referred to documents from India viz. The Juvenile Justice Act 2015, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and a few documents of organisations working in the Indian sports sector. The document has been created in such a manner that any football or sports organisation in the country will be able to use most parts of the document to create a policy and framework for themselves and they are welcome to do so!

The All India Football Federation is committed to safeguarding children from harm and shall work continuously to improve and expand the safeguarding measures that exist for children in football, futsal and beach soccer.

We hope our stakeholders will join us in actively facilitating a fun and safe experience for children in Indian Football.

Regards

Team Safeguarding

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# AIFF CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The AIFF is committed to facilitating football, futsal and beach soccer in a fun, safe and respectful environment for all children. We recognise the children's right to be free from all forms of abuse and acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard them.

This Policy provides a framework to ensure that children are safeguarded in the delivery of our sports and provided with a healthy and growth-oriented learning environment. It will be accompanied by codes of conduct, guidelines and procedures to support implementation. Its scope applies to all those under the age of 18 years, without discrimination of any kind on account of age, race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, ability, disability, language, physical appearance, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, or any other factor. We acknowledge that some children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse (e.g. children with disabilities, or those on performance or elite pathways), and we accept the responsibility to promote their inclusion, safety and well-being across our sports.

## **Application**

This Policy applies to the following people:

- coaches/instructors;
- medical staff;
- managers;
- committee members, administrators and coordinators;
- volunteers;
- parents/guardians;

- peer/youth mentors;
- implementing partners;
- consultants/contractors/subcontractors,
- any person who is working closely with the child.

The above list is not exhaustive and may include any other actors as may be required for this Policy to be applied, from time to time.

The scope of applicability also applies to all AIFF affiliated member associations, clubs, academies, and programmes. AIFF requires all affiliated entities in India to adopt their own Safeguarding Policy and to inform AIFF of the contact of their Safeguarding Focal Point. Clubs not affiliated to AIFF, such as private clubs and academies, are also expected to have a Safeguarding Policy in place and comply with national child rights and child protection law.

## Definitions

**Child:** a person under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse:** an act or omission that harms a child. Abuse towards a child can be carried out by an adult or by another child. It can be physical, emotional, sexual or by way of neglect. Abuse can take place in person or online.

**Poor practice:** Failure to provide good care and support or behaviour that disregards the needs of the children, thus compromising their well being and safety, but does not meet the threshold of child abuse.

**Safeguarding:** The action taken to ensure that all children are safe from harm when involved in activities related to football, futsal or beach soccer. It means proactively doing everything possible to minimise risk and prevent abuse of children.

**Child Protection:** refers to the action taken in response to a specific concern for a child or children who may be suffering or are at risk of suffering harm or abuse. It is an essential part of safeguarding and requires referral to specialised child protection services, law enforcement agencies and expert local organisations trained to advise on and manage cases if concerns arise.

## Implementation

As part of our Policy, we shall:

- Appoint a Child Safeguarding Officer.
- Set up an internal steering group and an external expert advisory group to guide our work.
- Map out, identify and establish partnerships with local child protection authorities/agencies and civil society organisations with expertise in this area that can provide help and advice.
- Ensure appropriate and immediate action is taken to address allegations of abuse through referral of concerns to the relevant statutory authorities.
- Develop an action plan to promote and install safeguarding measures across the organisation, projects, events and activities of the AIFF.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals (staff and volunteers) in football, futsal and beach soccer through safe recruitment and screening procedures.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding in football, futsal and beach soccer and provide all staff and volunteers with appropriate training when joining the organisation, as well as provide further training from time to time and updates regularly (at least once annually).
- Manage concerns of Poor practice and breaches of the code of conduct through the internal steering group of the All India Football Federation, with independent advice from the external expert advisory group.
- Require all members of staff and volunteers to comply with this Policy and sign the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that the children are informed of their rights and educate them on how to seek redressal when they have concerns or need help.
- Ensure inquiry, disciplinary and appeals processes are in place through the AIFF judicial process to appropriately manage allegations, reports and cases where staff or volunteers have been found to have breached this policy and the code of conduct. Case management and support for victims of abuse (or alleged victims), and those accused, shall be undertaken by the relevant authorities. Any internal AIFF inquiry shall be put on hold until statutory investigations are complete so that internal processes do not compromise statutory or criminal investigations.



- Ensure that confidential and accurate records of concerns, allegations, and reports and submitted evidence provided are maintained and securely stored as well as submitted to law enforcement agencies as and when required and demanded by them.
- Ensure that we continuously evaluate how children are involved in football, futsal and beach soccer in India and review our safeguarding practices regularly, at least every two years), to ensure that we learn and improve safeguarding, in keeping with evolving best practices and national legislations. Furthermore, we shall proactively consult with children and local agencies and partners to ensure the policy keeps in mind the best interest of the child.

AIFF commits to promoting a culture of respect and has zero-tolerance towards any form of abuse at all levels of our sports. This policy, and its accompanying code of conduct, procedures and guidelines, shall be widely promoted and made available on the AIFF website ([www.the-aiff.com](http://www.the-aiff.com)).

Failure by staff and volunteers to comply with this policy may result in dismissal.

Mobile:

Email: [safeguarding@the-aiff.com](mailto:safeguarding@the-aiff.com)

### **Monitoring**

This policy shall be reviewed every two years, together in collaboration with the government and expert local organisations, or more urgently in the following circumstances:

- changes in national legislations, policies and services related to children's rights, child protection and safeguarding;
- as a result of any other significant change, event or specific case arising.

Approved by AIFF Executive Committee:



Dr Shaji Prabhakaran

Secretary General, AIFF

On behalf of Executive Committee

# PRINCIPLES

*The All India Football Federation Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework is based on the following principles:*

## **CHILD FIRST**

We shall act in the best interests of children at all times and without exception.

## **RECOGNISING CHILD'S RIGHTS**

We shall recognise and respect the rights of children. We shall see them as a child first and as a player or any other role later.

## **FOOTBALL IS FOR EVERYONE**

Football, futsal and beach soccer are for everyone without discrimination and every child shall be provided with a safe environment to enjoy and express themselves.

## **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

Without exception, everyone involved in children's football, futsal or beach soccer and related activities must safeguard children from harm.

## **AIFF SHALL LEAD THE WAY**

The All India Football Federation shall lead by example in creating policies, measures and best practices to provide a safe environment for children involved in football, futsal and beach soccer and related activities.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE

**Physical abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child and includes any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. It mainly involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”) children with the hand or with an implement – a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. It can involve but is not limited to punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, scratching, pinching, biting or burning them or breaking their bones.

***Examples in our sports:***

- Slapping a child because they are provocative, not listening or disturbing the training
- Forcing a child with an injury to play
- Encouraging children to deliberately play aggressively, without regard to the risk of injury to themselves or others

**Emotional or Psychological abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child i.e. when they do not receive the support or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. It can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional, physical and intellectual well-being and development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include, but is not limited to, not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse often occurs as a pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-physical behaviour within a power-differentiated relationship. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

***Examples in our sports:***

- Shouting at a child and constantly calling them a 'loser' for not performing well during a match or for missing a penalty
- Constantly laughing at a child, and encouraging other players to laugh, if a child is unfit
- Showing favouritism in the team so that some children feel excluded

**Bullying** (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers (child to child), and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. It can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.

Adults sometimes try to dismiss bullying, thinking it is less serious because it usually occurs between children. However, bullying can and does cause harm. It also tends to get progressively worse. For this reason, it is important to create an atmosphere where everyone knows that bullying is not tolerated, and to stop it as soon as it starts.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs when those responsible for their care have the means, knowledge and access to services to do so, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter, that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. It also includes failure to protect a child from exposure to danger.

***Examples in our sports:***

- Not being aware of where children are during camps or away trips
- Not providing water, or not allowing children to take a break for water, in hot weather during training or a match
- Using transport that is not safe and roadworthy to take children to matches
- Allowing known sex offenders to work with children in football
- Depriving elite players education opportunities when they are in residential football academies

**Sexual abuse or sexual assault** is the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity. It occurs when adults exploit children sexually for their gratification. It may involve physical contact, such as assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts, such as kissing, rubbing and touching children's private body parts.

Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve contact; examples include involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse by gaining their trust (including via social media). In the majority of cases, the perpetrator is a person the child knows and trusts with sexual abuse often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations.

Sexual harassment encompasses a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviour and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating.

***Examples in our sports:***

- Taking photos of children naked while they are showering
- Starting a sexual relationship with a player
- Commenting on how 'well developed' a girl football player is physically
- Requiring abnormal physical contact claiming it is for the well-being of the player

**Compliance with definitions and punishments thereof for Sexual Assault (Penetrative/Aggravated) and Sexual Harassment will be as per the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. Please see the REFERENCES section for more details**

# RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN FOOTBALL, FUTSAL AND BEACH SOCCER

## **Risk factors for abuse**

- Potential risk situations: training and match field of play and surrounding areas, changing or dressing rooms, showers, carpooling, overnight stays, away trips;
- Tolerance for bullying, including amongst peers;
- Performance pressure from adults and/or peers at the cost of physical or mental harm
- High tolerance of physical violence and injuries;
- Dominance and unequal power relationships, for example between managers or coaches and their players;
- Access to prohibited substances or performance-enhancing drugs
- Inappropriate adult-child relationships and abuse of positions of trust;
- Discrimination and gender inequality; Social tolerance for abusive relationships or behaviour: a key factor that makes children, particularly girls, vulnerable to abuse;
- Reputation and scandal avoidance: leading to incidents being silenced or unreported, sometimes leading to the continuation of the abuse;
- Lack of clear policies and procedures at all levels of the sports

## **Protective factors against abuse**

- Culture of respect and zero-tolerance towards any form of abuse at all levels.
- Clear policies and procedures in place that are well known by all, including children, young people, and their families, with a designated contact person.
- Incidents and allegations are taken seriously and followed up.
- Organisations promoting a better understanding of the issues through education and awareness and are committed to deterring those who may wish to use sport as a means of gaining access to children for inappropriate reasons.
- Caring and committed staff and volunteers at all levels of the game.

# HOW TO RECOGNISE AND RESPOND TO ABUSE AND STANDARDS OF EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

Child abuse can be a very difficult topic for staff and volunteers. It is unlikely that a child will disclose that they are being abused or that you will see abuse happening – it is far more likely you will see indications that a child might be experiencing abuse, so it is important to follow some general guidelines. Children suffering from abuse often experience more than one type of abuse. The abuse usually happens over a period of time, rather than being a single, isolated incident. Increasingly, abuse can happen online.

**There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse:**

1. Considering the possibility;
2. Looking out for signs of abuse; and
3. Recording and reporting.

## **1. Considering the possibility**

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. This should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reasons or displays persistent behavioural problems that they never had before. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to certain people like a coach or team doctor or their parents or guardians, or anyone else.

## **2. Looking out for signs of abuse**

Signs of abuse may be physical, behavioural or developmental. The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not definitive.

**Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. Disclosures should always be believed and taken seriously.**



<b>PHYSICAL ABUSE</b>	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b></p> <p>Scratches Bite marks or bruises Burns, especially cigarette burns Untreated injuries Broken bones</p>	<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b></p> <p>Self-harm tendencies Constantly trying to run away Aggressive or withdrawn Fear of returning home Unnecessary or inexplicable fear of adults</p>
<b>EMOTIONAL ABUSE</b>	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b></p> <p>Sudden speech disorders Bed wetting and soiling Signs of self-harm Poor peer relationships</p>	<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b></p> <p>Attention-seeking behaviour Rocking, thumb sucking Fear of change Chronic runaway</p>
<b>NEGLECT</b>	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b></p> <p>Constant hunger Exposed to danger, lack of supervision Inadequate/inappropriate clothing Poor hygiene Untreated illnesses</p>	<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b></p> <p>Tiredness, listlessness Poor peer relationships Low self-esteem Compulsive stealing, begging</p>
<b>SEXUAL ABUSE or ASSAULT</b>	
<p><b>Physical indicators</b></p> <p>The child may complain of soreness, pain or bleeding in his/her “private parts” Making sexual advances to adults or other children Pain on urination Difficulty in walking or sitting Anorexic/bulimic Substance/drug abuse</p>	<p><b>Behavioural indicators</b></p> <p>Depression Inappropriate language and/or sexual knowledge for their age Making sexual advances to adults or other children Low self-esteem Afraid of the dark Wariness of being approached by anyone Unnecessary or inexplicable fear of adults</p>

## **Grooming**

In order to avoid grooming, we must know what it means. In the context of sexual exploitation and abuse, “grooming” refers to the subtle and gradual process over a period of time of establishing or building a relationship of trust with a child either in person or through the use of the internet or other digital technologies, to facilitate either online or offline sexual contact. Grooming also encompasses building trust or emotional attachment with parents or guardians with the intent of committing sexual abuse or exploitation against a child under their care.

### **Potential signs of grooming could include:**

- Befriending the child and their family to slowly gain trust.
- Giving gifts, money, trips, and/or performing special favours for the child.
- Promoting the notion that the relationship with the child is special.
- Encouraging harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets.
- Taking pictures/videos of the child.
- Communicating with the child excessively including calling, and sending messages over the phone or social media
- Desensitizing the child through non-sexual touching, “accidental” touching of private areas and/or walking in on bathroom or dressing time.
- Testing a child’s boundaries by using inappropriate language and/or telling dirty jokes.
- Playing body contact games with children; tickling, backrubs or wrestling.
- Making alcohol/drugs available to the children.
- Introducing pornography to initiate sexual interest or normalize the behaviour.
- Offering to babysit, including overnight trips or sleepovers.

**Some of these actions may be completely harmless in isolation however care must be taken to not normalise such behaviours.**

## **What to do if a child discloses information directly to you**

Children's disclosures must always be taken seriously. Most importantly, you should immediately contact the local police if the child is in immediate danger.

If a child suggests they want to tell you a "secret" or disclose information that suggests they are at risk or have been abused, it is important that you:

- remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief;
- listen carefully to what is being said and offer comfort statements, particularly when a child discloses sexual abuse, for example, "I'm sorry this happened to you", "It's not your fault";
- do not ask detailed, probing or leading questions;
- Assure the child that you will take what is said seriously;
- explain what you are going to do (depending on the child's age, this would include asking what type of help is wanted and with whose involvement the child would feel comfortable);
- tell the child that you cannot keep this a secret, but that the information will only be shared to keep them safe.

### **3. Recording and reporting**

Your observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant. The information is really important and may help any future investigation that can safeguard and protect the child. Please refer to the reporting form in Appendix 1 regarding responding to concerns.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

When dealing with concerns relating to possible abuse, staff and volunteers shall apply

strict discretion and maintain confidentiality. Information shall be shared on a "need-to-know" basis only to protect the child to whom the concern or allegations relate.

Information can, and must, be shared with statutory authorities or agencies to assist them with the investigation process.

# GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD AND/OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Voicing concerns, suspicions or allegations of Poor practice or abuse can cause worry and stress – particularly if it relates to a staff or volunteer who engages in the AIFF’s programmes and especially when it could be a colleague. However, reporting a concern is important to prevent a child from suffering harm or being at risk of harm, and to ensure that the concern is dealt with properly and consistently. ***No action is not an option.***

Any staff member or volunteer who, in good faith, discloses possible wrongdoing(s) or grounds for concern about a child shall receive full support from the AIFF, even if the allegation is subsequently proven to be unfounded. It is acceptable to report concerns and allegations in confidence and not to suppress them for fear of criticism or repercussions for doing so. Such a culture ensures that child abuse cases or risks are not ignored and inadvertently allowed to continue.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in AIFF to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns or allegations by reporting these to the child safeguarding officer/focal point.

## **Reporting a Concern**

Staff and volunteers should report any concerns they have to the child safeguarding officer/focal point using established reporting lines (anonymously online, by email or by phone) using the reporting form as a guide for reporting. (Appendix 1)

Some staff and volunteers may be more comfortable reporting their concerns directly to their line manager or a senior member of staff within the organisation. In such cases, the line manager should report these cases confidentially to the child safeguarding officer/focal point to ensure that reports and allegations are managed consistently. Complainants are encouraged to report allegations and concerns as soon as possible and within 72 hours. In cases of sexual abuse, the concerns or allegations shall be reported immediately. In case of emergency i.e. when a child is in immediate danger, inform the police first and the child safeguarding officer/focal point after. Where a case of abuse is suspected, the child safeguarding officer will have a list of names and contacts of local authorities, expert agencies and trusted organisations that specialise in child protection who can offer professional help to the alleged victim and family and for cases to be properly investigated.

***If the child safeguarding officer/focal point is not available, and in cases of sexual abuse one shall report the matter directly to the police. A list of relevant emergency contacts is mentioned in the IMPORTANT CONTACTS section of this document.***

### **Options in case of a concern:**

In case of emergency i.e. when a child is in immediate danger, inform the police first and the child safeguarding officer/focal point after.

### **For other concerns,**

- Submit a report via the AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer/focal point who shall refer the case to local statutory authorities, agencies and trusted partners, if required.

If the Child Safeguarding Officer/focal point is unavailable, and in cases of sexual abuse:

- Submit the report directly to the police
- Submit the report directly to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and;
- Call and report to Childline India: 1098

Ensure that all information submitted by you is reported in strict confidentiality.

### **Grounds for concern of abuse might exist when there is:**

- An account by a person who saw a child being abused.
- Evidence, such as an unexplained physical injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, such as the child being withdrawn and quiet when they are not usually so.
- Consistent indication over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical abuse and neglect.
- A specific indication (or disclosure) from a child that they have been abused. Remember, children rarely talk if they are being abused and often do not know what to do or where to go for help. It is very difficult for children to speak up about possible abuse; so one has to be vigilant in picking up signs of abuse.

### **Incidents of Poor practice might occur when the needs of children are not given the necessary priority, resulting in their well-being and safety being compromised. Examples might include:**

- Failing to take sufficient care to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players);
- Failing to report behaviour which may compromise the welfare of a child and allowing concerning practices to go unreported;
- Constantly showing favouritism towards or ignoring certain children;
- Using foul language and prohibited substances in the presence of children;
- Repeatedly ignoring health and safety guidelines, or failing to undertake regular risk assessments, which may put children at risk of harm (e.g. not ensuring that equipment, transport or facilities are fit for purpose, safe to use and accessible).

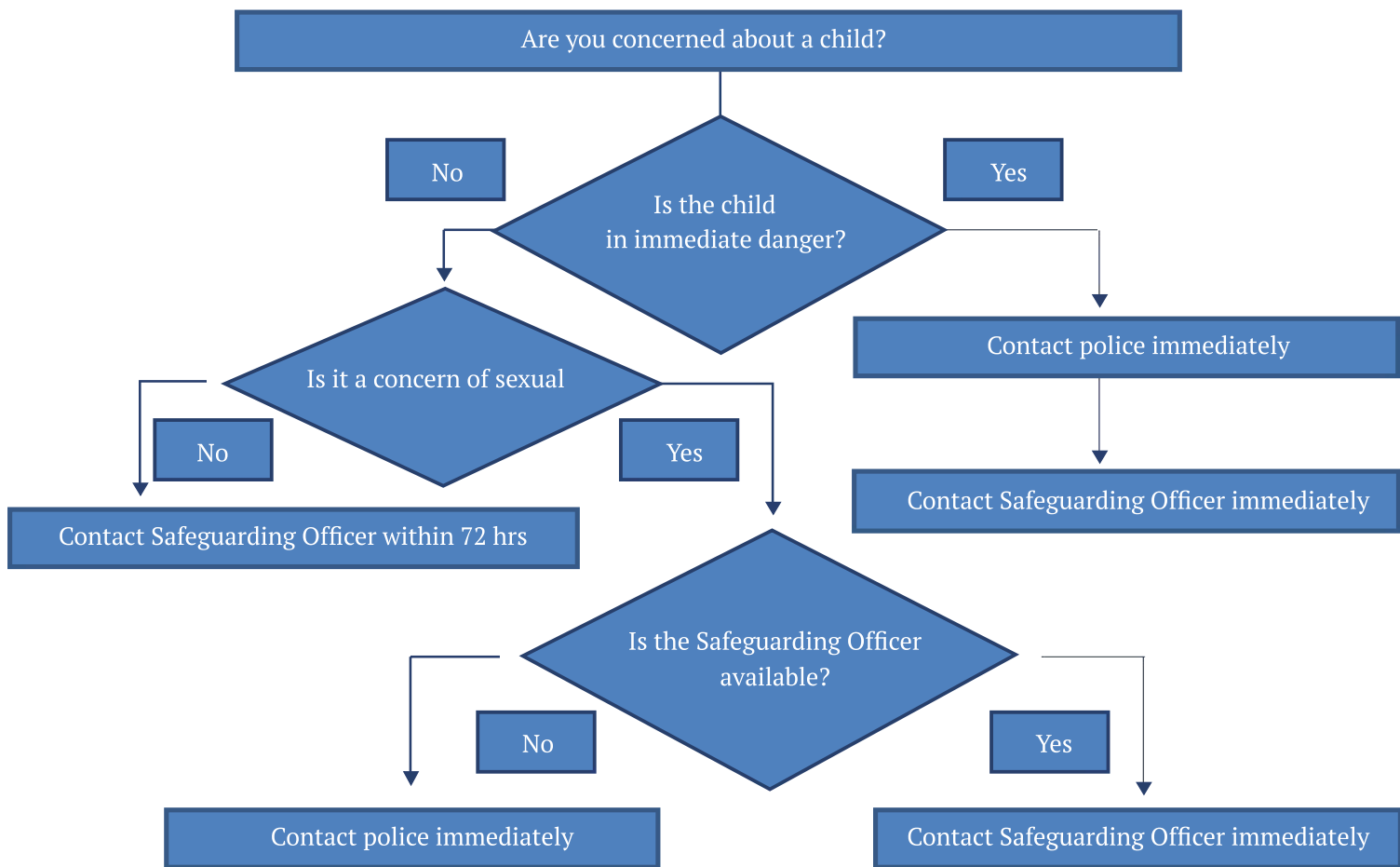
If you become aware of repeated Poor practices by one of your colleagues, you have a responsibility to also report the matter to the child safeguarding officer/focal point. Poor practice reports can be handled internally by the internal steering group, taking independent advice from the external expert advisory group. When necessary and depending on the severity of reported concerns, especially those not dealt with directly by the authorities, the AIFF Safeguarding Officer will establish a case management team with members of the external advisory group

*Failure to challenge and report Poor practice can lead to an environment where abuse may occur.*

**REMEMBER:**

**It is not your duty to decide if a Poor practice or abuse has occurred. It is your responsibility to report any concerns and suspicions, you may have, to the child safeguarding officer/focal point or the appropriate authorities.**

## Reporting Flow Chart





## **What may happen after an allegation of abuse has been made?**

Allegations of abuse will be responded to after consultation with the external expert advisory group, relevant statutory authorities or child protection agencies. Any internal AIFF gathering of information will be put on hold until statutory investigations are complete so that internal processes do not compromise the statutory or criminal investigation. AIFF shall further provide all such assistance as may be lawfully allowed and asked for, by the statutory investigating agencies concerning the allegations of abuse.

***The AIFF response may then include (this is not in order of importance or an exhaustive list):***

- Liaising with child protection services as necessary to ensure support is provided to the child for their full care and recovery. If child protection services are not operational, we will engage with local organisations/NGOs to ensure care and support are provided;
- Informing the line manager responsible for the staff member or volunteer;
- Informing the AIFF Secretary General to coordinate an internal response, when appropriate
- Contacting the victim and their family, if advised to do so by statutory agencies, to inform them that the allegations have been forwarded for investigation;
- Informing the staff member or volunteer of the allegation made against them and affording them the opportunity to respond.

## **Support during Investigation**

- In a sensitive and best possible way to not allege or accuse before the investigation is done, the concerned staff or volunteer shall be temporarily suspended, without prejudice, from their duties while an external investigation is taking place.
- Endeavour that the child who experienced the alleged abuse is safe, both emotionally and physically, throughout the investigation process
- All media inquiries shall be handled by the AIFF President, Secretary General or Spokesperson.

## **After investigation**

Depending on the severity of the situation and proven charges as concluded by the AIFF Disciplinary Committee or law enforcement agencies, the organisation shall take the necessary steps

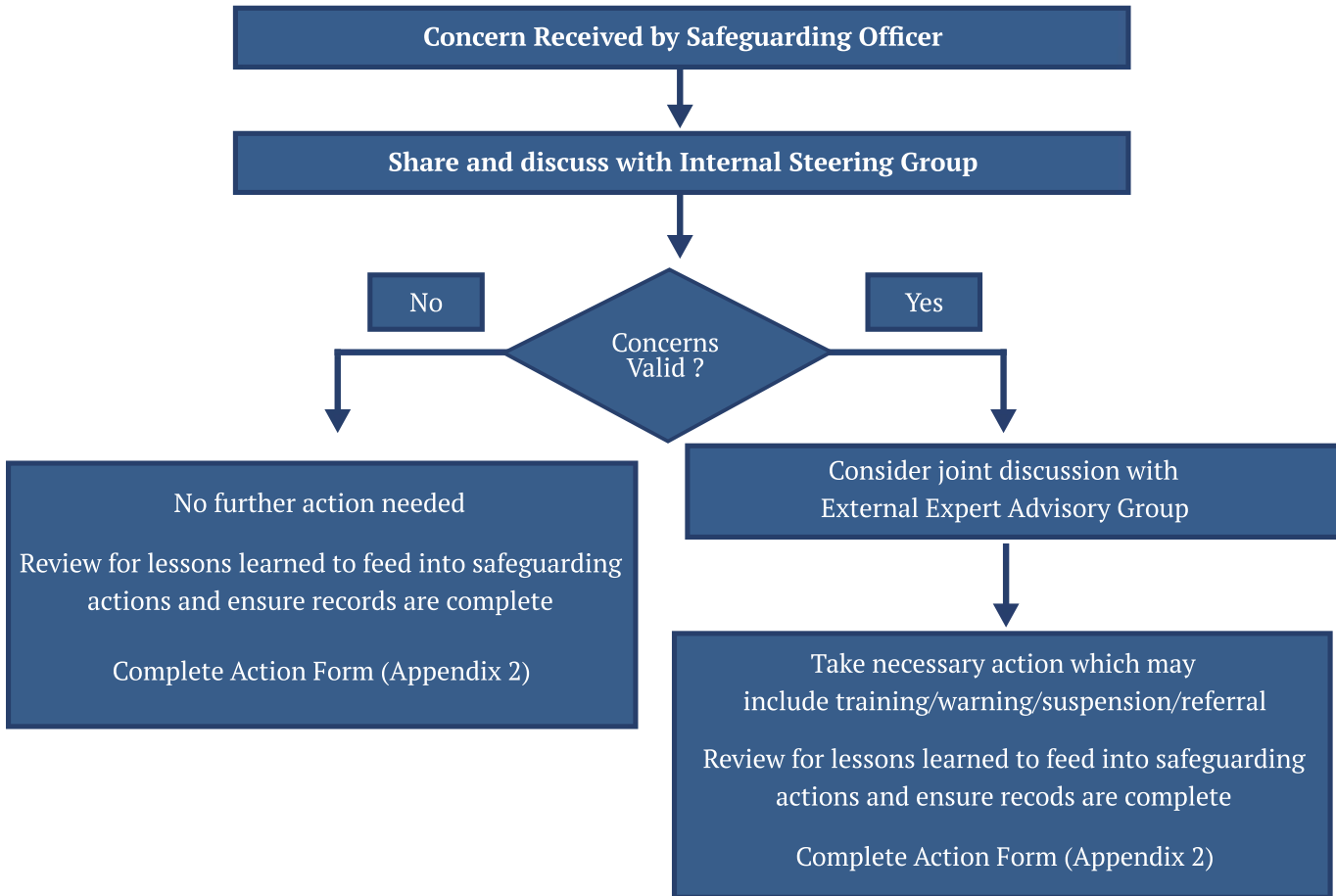
### **If no violation has been found:**

- Reinstate staff members in their position. This is a sensitive issue and one must ensure careful handling to avoid gossip and misinformation.
- Be careful to share the findings of the investigation only with appropriate parties on a need to know basis and support the individual in coming back to the organisation along with communicating this information with all other staff members.

### **If a violation is found:**

- Take action as per the severity of the violation and the conclusion of the findings.

## Action Flow Chart



### What may happen when the concern is not an allegation of abuse but of Poor practice?

The majority of Poor practice cases can be dealt with by AIFF through the internal steering group, in consultation with the external expert advisory group and cooperation from all parties involved. Follow-up by the AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer/focal point is important to ensure that the appropriate course of action has been followed and all reported cases documented

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## **Child Safeguarding Focal Point**

- Be the point of contact for all child safeguarding matters for the entity or project they are associated with e.g. member association, team, activity or event etc.
- Carrying out risk assessments for their project as advised by the AIFF Safeguarding Officer or Internal Steering Group and External Expert Advisory Group
- Ensuring that all associated staff, volunteers and all stakeholders are familiar with the AIFF's child safeguarding policy, code of conduct and safeguarding measures.
- Providing or arranging safeguarding training and education for all associated staff and volunteers.
- Reporting allegations of Poor practice and breaches of the AIFF's code of conduct to the AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer
- Keeping own safeguarding knowledge, best practice solutions and skills up-to-date

## **AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer**

- Playing a lead role in developing the AIFF's approach to safeguarding children in football, futsal and beach soccer
- Identifying and establishing partnerships with local authorities/agencies and civil society organisations/NGOs with expertise in this area.

- Carrying out risk assessments when required and on an ongoing and regular basis, to ensure that the programmes, practices or activities (e.g. training and matchday procedures) are in conformity with safeguarding measures
- Ensuring risk assessments are undertaken by other staff and volunteers (and not only by the lead officer), to ensure that practitioners are also proactive in assessing risks and in revising and adopting further safeguarding measures that may be needed.
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers and all stakeholders are familiar with the AIFF's child safeguarding policy, code of conduct and safeguarding measures.
- Providing or arranging safeguarding training and education for all new staff and volunteers and ensuring that existing personnel receive ongoing training and updates on safeguarding regularly.
- Advising management on ongoing training needs and maintaining a central filing system to keep track of the number of staff and volunteers who have completed safeguarding training.  
Liaising with HR as necessary
- Reporting allegations of Poor practice and breaches of the AIFF's code of conduct to the
- The internal steering group of the organisation. Managing referrals to statutory authorities/ agencies and local organisations if cases or concerns of abuse arise
  - Forming a competent case management group when needed in cases that do not meet a criminal threshold but need to be investigated by AIFF.
- Acting as the central point of contact for internal and external individuals and agencies on safeguarding matters
- Representing the association at external meetings related to safeguarding
- Taking a lead role in maintaining and reviewing the association's implementation plan, together with the Executive Committee
- Keeping own safeguarding knowledge, best practice solutions and skills up-to-date

## **Internal Steering Group**

The Internal Steering Group will be composed of people who are directly associated with AIFF, e.g. staff, volunteers, players etc. They will champion the awareness, implementation and embedding of Safeguarding in their respective roles, activities and departments as well contribute from their own expertise and role in improving Safeguarding for the All India Football Federation.

- Provide a cross-department perspective on safeguarding and information sharing.
- Act as a forum to hear and respond to new ideas and proposals (including checking on the practical implementation of policies and procedures across AIFF).
- Offer a communication route into all departments.
- Undertake or contribute to specific tasks (e.g., gathering information, helping to disseminate messages, or assisting with training or presentations).
- Develop and update the Safeguarding Action Plan – particularly identifying any gaps in safeguarding arrangements and ways to address them.
- Identify and try to resolve problems or address concerns within the organisation.
- Help to identify and engage safeguarding allies and champions.
- Integrate safeguarding requirements into other departments' work and responsibilities, including that of disciplinary and ethics processes.
- Support the development of progress reports for senior management, including identifying priorities

## **External Expert Advisory Group**

The External Expert Advisory Group will consist of external individuals within India who have expertise, knowledge and experience in safeguarding and child protection. They will provide knowledge of safeguarding risks and the impact of abuse, together with national safeguarding and child protection legislation, data and research, guidance and processes that already exist in India. They will be able to share practical experience of how the organisation can develop safeguarding (e.g., safe recruitment, education and training).

With respect to cases, they will help advise AIFF, in line with the relevant applicable AIFF regulations, to ensure all cases of harassment and abuse are dealt with appropriately in its jurisdiction, including by working with the relevant authorities when concerns are raised and conducting an independent investigation, especially where it is determined that criminal or statutory investigation thresholds are not met. This includes:

- Establishing independent multi-disciplinary teams to conduct investigations and appointing trauma-informed interviewers and/or training AIFF staff to conduct such interviews
- Ensuring, victims/survivors and witnesses have appropriate support throughout the process, based on a risk assessment of their needs. Such support may include counselling, medical help, or safe refuge.

***The group will advise AIFF on matters related to Safeguarding including:***

- The laws and guidance in India relating to safeguarding children, child abuse, child protection, Child Rights, and gender-based violence.
- The structure and function of child protection organisations and other specialised agencies – nationally and at local level
- Processes for reporting, referring and investigating abuse reports – including contact details linked to paper or online systems.
- Access to safeguarding case advice and consultation – to help clarify when formal referrals should be made to external agencies or organisations.
- Developing and/or delivering safeguarding training – including any external training and learning opportunities that may be available to staff.
- How to adopt and embed a rights-based approach.
- Support services for victims and others impacted by safeguarding cases, including adults aged 18 and above (e.g., access to counselling, legal representation and mental health services).

- Developing and implementing organizational and competition safeguarding policies and associated procedures.
- Sources of support for Safeguarding Officers and others who are responsible for receiving and responding to reports of abuse.
- Safeguarding awareness raising campaigns.

***Both groups will:***

- Meet on a quarterly basis at the minimum and more often at the outset, to establish necessary safeguarding measures included in the AIFF Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework
- Consider any urgent issues and necessary revisions to the policy following incidents or changes to legislations and best practices
- When concerns are reported, case management teams can be formed that could include members from both groups to resolve them depending on the level of severity/seriousness. In principle, lower level concerns and poor practise will be dealt with by competent members of the Internal Steering Group and the AIFF Disciplinary and or Ethics Committee. With respect to serious allegations of abuse, especially where it is determined that criminal or statutory investigation thresholds are not met, AIFF will work with the Expert Advisory Group to establish an independent multi-disciplinary team, in line with the relevant applicable AIFF regulations, to conduct investigations and appoint trauma-informed interviewers and/or to train AIFF staff to conduct such interviews, to safely gather evidence and information to be used in the scope of the relevant AIFF investigation/judicial process.



# AIFF SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING PROCEDURES

## **Safe recruitment and screening**

The range and quality of football, futsal and beach soccer programmes for children would not exist without the time, skills and commitment of staff and volunteers. It is recognised that recruitment can never be entirely “safe” but the aim of safer recruitment is to put in place a number of actions that, together, aims to reduce the chances of employing the “wrong” people to work with children. AIFF accepts the responsibility to ensure that staff and volunteers providing opportunities for children are appropriately selected, supported and have the necessary safeguarding knowledge to help them in their roles.

The following recruitment procedures will help select the right people and screen out and discourage those who are not suitable to work with children in football, futsal or beach soccer:

1. All roles involving interaction with children shall explicitly include a reference to safeguarding in the advertisements and job descriptions.
2. At least two reference checks shall be conducted and documented. References shall be requested to demonstrate the applicant’s suitability to work with children.
3. Applicants shall be asked to explicitly explain any gaps in employment. 4. Police checks shall be completed before the individual starts working in their role but also regularly, once they have started working in their role (at least once every five years).
5. A self-declaration form (Appendix 3) shall be signed by the recruited individual before they start working for the organisation.

6. All new employees shall attend and complete the FIFA Safeguarding Essentials Course (<https://safeguardingsport.fifa.com/>) and any other AIFF training on safeguarding children within three months of taking up a post.
7. All new employees shall read and sign the AIFF Code of Conduct upon taking up a post.
8. All new employees shall complete their induction, which would include an obligation to read all relevant policies and procedures pertinent to safeguarding.
9. All current employees shall attend and complete the FIFA Safeguarding Essentials Course (<https://safeguardingsport.fifa.com/>) and any other AIFF training on safeguarding children within the timeline advised by AIFF.

# RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCESS GUIDELINES

<b>Profile of candidate</b>	Decide what skills and knowledge are needed to safely work with children in football, and include these within the profile
<b>Advertisement</b>	Include a clear statement about AIFF's commitment to safeguarding children
<b>Interview Questions</b>	<p>Recruitment for those who will work directly with children shall include an interview plan that incorporates behavioural-based questions. Sample safeguarding questions for interviews may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have you worked/volunteered with children in a similar position before? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?</li> <li>- How have you handled children who did not want to participate in an activity?</li> <li>- Provide three examples of how to work safely with children in football, futsal or beach soccer.</li> <li>- How would you handle children who were not listening to your instructions?</li> <li>- What is your understanding of safeguarding children in football?</li> </ul>
<b>Pre- Appointment</b>	
<b>Reference checks</b>	Two professional references shall be directly provided, including one by the candidate's current or most recent employer. Open references (e.g. a candidate directly providing a written reference to you) are not sufficient.
<b>Proof of identification</b>	Verify a candidate's identification, preferably by using their national passport or national/government ID card.
<b>Qualification and registration checks</b>	Verify that candidates have obtained all qualifications or professional registrations claimed in their application by asking to see original certificates.

<p><b>Police check</b></p>	<p>The decision to request a police check needs to be made based on whether the job entitles access to children, even if such access is occasional (like security or cleaning staff).</p> <p>If a police check returns with a conviction, then Human Resources Department, in consultation with the child safeguarding officer, needs to decide whether to proceed with the appointment.</p> <p>Having a conviction does not necessarily mean that the person cannot be appointed; it depends on the offence.</p> <p>However, any conviction for abuse of a child or a sexual offence will lead to an immediate decision not to hire the person.</p>
<p><b>Self-declaration form</b></p>	<p>Candidates working directly with children should also sign a self-declaration form. (Appendix 3)</p>

# SAFEGUARDING AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

In any activity, it is important to ensure any risks concerning the location, training facilities and equipment are minimised by using the risk assessment tool

(<https://forms.gle/7bhiQLkFMojNkKFD6>) together with local health and safety guidelines. In addition, during any activity, children need to be supervised at all times as the likelihood of accidents happening increases when adequate adult supervision is not in place.

Staffing and supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to judge. You need to make sure you have enough staff and volunteers to ensure children are safe – and that these adults are suitable to undertake various tasks as needed. It may not always be possible to stick to recommended ratios. However, you shall make every effort to achieve the best level of supervision of children at all times.

## **Recommended adult-to-child ratios**

*The following adult-to-child ratios are recommended to help keep children safe:*

- When working with children between five and eight years of age, a ratio of one adult to 16 children shall be adhered to;
- When working with children between nine and 18 years of age, a ratio of one adult to 20 children shall be adhered to.
- If young people are helping to supervise younger children, only those aged 18 or over shall be included as adults when calculating adult-to-child ratios.

***All activities shall always be planned to involve at least two adults.***

The following factors shall also be taken into consideration in deciding how many adults are required to safely supervise children in football, futsal or beach soccer activities:

- The number of children involved in the activity;
- The age, maturity and experience of the children;
- Whether any of the members of staff, volunteers or children have a learning or physical disability or special requirements;
- Whether any of the children have challenging behaviour;
- The particular hazards associated with the activity;
- The particular hazards associated with the environment;
- The level of qualification and experience of the members of staff and volunteers;
- The full programme of activities.

**Important things to remember:**

- There shall always be at least one adult per group of children of the same gender as the children involved.
- There shall always be at least one adult of each gender with mixed groups.
- All activities shall be planned to involve at least two adults.
- Adults shall avoid being left alone with children.
- All adults working directly with children shall be subject to safe recruitment processes, shall sign the code of conduct and complete the FIFA Guardians Safeguarding Essentials Course (<https://safeguardingsport.ffa.com/>) and any AIFF safeguarding awareness training.

# PLANNING AND ORGANISING TOURNAMENTS, OVERNIGHT STAYS AND AWAY TRIPS

Travelling to away games and tournaments should be both safe and fun for children. Parents and guardians will often worry when their children are away but careful planning and preparation should help to ease those worries and demonstrate that you have taken into account the various needs of their children and the potential dangers of a trip away.

To help with planning and organisational arrangements, the following guidelines have been developed for implementing proper safeguarding measures. Much of this preparation can be done at the start of the year when the calendar of events is being planned.

Essential planning – at the start of the year/season

Hold a meeting with parents or guardians at the start of the season to explain the safeguarding policy and measures, introduce staff, and review the code of conduct. This is a great opportunity to discuss procedures for travelling for away games and tournaments and for parents or guardians to sign consent forms.

Hold a meeting with children for the same purposes.

***Make sure you ensure the following:***

- Parental (or guardian) consent forms (Appendix 4) – make sure they are signed and kept safely.
- When travelling, there shall always be at least one adult per group of children of the same gender as the children involved.
- There shall be a qualified first-aider with the team who has read and signed the code of conduct.

- If team doctors and physiotherapists are on the trip, they shall always treat a child for illness or injury in a manner that reflects the ethos of their profession. They shall also read and sign the code of conduct.
- You have the proper insurances in place.
- A child safeguarding focal point or approved chaperone(s) shall be on the trip. Ideally, the focal point/s shall be of the same gender as the children involved.
- The code of conduct is signed by all those travelling (both adults and children).
- Children know whom to contact if they have a concern.
- Use Travel Checklist (Appendix 5)

### ***Important considerations***

- Draw up a programme, including departure and return dates and times.
- Have a meeting with the parents, guardians and players to run through the trip's programme of events and itinerary and address any questions or concerns they may have.
- Someone from AIFF who is not going away needs to be identified as a point of contact. They shall have a list of those going on the trip and their contact details.
- Make it clear who the child safeguarding focal point or approved chaperone(s) for the trip is, ensure that they are suited to this role and make sure that everyone in the group is aware of who this person is and what their role is on the trip.

### **Other Important considerations**

- Before you leave, work with the players to establish rules for the trip (and what will happen to those who break them). Players should sign the children's code of conduct.
- Agree on who is sharing accommodation with whom before you go.
- Ensure that you have your staff bedrooms spread out, for example – if the group is accommodated over three floors, there shall be at least one adult room on each floor. Ideally, the whole team shall be on the same floor. Adults shall not share rooms with minors.



### **Essential planning – while away On arrival:**

- Ensure there is no access to alcohol or drugs in the rooms or at any other time.
- Ensure movie access is appropriate and that adult movie channels are not available in the children's rooms.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of fire exits and emergency procedures.
- Have group meetings to review the programme and rules. Ensure children have their ID badges on them at all times.

### **During the trip:**

- Hold daily group meetings and staff meetings. They do not need to be long and shall provide the opportunity to discuss any issues or problems and solve them.

### **On return:**

- Ask the children and the staff about their experience and feedback; this will help with the following year's planning.

### **Staff and volunteers on away trips have a responsibility to:**

- Ensure the safety and well-being of children. This shall mean carrying out a risk assessment (<https://forms.gle/7bhiQLkFMojNkKFD6>) in advance with the assistance of a child safeguarding focal point, including transport and accommodation.
- Arrive at all departing venues well ahead of children so that they are not left alone.
- Arrange a group meeting point before boarding the mode of transport (i.e. bus, plane, train).
- Ensure children are given the name and contact of the child safeguarding focal point or approved chaperone(s) accompanying them on the trip.
- Familiarise the group with the emergency exits in the event of a fire, and agree on a group meeting point – including at the stadium where the match(es) will take place.
- Medical staff (i.e. doctors and physiotherapists) on the trip shall always treat a child for illness or injury in a manner that reflects the ethos of their profession. This includes not gaining any individual access to players.

- Avoid spending time alone with a child or young person and ensure that the team doctor or physiotherapist is accompanied by another member of staff when treating players.
- Should a child or young person have to remain in the hotel during the course of the tournament or trip due to injury or illness, try to ensure that two staff members remain behind to look after them.
- If a child or young person falls ill, or is seriously injured, and has to remain behind after a tournament or match, ideally two members of staff shall remain with the child if possible. Staff have a duty of care to ensure that the child returns safely to their home/home country.
- If “time off” is permitted by the head coach, staff and players shall sightsee or partake in recreational activities as a group.
- Ensure that all players partake in group excursions so that no child or young person is left alone in the accommodation. Arrange a “meeting point” for players in the event of a player being separated from the group.
- Being aware of the whereabouts of the children at all times e.g. roll call
- Have access to mobile phones and be reachable 24/7. Staff shall have a full list of contact names and numbers of parents and guardians, and vice versa, in case of emergency.
- Ensure you are aware of the Missing Child Protocol.

# GUIDANCE ON CELEBRATION AND COMMUNICATION ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING THE USE OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNICATION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

## ***Celebration & communication: safe use of images of u-18 players:***

Photographs, films and video clips are a great way to publicise activities and programmes. They can be used to celebrate achievements, promote activities and keep people updated on what is happening. The footage might also be recorded for performance development and analysis reasons. The aim of this guide is not to curb such activity but to ensure that children are protected from those who might seek to take or manipulate photos and video footage in a way that harms children or places them at risk of harm.

AIFF shall take all reasonable steps to promote the safe use of social media, photography and filming. The following is a model guide to assist in developing celebration and communication arrangements while implementing the safeguarding policy.

## ***Permission:***

Children and their parents or guardians shall be informed that the child may, from time to time, be photographed or filmed whilst participating in activities or programmes. This could be for the following reasons:

- Video footage for performance development;
- Media coverage of an event or achievement;
- Promotional purposes, e.g. website or publication.

Written consent (Appendix 4) shall be obtained from parents or guardians before any photography or filming takes place.

### ***Safe use of images and general information:***

To minimise any risk of harm coming to children, the following shall be prioritised:

- Unsupervised access or one-to-one photography or video sessions with children shall not be allowed. At least one staff member or the child's parents or guardians shall attend any one-to-one photography or video session;
- Photographing or filming shall not be permitted in changing areas, bathrooms or sleeping areas;
- Information published on websites or social networking sites shall never include detailed personal information that could identify a child, e.g. their home address, email address or telephone number;
- Children shall never be portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or provocative manner. Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed (e.g. a minimum of shirt/top and shorts).

### **Information and communications technology (ICT) and social media:**

There are various ways in which to celebrate and communicate using ICT and social media. However, misuse of ICT and social media can also put children at considerable risk.

#### ***For children, the risks include:***

- inappropriate access to, use or sharing of personal details (e.g. their names, email addresses or phone numbers);
- unwanted contact from adults with wrongful or questionable intent;
- being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate material;
- online bullying;
- grooming for sexual abuse.

## **For adults, risks include:**

Their communication with children is misinterpreted leading to:

- potential investigation/gathering of information (internal disciplinary or by statutory agencies); and
- potential disciplinary action.

***As a general principle and good practice, adults shall never engage in inappropriate use of social media. This includes direct messaging with children and posting comments on social media sites that could compromise the well-being of a child, causing them harm, or bringing AIFF or the club/entity into disrepute.***

## **Text/Email**

The general principle is that all communication shall be made via parents or guardians of children where possible. Where this is not possible, consent shall be sought from parents/guardians, as well as the child via email rather than by text with a minimum of two adults included (copied) in the communication.

## **Safe use of Online Meeting Platforms**

- As a rule, parents' written consent (hard copy) shall be obtained before starting any online session with the children.
- Before the session, participants' consent shall be sought if the session is being recorded. Do not show any kind of content which is offensive or inappropriate.
- At any given time, there shall be at least two adults present in the meeting with one adult of the same gender as the children present.

## **Concerns**

- If at any time the use of an image or information attached to it appears inappropriate, report the misuse of an image to the child safeguarding focal point.
- Anyone behaving in a way which could reasonably be viewed as inappropriate in relation to filming or photographing children or the use of social media shall be reported.
- Where appropriate, concerns shall also be reported to the police.

# GUIDANCE ON THE SAFE USE OF CHANGING ROOMS AND SHOWERING FACILITIES

It is important to think about how you can effectively meet the needs of all members of the football family, taking into account the available facilities, the number of people accessing them and the activities being undertaken.

Children are particularly vulnerable in changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because they are less supervised than at many other times. The risk of child-to-child problems, such as bullying, is also present when coaches or staff members are not supervising players or mascots. This is especially true in changing rooms. The following guidelines have been designed to reduce the risk of misconduct or abuse in changing areas:

1. Where facilities are used by both adults and children at the same time, there shall be access to separate changing, showering and toilet areas.
2. Under no circumstances shall adults be undressed in front of children in changing rooms.
3. Adult staff and volunteers shall not change or shower at the same time as children using the same facilities.
4. For mixed-gender activities, separate facilities shall be available for boys and girls.
5. If a child feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure shall be placed on them to do so. Instead, they shall be encouraged to do so at home.
6. If children with disabilities need to use facilities, make sure they are accessible and the concerned child and their guardian/s or personal assistant/s are involved in deciding if and how they should be assisted. Make sure the child is able to consent to the assistance that is offered.
7. The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment with video recording capabilities by staff and volunteers and children themselves shall be prohibited in general and shall not be used under any circumstances in changing rooms.

8. Where no changing facilities are available, children and their parents or guardians shall be made aware of this before the game and advised to make alternative arrangements and take appropriate additional clothing.

9. Parents shall be discouraged from entering changing rooms unless it is truly necessary. In such circumstances, only a parent of the same gender as the children may enter the changing room and they shall let the coach know about this in advance. At least one member of the coaching staff of the same gender as the children involved shall be present with the parent when other children are in the changing room.

10. Adult staff and volunteers, especially those of the opposite gender, shall not be in the changing room when children are undressed.

# MISSING CHILD PROTOCOL

*It is recommended that the staff and volunteers make adequate arrangements to ensure that all children are accounted for at all times to avoid a “missing child” situation. However, on discovering that a child has gone missing, staff members are expected to:*

- Immediately search for the surrounding area;
- Request help from additional staff or volunteers;
- If it is a public building, alert the staff of the situation and ask for assistance in searching for the missing child;
- If it is a place where it is possible to seal off exits and access CCTV footage, request that this is done immediately;
- Ensure that people involved in the search are given a description of the child and what the child is wearing;
- Report to the child safeguarding focal point and police immediately, providing a description, and keep searching the area;
- Reassure the other children as this could become a distressing situation for them.
- Advise the parents and/or guardians of the situation as soon as it is reasonably practical to do so.

*After the event, a detailed case report shall be filed by the child safeguarding focal point and based on the report, the Child Safeguarding Officer shall review the policy and procedure to establish what went wrong and how it can be avoided in future.*



# AIFF CODE OF CONDUCT

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Staff and volunteers play an essential role in contributing to the sporting and social development of children in football, futsal and beach soccer. As such, we have a duty of care to create a safe, inclusive and positive environment for all. It is important that coaches, managers, medical staff, volunteers, staff, parents and all those involved in football, futsal or beach soccer and related activities or programmes respect the rights and well-being of children in our game. You are confirming your absolute commitment to these values by signing this code of conduct.

### **As a member of staff or volunteer, I will promote good practice and:**

- Make football a fun experience.
- Complete FIFA Guardians Safeguarding Essentials Course (<https://safeguardingsport.fifa.com/>) and any other safeguarding awareness training advised by AIFF
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child without discrimination on account of age, race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, ability, disability, language, physical appearance, religion, sexual orientation, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, or any other factor.
- Always report any concern of Poor practice or abuse immediately to the child safeguarding officer/focal point or appropriate authorities. I acknowledge that I must report any concerns I may have – no action is not an option.
- Lead by example when it comes to good sportsmanship and be a role model for children – this includes not drinking alcohol, smoking, vaping, taking drugs or using foul, racist, homophobic or discriminatory language in the presence of children.
- Respect my position of trust and maintain appropriate boundaries with children.

- Work in an open environment and avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Arrive in sufficient time to set up activities and ensure that risk assessments (<https://forms.gle/7bhiQLkFMojNkKFD6>) are undertaken as necessary for all activities, programmes, and events involving children.
- Ensure children are safe by supervising them appropriately and using safe training methods and techniques.
- Never engage in bullying behaviour.
- Challenge any form of bullying behaviour among and towards children.
- Communicate in a constructive, age-appropriate manner with children, never humiliating them.
- Provide meaningful opportunities that empower children to share in the decision-making process.
- Never condone rule violations, any form of violence or the use of prohibited substances.
- Ensure that confidential information is not divulged unless with the expressed approval of all those concerned or where a case warrants disclosure to relevant authorities.

***I will never:***

- Engage in or allow any verbal, physical or sexually provocative games with or inappropriate touching of children;
- Engage in any sexual relationship with any player under 18 years of age, including making sexually suggestive comments or actions to a child;
- Groom or exploit a child for personal and/or financial gain;
- Engage in inappropriate use of social media – this includes engaging children in private social media conversation and never posting comments that could compromise their well-being or cause them harm;

- Reduce a child to tears or scare or humiliate them as a form of control;
- Deliberately indulge in physically hurting or threatening to hurt a child – hitting and punching may be regulated forms of contact in some (combat) sports but have no place in football, futsal and beach soccer.

***I have read and understood the AIFF Child Safeguarding Policy and Framework and agree to abide by the above Code of Conduct.***

Signature:

Name:

Designation:

Department

Date:

Witness (signed by the AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer/focal point or line manager of the staff or volunteer):

Signature:

Name:

Designation:

***Failure to abide by this code of conduct shall result in appropriate action being taken. This may mean your removal from the activity/event for a period whilst an investigation is taking place and may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.***

# CHILDREN

For the adults who will facilitate the discussion with children, the purpose shall be to give age-appropriate information and to have a discussion on safeguarding, to empower them so that they know whom to speak to if they have any concerns. Adults shall allow at least one hour to go through it with them in group work, especially if they have any questions or do not understand something. For younger children, it may need to be further adapted and simplified. Decide who would be the best person to facilitate and lead this discussion – it may be the safeguarding officer/focal point or another staff member or a local expert agency or partner. Always ensure that at least two experienced adults or more conduct the session together.

Remember, in facilitating this discussion with children, it is important they know that if they are worried about something, or if they do not feel safe, there are a lot of people who can help. Encourage them to always talk to an adult whom they trust. Within football, futsal and beach soccer this may be the child safeguarding officer/focal point or other members of staff.

***In playing or being involved in football, futsal or beach soccer and related activities, I shall:***

- Respect my coach and team-mates;
- Play fairly and be gracious in defeat;
- Shake hands with the other team and the referee at the end of the match;
- Ensure that I am on time for training, matches and any other activity;
- Tell the team manager/coach about any injury or medical condition before or during activities;
- Not bully or start fights with others (doing hurtful things on purpose), like:
- Using mean words to hurt others or spread rumours about them;
- Excluding someone on purpose;

- Using social media in a bad way – e.g. posting mean comments or photos on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat or Twitter, etc.) to hurt or upset someone;
- Cursing or swearing at someone;
- Physically fighting and hurting others;
- Report abuse if I see it happening to others.

***In participating in football, futsal or beach soccer activities, I understand that I have the right to:***

- have fun and develop my technical skills;
- feel safe and comfortable;
- be protected from bad behaviour, from adults or other children that make me feel uncomfortable or sad;
- talk and be listened to, especially if I have concerns or do not feel safe;
- know where to go for help or whom to talk to if I am scared or worried about something;
- be looked after if there is an accident or injury.

# PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians can promote the positive aspects of football, futsal or beach soccer by demonstrating good behaviour at all times – this includes encouraging their child’s participation in the game, demonstrating respect for staff and officials and behaving responsibly on the sidelines or during other activities.

The Code of Conduct can be used as a discussion guide during information evenings or events on safeguarding. Parents and guardians shall be informed that persistent breaches of the code could result in them being asked to stay away from football, futsal or beach soccer activities and may also result in their child being removed from the AIFF programmes.

## *As a parent/guardian, I shall:*

- Encourage my child to play by the rules and teach my child that they can only do their best;
- Promote my child’s participation in playing football, futsal or beach soccer for fun;
- Cooperate with and show appreciation and respect for staff, coaches, referees, volunteers and other players;
- Be realistic and never exert undue pressure or expectations on my child or other children;
- Praise effort and participation rather than focusing on performance and results;
- Accept decisions made by match officials, behave responsibly on the sidelines and not use aggressive or abusive language with any player or official;

- Refrain from engaging in inappropriate use of social media – this includes posting comments on social media sites that may cause harm to others or bring the AIFF or its stakeholders into disrepute;
- Detail any health concerns and inform the coach/coordinator if my child has been ill or hurt recently;
- Complete and return the relevant consent forms about my child’s participation. (Appendix 4)

***Parents/guardians have the right to:***

- Know their child is safe and protected from any form of Poor practice or abuse;
- Be informed of any problems or concerns relating to their child;
- Speak to staff and voice any concerns about their child;
- Have concerns appropriately dealt with.

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**Child’s name:**

**Date:**

# APPENDIX 1 – REPORTING FORM

*Please fill out as many sections as possible in as much detail as you can. This form is strictly confidential. Carefully record the details and pass on this information to the child safeguarding officer/focal point. Do not keep a copy for yourself.*

## **Your (reporting person) details**

**Name:**

**Designation:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email address:**

## **Child's details:**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Address(if known):**

## **Parent's/Guardian's details:**

**Name:**

**Phone number:**

**Address:**



**Are you reporting a direct disclosure, your own concerns or concerns raised by someone else?**

- Direct disclosure from a child
  
- Reporting my own concerns
  
- Reporting concerns raised by someone else

*If reporting concerns raised by someone else, please provide their details:*

**Name:**

**Designation:**

**Phone number:**

**Email address:**

***Details of concern/suspicion/incident. Please describe.***

**Time:**

**Date(s):**

**Place or location:**

**Name of member of staff or volunteer involved in the incident (if any):**

**Behaviour or physical signs observed:**

***Any other details:***

**Details of any conversation with the child or children:**

**Has the incident been reported to any external authorities or agencies?**

Yes

No

**If yes, please share their details:**

**Name of external authority or agency:**

**Name of Contact person:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email address:**

**Action taken:**

# APPENDIX 2 – ACTION FORM

**To be filled by the AIFF Child Safeguarding Officer**

*Details of the person who reported the concern*

**Name:**

**Designation:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email address:**

**Details of the child concerned**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Date of reporting:**

*If the incident is a Poor practice, please fill in all the questions in Section A (or)*

*If the incident is an abuse, please fill in all the questions in Section B*

**Section A:**

What happened/reason for concern/Nature of allegation:

***Description:***

What support has been given to the child, if any?

If this report is about a child, has it been discussed with the child and parents/guardians? If yes, what are their views? If not, why not?

What were the immediate actions taken by the organisation in response to the report filed?

Briefly describe the investigation process and its findings following the report.

What were the actions taken by the organisation in response to the findings of the investigation, if any?

**Section B:**

Name and contact details of the person and organisation to whom this report is made to:

What happened/reason for concern/Nature of allegation:

***Description:***

Law information agency informed?

Police First Information Report (FIR) Details

Investigation officer details?

What support has been given to the child, if any?

If this report is about a child, has it been discussed with the child and parents? If yes, what are their views? If not, why not?

What were the immediate actions taken by the organisation in response to the report filed?

Briefly describe the investigation process and its findings following the report.

What were the actions taken by the organisation in response to the findings of the investigation, if any?

# APPENDIX 3 – SELF DECLARATION FORM

*All applicants working directly with children must complete this form in full. Please refer to the guidance notes at the end of the form, before completing the following sections.*

**Please complete in black ink.**

<b>Full Name (block capitals):</b>	
<b>Post applied for:</b>	

*Please answer the following questions:*

**1. Have you ever been convicted by the courts or cautioned, reprimanded or given a final warning by the police? Please give details of any offences or penalties as well as the name of the country and dates in the table below.\***



- Yes (Please provide details.)
- No (Proceed to question 2.)

Date and Place	Details



**2. Have you ever been subject to disciplinary proceedings or disqualified from work with children or subject to any other sanctions?**



- Yes (Please provide details.)
- No (Proceed to question 3.)

<b>Date and Place</b>	<b>Details</b>

3. Please sign the following declaration and return this form to AIFF Human Resources where applicable or the recruiting manager with your employment application. Failure to complete this declaration will result in your application being withdrawn.

- I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete. I understand that any false information could result in my application being rejected or, if appointed, in my dismissal from employment. I understand that any offer of employment made to me may be subject to further review and I hereby give my consent for AIFF to carry out the relevant criminal record checks.

- I declare that I shall notify Human Resources, where applicable, or the recruiting manager of AIFF immediately if I am prosecuted or convicted for a criminal offence.

- I declare that I am not currently on any barring list or sex offenders list in any country. I declare that I shall notify Human Resources where applicable or the recruiting manager of AIFF immediately if I do become barred or listed in future.

**Signature :**

**Date :**

### ***Suggested guidance notes for applicants:***

#### **Why you need to declare your criminal convictions and other related information**

The All India Football Federation is committed to safeguarding children from abuse and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We ask you to complete this form as comprehensively and honestly as possible. The only people who will see the information provided will be those directly involved in the recruitment process. At your interview, or in a separate discussion post-interview, we shall ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position.

Having a criminal record shall not necessarily prevent you from working with us. This shall depend on the nature of the post you have applied for and the relevance and circumstances of your offence(s).

We shall ensure that anyone making appointment decisions has the necessary information and support to assess the relevance and circumstances of any offences.

#### **What will happen if you are offered the post**

If you are offered the post, we shall ask for evidence of your identity, your right to work in India and your qualifications. We shall also carry out a criminal record check.

#### **False information**

Please note that providing false information could result in your application being rejected or your dismissal from employment if you are appointed.

#### **Retention of information**

The information that you provide in the declaration form shall be processed in accordance with national data protection legislation. It shall only be used to determine your application for this position and work directly with children.

# APPENDIX 4 – PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

*Parents or guardians of players under the age of 18 are required to sign this form.*

<b>Parent/guardian's name:</b>	
<b>Contact number:</b>	
<b>Event/tournament name:</b>	
<b>Parental or guardian consent statement:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I agree with my child's participation in this activity.</li> <li>● I have answered the questions regarding medical information below, and consent that, in the event of any illness or accident, any necessary treatment can be administered to my child, which may include the use of anaesthetics.</li> <li>● I understand that, while the adult officials will take every precaution to ensure that accidents do not happen, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury caused to my child.</li> <li>● I have read the codes of conduct and acknowledge the need for my child to behave responsibly.</li> <li>● I give permission for photographs or videos of my child to be used on the AIFF or club's website, social media and for printed publications.</li></ul>	

Travel arrangements:

- I agree to the transport arrangements that have been made for my child.

Child's Details\* (Please PRINT Clearly)

First Name:

Surname:

Age:

DOB:

Home Address:

Child's medical information

Does your child have:

Any allergies? If yes, please specify:

Medication?, If yes, please specify:

Any special needs? If yes, please specify:

A disability requiring specific access needs?  
If yes, please specify:

Child's Details\* (Please PRINT Clearly)

Doctor's name:

Doctor's telephone number:

Any other information:

*I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, my child does not suffer from any medical condition other than those detailed above and that I shall inform the AIFF if this changes.*

**Parent's signature:**

.....

*When my child is away, I know the contact person is (Provide details of child safeguarding focal point):*

**Name:**

**Contact Number**

**Email address:**

# APPENDIX 5 – TRAVEL CHECKLIST

*Checklist to help think through planning and organisation (adapt as necessary)*

## **Purpose of the trip**

- Competition
- Training
- Other (specify):
- Combination:

## **Planning**

- When
- Where
- Who (staff/volunteers/players)

## **Communication with parents**

- Destination and accommodation details sent (address/telephone)
- Name(s)/number(s) of child safeguarding officer and/or approved chaperone(s) shared with parents and players
- Drop-off/pick-up times agreed
- Transport arrangements in place Competition details shared
- Kit and equipment list shared
- Consent form signed
- Information regarding medical conditions (including allergies) or impairments and access needs, and medication
- Safeguarding arrangements (reporting concerns, supervision, etc.)

## **Transport**

- Drop-off/pick-up times (agree on times with parents, and agree on what to do if a parent does not arrive to collect a child at the appointed time)
- Suitability and accessibility requirements
- Drivers checked and signed the code of conduct
- Insurance



## **Accommodation**

- Type (hotel, hostel, etc.)
- Pre-event visit and risk assessment done, if possible
- Special diets, food allergies
- Suitability for the group, including access needs of attending disabled children (this might include accommodation and meals for a guardian or personal assistant)
- Room lists
- Supervising adults' sleeping arrangements

## **Preparing athletes**

- Local culture, language
- Expectations on dress and behaviour
- Food and drink
- Currency
- Telephones and contacts

## **Supervision and staffing**

- The ratio of staff to children agreed
- Male/female staff clear responsibilities

## **Documentation**

- Travel tickets
- Passports, visas
- Accommodation and travel booking documents

## **Insurance**

- Liability
- Accident
- Medical

## **Emergency procedures**

- First aid
- Specific medical information available for players where needed
- Information on local emergency medical services, hospitals, etc.

## **Arrival**

- Check rooms, meal times
- Arrange group meetings
- Confirm procedures with staff
- Rules explained (e.g. curfews)

# MAIN REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS

## *External Links*

### **FIFA Guardians Toolkit**

<https://www.fifa.com/social-impact/fifa-guardians/guidance>

### **AFC Child Safeguarding Policy (2022 Edition)**

<https://assets.the-afc.com/AFC-Child-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf>

### **UEFA Toolkit for Safeguarding**

<https://uefa-safeguarding.eu/toolkit>

### **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012**

<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/2079>

### **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**

<https://www.indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/2148>

### **FIFA Guardians Safeguarding in Sport courses**

<https://safeguardingsport.fifa.com/>

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

## ***Internal Links***

### **Activity Risk Assessment Form**

<https://forms.gle/7bhiQLkFMojNkKFD6>

### **Reporting Form**

<https://forms.gle/7dfpEzoBsN6DVjEv8>

### **Action Form**

<https://forms.gle/CHyDWzvhjnnRmUWZ9>

## ***IMPORTANT CONTACTS***

### **National Emergency Contacts**

Emergency: 112

Police: 100

Fire: 101

Ambulance: 102

### **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights**

POCSO e-box: <https://ncpcr.gov.in/pocso/public>

Childline India: 1098

### **All India Football Federation**

Safeguarding Team

Phone:

Email address: [safeguarding@the-aiff.com](mailto:safeguarding@the-aiff.com)

