



# SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

## Foreword

This Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy reflects the ethos of Southport Football Club Limited ("Southport FC"). This policy applies to Southport FC, including the Southport FC Academy and Southport FC Foundation, and all affiliated teams.

Southport FC is committed to working in partnership with The Football Association, The National League, and relevant statutory and regulatory agencies to ensure that staff, volunteers, and all users of Southport FC's facilities are protected. Where information or complaints regarding sexual harassment or misconduct are brought to the attention of Southport FC, they will be dealt with with the utmost importance. Information will be shared with relevant partners to ensure matters are investigated thoroughly and appropriately.

## Board Safeguarding Champion:

Steven Porter

Email: [welfare@southportfc.net](mailto:welfare@southportfc.net)

## 1. Introduction

This policy applies to acts of sexual harassment or misconduct by and against any staff, volunteer, player, or supporter on Southport FC's premises or elsewhere in connection with Southport FC activities or events.

Under this policy, a person may report and make a complaint about sexual harassment or misconduct regardless of their role within the club. This includes current and former staff, volunteers, players, or visitors. Southport FC acknowledges that sexual harassment or misconduct can happen to anyone regardless of sex, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, or background. Such behaviour is unacceptable under all circumstances and may constitute a criminal offence.

Southport FC recognises its moral, legal, and regulatory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all employees, staff, volunteers, and supporters. This policy is underpinned by legislation, statutory and regulatory

guidance, compliance with Football Authority Regulations, and current best practice.

## 2. Objectives of this Policy

Southport FC aims to:

- Ensure awareness among all staff and volunteers of their responsibilities regarding sexual harassment or misconduct.
- Provide a fair, transparent, and consistent approach for reporting, investigating, and responding to allegations.
- Ensure information about support services is made available to anyone affected by sexual harassment or misconduct.

## 3. What is Sexual Misconduct?

Sexual misconduct includes a range of behaviours, such as:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Voyeurism
- Rape
- Any other conduct of a sexual nature that is non-consensual or has the purpose or effect of threatening, intimidating, undermining, humiliating, or coercing a person.

These behaviours can be:

- Verbal – Sexual comments, questions about a person's sexual life, or repeated propositioning.
- Non-Verbal – Sharing sexual images or messages, inappropriate gifts, or stalking.
- Physical – Unwanted touching, groping, grabbing, or any sexual act without consent.

## 4. Consent

Under this policy, a person is regarded as consenting to sexual activity if:

- They agree by choice and
- Have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Consent must be present every time a person engages in sexual activity with another person. Consent can never be

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implied, assumed, or coerced and may be withdrawn at any time, including during a sexual act.

## 5. Capacity

A person does not have the capacity to give consent if they:

- Are under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Are asleep or unconscious
- Are below the age of consent (16 years or below 18 years for individuals in a Position of Trust)
- Have a disability or impairment affecting their ability to make informed decisions

## 6. Disclosing or Reporting Sexual Harassment or Misconduct

Any staff member, volunteer, player, or supporter at Southport FC who experiences or witnesses sexual harassment or misconduct can report it through the following channels:

- Confidential Disclosure to the Club Welfare Officer or any trusted staff member.
- Formal Report requesting an investigation into the behaviour of another staff member, volunteer, or visitor.

### Initial Response

When a Disclosure is made:

- The Reporting Party will be taken to a quiet, safe place to discuss the incident.
- Two staff members will be present if possible, including one from the Club Welfare Team.
- An account of the incident and the details of the Responding Party will be taken.
- If the Reporting Party is under 18, their parents/carers will be contacted, and the local authority LADO and the police will be notified.

## 7. Investigation and Reporting

Southport FC will:

- Log the case securely and conduct an initial review.
- Report the case to the County FA DSO and consider escalating to The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team.

- Suspend internal investigations if a criminal investigation is initiated by the police.
- Cooperate with The FA, County FA, and statutory agencies to share relevant information and support decision-making.

## 8. Support Services

Southport FC is committed to supporting anyone involved in a case of sexual harassment or misconduct. Confidential support will be offered to the Reporting Party and Responding Party, including:

- Emotional support and counselling referrals
- Legal advice and guidance
- Specialist support services such as Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and organisations like Women's Aid, Refuge, and Respect.

## 9. Malicious Reporting

Southport FC treats all complaints seriously and assumes they are made in good faith.

- If evidence shows a complaint was made maliciously or vexatiously, disciplinary action may be taken in line with Southport FC's policies.
- A decision not to uphold a complaint does not imply that the complaint was malicious.

## 10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All reports and investigations will be handled with utmost confidentiality to protect the dignity and privacy of all parties involved.

- Records will be securely stored in line with data protection laws and Southport FC's Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

## 11. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or when necessary to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or best practice.

- Updates will be communicated online through the club's website at <https://southportfc.net>.

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## 12. Contact Information

### Club Welfare Officer:

Keith Paterson

Email: [welfare@southportfc.net](mailto:welfare@southportfc.net)

### County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Neil Yates

Lancashire County FA Head of Safeguarding

[neil.yates@lancashirefa.com](mailto:neil.yates@lancashirefa.com)

01772 954232

### The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team:

Email: [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)

0800 169 1863

## Support Organisations for Victims of Sexual Misconduct and Harassment

### Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

SARCs offer medical, practical, and emotional support to anyone who has been sexually assaulted or raped. They provide:

- Special support for young people
- Forensic examinations to collect evidence
- Testing for sexually transmitted infections and HIV
- Specialist therapeutic aftercare including counselling, psychology, and Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) support.

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/otherservices/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/LocationSearch/364>

### Organisations for Women

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

- A free 24-hour helpline offering advice and support to women, including emergency accommodation referrals.
- Phone: 0808 2000 247 (Translation facilities and BT Type talk available)

Website: <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Refuge

- Offers safe, emergency accommodation through a network of refuges across the UK, including services for women from minority ethnic communities.

Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk>

Women's Aid

- Provides resources to help women and young people, including the Survivor's Handbook.

Website: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk>

Rights of Women

- Offers confidential legal advice on domestic and sexual violence.

Website: <https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk>

Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors (FLOWS)

- Provides legal advice to women affected by domestic abuse.

Website: <https://www.rcjadvice.org.uk/family/flows-finding-legal-options-for-women-survivors>

### Organisations for Men

Men's Advice Line (Respect)

- Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence.
- Phone: 0808 801 0327

Website: <https://www.mensadvice.org.uk>

ManKind Initiative

- Offers support to men who are victims of domestic abuse, including referrals to refuges and support services.
- Phone: 01823 334244

Website: <https://new.mankind.org.uk>

Everyman Project

- Counselling for men seeking to change violent or abusive behaviour.

Website: <https://www.everymanproject.co.uk>

### Organisations for LGBT+ People

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline (Galop)

- Support for LGBT+ individuals experiencing domestic violence.
- Phone: 0800 999 5428

Website: <https://www.galop.org.uk/get-help>

### Organisations for Disabled People

- SignHealth - Domestic Abuse Service
- Specialist domestic abuse service for Deaf people.

Website: <https://www.signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-service/>

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