Stockport Chess Club
Safeguarding Policy

Stockport Chess Club is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all players to enjoy chess and be respected by others.

This Safeguarding policy sets out the minimum requirements to ensure all players are able to take part in our club activities.

Overview

Stockport Chess Club (hereinafter the 'Club') welcomes to its sessions and other activities all players who are interested in chess, and will strive to ensure that everyone is treated with care and respect.

The Club recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It also aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or identity, or socioeconomic background, all members and visitors:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of chess in a safe and sociable environment;
- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- value, listen to and respect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Club has adopted a Safeguarding Policy as set out in this document. This policy will apply to all members of, and visitors to, the Club when undertaking Club activities. A child (otherwise a junior player) in this context is deemed to be anyone less than eighteen years of age. A copy of the policy will also be hosted at the Stockport Chess Club website and a printed copy will be kept at the Club's meeting place (see "Venue" below), and it is a condition of membership that all members of the Club abide by and promote this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

All club members are responsible for ensuring that our high standards are upheld and that Safeguarding is at the forefront of our considerations.

Officials

There are some posts, in particular Junior Organiser/Coach, which may involve a considerable degree of contact with children or adults in circumstances where there is not always a parent/guardian or carer present. In general, the type of work may involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people. It is the policy of the Club that it will only appoint to these positions a person for whom an independent suitable reference has been obtained together with an Enhanced DBS check (including a check of the relevant barred list where the role is eligible for one).

Note: the Club does not currently provide any structured coaching or organising that involves a considerable degree of contact with children in circumstances where a parent/guardian may not be present.

Safeguarding Officer

The Club will also appoint a Safeguarding Officer (and where practical a Deputy Safeguarding Officer), who will both be required to have an enhanced DBS check (where eligible) and (preferably) be signed up to the DBS update service. Any Safeguarding, child welfare concerns or allegations, and any comments or questions regarding the policy or advice should be directed to them.

The current **Safeguarding Officer** is **Gareth Griffiths**. Contact via the form on the Club Website at stockportchessclub.org/contact

The post of Deputy Safeguarding Officer is vacant.

Any allegations or concerns will be listened to and investigated. If deemed necessary, they will be pursued, by the Club's Safeguarding Officer in accordance with the English Chess Federation's Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines, which are available for viewing on the Federation's website at www.englishchess.org.uk

How to Report a Concern

If anyone is in immediate danger or seriously injured, call 999.

Anyone with a safeguarding concern should report it to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, using the contact form on the club website, and follow it up with a written note within 24 hours, using the form for recording concerns in the ECF Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 4). Concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously and treated in confidence.

If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, or the concern relates to the Safeguarding Officer, it should be raised directly with the ECF Safeguarding team at safeguarding.officer@englishchess.org.uk.

Venue

The Club meets in a room on the first floor of The Ladybrook, Fir Road, Bramhall (the “Venue”). The Venue is licensed premises run by a third party, and the Club also follows the Venue’s own rules and policies. Alcohol must not be supplied to anyone under 18, and adults are expected to behave appropriately.

The Venue is reached by a flight of stairs and, at the date of this policy, has no step-free access. The Club recognises that this is a barrier for some people. Anyone who cannot use stairs is welcome to contact the Club Secretary, ideally in advance, so that we can discuss what accommodations can reasonably be made. The Club will keep under review, with the Venue, whether step-free access can be provided.

Anyone who may need help to leave the building in an emergency is asked, if they are comfortable doing so, to let the Club Secretary know so that a plan can be agreed with the Venue; nobody is required to disclose a disability or health condition. The Safeguarding Officer will carry out a safeguarding risk assessment of the Venue and review it each year.

Junior Players

The Club welcomes junior players to its sessions and events. It also allows juniors of an appropriate level to participate in inter-club matches and league matches.

The Club and its officials are not able to act 'in loco parentis' at any club session, event or match. Parents/carers/guardians are ultimately responsible for the junior player and need to consider the wellbeing, safety and good behaviour of junior players when deciding on any arrangements.

This policy sets out to safeguard the welfare of children attending the Club by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm or abuse.

Parental Supervision

Parents/carers/guardians remain responsible for their child when they are attending chess club. Ideally, they should accompany their child to sessions, remain on the club premises and escort their child home. Any alternative arrangements made with other responsible adults should be put in writing and must comply with the guidelines below.

Children under the age of 14 must always be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Older juniors between the ages of 14 and 18 must have written permission from a parent or other responsible adult to be allowed to attend the club alone, and to travel home alone. Such written permission should be emailed or clearly communicated to the Safeguarding officer in advance of the sessions.

The Club also, where appropriate, welcomes the participation of children in inter-club matches away from the club venue. Parents, or other responsible adults, remain responsible for their child and any arrangements made.

Ideally, they should accompany their child to away venues and it is advisable that any alternative arrangements concerning transportation or supervising juniors at away venues is put in writing.

Clear arrangements and responsibilities should also apply for any visiting juniors and responsibility for this should be made clear to the visiting team captain.

Supervision and the Rule of Three

The club adheres to the "rule of three" requiring at least two adults or two juniors in a group whenever possible. If a one-on-one situation is unavoidable, the adult and youth shall stay in an open, public area where they can be seen by others at all times.

Photography & recording of images

Recording a child's achievements can by really important. The Club, however, recognises the opportunity for misuse of published material and that there can be circumstances where publicity can be detrimental to a child or their family.

Parents and guardians should be aware that photography for publicity purposes may take place, particularly at regional or national events, which may be outside of the Club's Control. The Club's policy is to seek parental consent before photography takes place and for publication.

Parents and guardians who have any objection to photography (which does not need any explanation) can register it with the Club Secretary or the Safeguarding team.

Conduct, communications and lifts

All members and visitors are expected to follow the ECF Code of Conduct and Safe Play Policy (Appendices 1 and 2 of the ECF Safeguarding Policy). In particular, adults should not: contact juniors privately by phone, message or social media, or add them to personal social media accounts, without a parent/carer's permission; give or accept individual gifts to or from juniors without a parent/carer's permission; spend excessive time alone with a junior; take a junior to their home; give them a lift, without the explicit prior consent of a parent/carer; or engage in any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with, or in front of, juniors or vulnerable adults.

Adult Players

All adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Club will seek to ensure that our chess is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment. No member is required to disclose a disability or health condition; anyone who would like an adjustment is welcome to raise it with the Club Secretary at any time, and the Club will keep that information confidential and use it only to make the arrangements agreed upon.

Visitors

Visitors who would like the Club to make any reasonable adjustments are asked to contact the Club Secretary or the Safeguarding Officer beforehand, if they can, so that arrangements can be put in place. This is a request and not a condition of attending: no visitor is required to disclose a disability or health condition, and no visitor will be refused entry or treated less favourably because they did not give notice. Where notice is short, the Club will do what is reasonably practicable. Any information a visitor provides will be kept confidential and used only to make agreed arrangements. The Club will also consider in advance what adjustments it can reasonably offer, rather than waiting to be asked

As a condition of attending, and because juniors may be present at any Club session, visitors **must** tell the Safeguarding Officer before attending (or, if that is not possible, on arrival) if either of the following applies to them:

(a) they are subject to any court order, licence or bail condition, barring decision, or other restriction relating to contact with children or vulnerable adults; or

(b) they have an unspent conviction or caution, or a pending charge, for an offence involving violence, a sexual offence, or an offence against a child or vulnerable adult.

The Club does not ask visitors to disclose spent convictions and does not require visitors to obtain a DBS check. Any information disclosed will be treated as confidential, shared only with those who need to know, held securely, and used only to decide what safeguards are needed. The Club will consider each case individually and proportionately: disclosure will not automatically mean that a visitor is refused entry, but the Club may require conditions (such as supervision, or no unsupervised contact with juniors) or, where necessary to protect children or others, decline to admit a visitor or ask them to leave. Whether or not anything has been disclosed, no visitor will be left alone with a junior, the "rule of three" applies at all times.

Please see "Venue" above for information about access to the playing area.

Visiting Teams

Visiting teams bringing unsupervised junior players (under 18) should inform the Stockport Chess Club Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, and relevant Captain, ideally at least one week in advance, so that appropriate arrangements may be made where required. Visiting teams are also asked to let the Club know, where they can and with the player's agreement, if any player (including any vulnerable adult) may need reasonable adjustments or support, for example because of the stairs. No player is required to disclose a disability or health condition, and no player will be refused because notice was not given. Visiting team captains are asked to make their players aware of the requirements for visitors set out above.

Recordkeeping

Adequate records are to be maintained relating to all safeguarding matters, both to demonstrate that appropriate policies are adopted and followed, and that any complaints are addressed and resolved expeditiously, and with due diligence. Records should be held securely and be accessible only to those who need them, and kept for seven years or, where a junior is involved, until that junior reaches the age of 25 if later, in line with the ECF's policy. Information disclosed to the Club under this policy (including about convictions, restrictions or health) will be handled in line with data protection law.

Summary

This policy will be reviewed and updated from time to time in line with experience and recommended practice in the area of Safeguarding and child protection.

The Club has adopted the ECF's Safeguarding Policy and will follow relevant sections of the policy including procedures for recognising issues, handling allegations, acting on concerns and maintaining proper safeguarding records.

The Club shall abide by any further rules, regulations or guidelines which may be set out from time to time by the Club Committee, the Venue, the Local League Committees, and/or the ECF where these are deemed necessary to support the policy objectives.

This policy shall be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis (at the AGM of Stockport Chess Club).

Relevant Documents

Code of practice for services, public functions and associations

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/codes-practice/code-practice-services-public-functions-and-associations

Note: Stockport Chess Club is an Association per section 107, part 7 of the Equalities Act 2010.

ECF Safeguarding Policy

https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ECF-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf

Signature: Date: