



# WBC Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures

## 1. Purpose

West Bridgford Colts (WBC) FC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, safeguarding, fairness, and governance. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a safe and confidential process for individuals to raise concerns about wrongdoing, misconduct, or unsafe practices affecting the club, its members, volunteers, players, officials, or the wider community.

The club encourages anyone with genuine concerns to report them without fear of retaliation.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Club members
- Players
- Parents and guardians
- Coaches and team managers
- Volunteers
- Committee members
- Match officials
- Contractors and suppliers
- Any person involved with the club

## 3. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about suspected wrongdoing, misconduct, illegal activity, or risks that are in the public interest or could harm individuals or the club.

E.g.:

### Safeguarding Concerns

- Abuse or neglect of children or adults at risk
- Inappropriate behaviour towards players
- Grooming concerns
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures

### Financial Misconduct

- Fraud or theft
- Misuse of club funds
- False expense claims
- Financial irregularities

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Safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility. **No action is not an option.** If you have a concern in relation to any child or adult's welfare please contact without delay: [welfare@westbridgfordcolts.com](mailto:welfare@westbridgfordcolts.com) For urgent safety issues, contact MASH at 0300 500 80 80 (Mon-Fri) or the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) at 0300 456 4546 outside these hours. Call 999 if any child or adult is in immediate danger.



### **Health and Safety**

- Unsafe facilities or equipment
- Serious breaches of health and safety procedures
- Conduct that puts players, volunteers, or spectators at risk

### **Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination**

- Racism, sexism, homophobia, or other discriminatory behaviour
- Bullying or intimidation
- Harassment by any club representative

### **Governance and Conduct**

- Breaches of club policies
- Abuse of position or authority
- Conflicts of interest not properly declared
- Deliberate breaches of league or governing body rules

### **Criminal Activity**

- Theft
- Assault
- Drug-related offences
- Other criminal conduct connected to club activities

## **4. What Is Not Covered?**

This policy is not intended for:

- Personal grievances relating solely to an individual's own circumstances
- Team selection disputes
- Minor disagreements between members
- Complaints better dealt with through the club's Complaints, Disciplinary, or Grievance Procedures

Where appropriate, concerns will be redirected to the relevant process.

## **5. How to Raise a Concern**

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible. Reports may be made to:

**Primary Contact: Club Welfare Officer, [welfare@westbridgfordcolts.com](mailto:welfare@westbridgfordcolts.com)**

**Alternative Contact: Club Chairperson, [chair@westbridgfordcolts.com](mailto:chair@westbridgfordcolts.com)**

Where the concern involves either of the above individuals, reports should be made directly to another Trustee committee member or Nottinghamshire FA.

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When reporting a concern, individuals should provide:

- What happened
- Who was involved
- Dates, times, and locations where possible
- Any evidence or witnesses
- Why they believe the matter is of concern

Reports may be made verbally or in writing.

## **6. Confidentiality**

The club will make every effort to keep the identity of a whistleblower confidential. Information will only be shared where:

- It is necessary to investigate the concern
- There is a safeguarding risk
- There is a legal obligation to disclose information; or
- Law enforcement or regulatory authorities require disclosure.

## **7. Anonymous Reports**

Anonymous reports will be considered and investigated where possible. However, anonymity can make investigation more difficult and may limit the club's ability to gather evidence or provide feedback. Individuals are encouraged to provide contact details where they feel safe to do so.

## **8. Protection Against Retaliation**

The club will not tolerate victimisation, harassment, discrimination, or any form of retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith. Any person found to have retaliated against a whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from their role.

## **9. False or Malicious Allegations**

Individuals who knowingly make false, misleading, or malicious allegations may be subject to disciplinary action. A concern raised in good faith will not result in action against the whistleblower simply because the concern is not ultimately substantiated.

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## 10. Investigation Process

Upon receiving a report, the club will:

1. Acknowledge receipt where possible.
2. Conduct an initial assessment.
3. Determine whether immediate safeguarding or safety action is required.
4. Appoint an appropriate person to investigate.
5. Gather relevant information and evidence.
6. Decide on appropriate action.
7. Inform the whistleblower of the outcome where appropriate and legally permissible.

Investigations will be conducted fairly, promptly, and confidentially.

## 11. Safeguarding Concerns

Any concern involving the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult will be treated as a priority.

The Club Welfare Officer will follow safeguarding procedures and, where necessary, refer concerns to:

- Local Authority Children's Services
- Police
- Nottinghamshire FA

Immediate risks to safety should be reported to emergency services without delay.

## 12. Records

The club will maintain a confidential record of concerns raised in an Incident Log. Records will be retained in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

## 13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## 14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, Nottinghamshire FA requirements, or club operations.

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