

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



FC BARCELONA



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1. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the environments in which Football Club Barcelona and the Barça Foundation (hereinafter “the Club” or “FC Barcelona”) operate are safe and protective, including the elimination of any form of violence against children and young people.

This policy will enable FC Barcelona to:

- ▶ Ensure that sports grounds and facilities and anywhere that sports are practiced are safe and protective environments for all the children and young people who use them, by taking a Child Rights-based Approach and giving precedence to the best interests of every child or young person.
- ▶ Foster a caring society that safeguards all children and young people and responds appropriately to any form of violence, whether it be against children and young people or adults.
- ▶ Prevent potential situations of violence against children and young people by professionals, athletes and other persons who provide services to FC Barcelona, or by other children and young people.
- ▶ Detect as soon as possible any situations of violence that children and young people participating in FC Barcelona activities may experience.
- ▶ Establish procedures to follow if there are any signs of conflict, vulnerability, mild and moderate risk, or serious risk of violence.

2. PRINCIPLES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. PRINCIPLES

FC Barcelona has a firm commitment to the highest principles and values. The most relevant of these within the framework of this Child Safeguarding Policy are:

- ▶ A Child Rights-based Approach and a gender perspective, the principles of which include the best interests of the child or young person; non-discrimination, including gender equality; the right to a dignified and full life; active involvement of children and young people, etc.
- ▶ An all-encompassing approach to the safeguarding of children and young people, defined as the creation of a safe and protective environment that is free of any form of violence and enables the full development of every child or young person.
- ▶ The responsibility of every professional to act as a safeguarding steward.
- ▶ The employment of persons who have the proper training and profiles to work with children and young people.
- ▶ Appropriate training for everyone who has contact with children and young people, focusing on the safeguarding requirements specific to each position.





- ▶ Global coverage, so that all children and young people are provided with adequate safeguarding in all programs and projects in which they participate.
- ▶ Transparency and efficacy in all spheres of safeguarding. This involves:
 - Ensuring that all procedures derived from this Child Safeguarding Policy are set out in specific documents.
 - Facilitating public access to all child safeguarding instruments.
 - Ensuring the clarity of the procedures followed in the resolution of any case in which there is a suspicion or evidence of a violation of the rights of any child or young person.
 - Providing accountability for the measures taken in relation to children and young people involved in such a case.
- ▶ Confidentiality, preserving the privacy of all children and young people, especially those who have experienced any form of violence, and that of their families.
- ▶ Working together by recognizing and fostering networks that care for the needs of children and young people, their families and communities, and by collaborating with private and public organizations that tend to their well-being. FC Barcelona recognizes the importance of teamwork not just in sports but in the area of safeguarding and protection as well.
- ▶ Carrying out preventive work with all children and young people that gives them:
 - An awareness of the inner connection between their body and their emotions and helps them to identify situations that are harmful for themselves or for other children and young people.
 - The initiative to ask for help.
 - Skills in resilience that help them to build inner emotional strength.
 - Skills in non-violent conflict resolution.
 - Affective skills with which to build a healthy affective network of peers and of adults to turn to if needed.
- ▶ Carrying out preventive work with families along similar lines to the work done with children and young people.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Children and young people have the right to grow up in safe and protective environments that guarantee their right to develop fully. Safe and protective environments can be defined as those in which people are treated well both psychologically and emotionally, there is no form of violence, abuse or exploitation and people show respect for human rights. In the case of children and young people, safe environments are therefore essential for guaranteeing the right that every child or young person has to develop fully and in safety. This requires taking into account the basic principles of the Child Rights-based Approach: the right to have adults and institutions prioritize the best interests of every child or young person; the elimination of any form of discrimination (based on gender, functional diversity, ethnic, social or cultural origin, gender identity and sexual orientation, etc.) and the right to equality; the active involvement of children and young people in their own lives; and the right to a dignified and full life.

Engaging in sport helps children and young people to develop fully, as it provides them with opportunities to improve their physical well-being while cultivating values such as camaraderie, effort and teamwork. That is why FC Barcelona seeks to ensure that the children and young people who take part in its activities and use its facilities are treated in a way that makes them feel warm and safe there and safeguards them completely from violence.

This Child Safeguarding Policy covers all the aspects of taking care of a child or young person at any sports ground or facility, or anywhere that sports are practiced, that is the responsibility of FC Barcelona.

Exactly what constitutes violence must be understood if it is to be adequately addressed. Under this Child Safeguarding Policy violence is defined as any situation that (1) causes harm to a child or young person (2) as a result of an abuse (misuse) of power and (3) it takes a variety of forms (the main modes being physical, psychological, sexual and negligence). Safeguarding will therefore focus on the use (and abuse) of power.

In this context, children and young people can be at greater risk of abuses of power that take the form of manipulation and coercion. They also face greater difficulty than adults in disclosing such situations, especially if the person committing the violence is someone who holds a position of authority (real or perceived) over them or with whom they have an emotional bond.





Although the relevant actions and responsibilities are set out in detail in other documents, it is important to note that there are four major levels of intervention in situations involving children and young people:

- ▶ **Conflict.** Conflict, understood as a situation in which two or more people seek different outcomes, is part of daily life. When conflicts are handled properly, the solutions are understood and accepted by all parties. However, children and young people often find themselves in conflict situations that they do not know how to manage well or in which violence can be resorted to. Therefore, a first function of safeguarding (which must be undertaken by adults) is mediating in conflicts and preventing the use of violence.
- ▶ **Vulnerability.** All children and young people are vulnerable to violence by the mere fact of being who they are. But there are certain groups that society places in a position of greater vulnerability due to: gender (girls and young women), functional diversity (children and young people with disabilities), gender identity and sexual orientation (LGBTI+), discrimination of any kind (ethnic, social, cultural, and religious minorities), origin and legal status (children and young people who are migrants or refugees or seeking asylum, especially if not accompanied by an adult), protective measures (children and young people in institutional or foster family care), family composition (adoption, single-parent and same-sex parent families), isolation and lack of bonds, etc. The function of safeguarding at this level is to take all the necessary actions to ensure equal and fair treatment of children and young people belonging to these groups, guaranteeing their participation in the activities on an equal-footing basis, and catering for their specific needs by introducing any necessary adaptations. This eliminates the structural conditions that generate the vulnerability that increases the risk of being a victim of violence.
- ▶ **Mild and moderate risk.** Risk has to do with identifying situations that could be harmful for a child or young person. At this level the function of safeguarding is to not wait for harm to occur, but to take the necessary steps to prevent it.
- ▶ **Violence or violation of rights.** Working within the framework of safe and protective environments means not only addressing the different forms of interpersonal violence but also confronting all forms of structural violence where there is a **violation of rights** (discrimination against a particular group, poverty or lack of assistance, etc.). As for interpersonal violence, this ranges from one-off aggressions to ongoing abuse, classified as such due to the frequency or intensity of the instances. At this level, safeguarding includes early detection and reporting and providing support to the child or young person. Here it is essential to remember that the professional teams will continue having the child or young person at their training sessions and sports grounds or facilities and anywhere that sports are practiced while the relevant procedure follows its course.

3. WHO THIS CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY IS FOR

3.1. TARGET GROUPS FOR THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Child Safeguarding Policy is structured to create a safe and protective community for all children and young people, and therefore it applies to different groups of people.

First, the Child Safeguarding Policy applies to **everyone who performs their duties at FC Barcelona sports grounds and facilities or is involved or interacts with children and young people as part of FC Barcelona activities, regardless of the capacity in which they do so**. This first group comprises employed and contract staff, the personnel of partner organizations and other personnel who provide their services through other mechanisms and organizations (freelance workers, companies, associations, foundations, etc.). It also applies to persons with other non-employment relationships (volunteering, internships, training, etc.).

Likewise, all **FC Barcelona partner organizations**, that is, legal entities (companies, associations, foundations etc.) connected to FC Barcelona, especially those that interact with children and young people as part of FC Barcelona programs and projects (particularly organizations that manage sports and social projects), must also sign up to this Child Safeguarding Policy as part of the usual contracting procedure.

In addition, **children and young people** take a leading role in the Child Safeguarding Policy. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any person under 18 years of age (unless by virtue of the law applicable to them, the child has reached the age of majority earlier). It is essential for all children and young people to be familiar with the fundamental elements of the Child Safeguarding Policy, in adapted language. First, because they need to be aware of the communication channels that are available to them and how to ask for help, but also so that they know that any violent or harmful behavior by them towards other children and young people or anyone else will not be tolerated.

Finally, the Child Safeguarding Policy is also for **the families and legal guardians of the children and young people**. In this way, they participate in the safeguarding of their children, while realizing that their behavior at home should be an example for children and young people to follow in their sports activities and in life in general.

3.2. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The documents for implementing the FC Barcelona Child Safeguarding Policy include several that set out the roles and responsibilities of each target group, as well as their obligations within the framework of this safeguarding policy. Two of them are:

- ▶ **Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities**, covering the rights and duties of each group, including the children and young people themselves and their families.
- ▶ **Code of Conduct for professionals and other persons who have contact with children and young people**. This document elaborates further on the risks for children and young people. Its purpose is to foster a culture in which all professionals, staff and other persons (including FC Barcelona partner companies and organizations and their technical teams and anyone else involved in FC Barcelona activities and events) safeguard and take care of the children and young people with whom they interact. It also seeks to raise awareness about behavior that is formally prohibited as well as potential risks and preventive actions. By signing the Code of Conduct, every professional makes clear what they are committing to at all levels.



3.3. RECRUITING AND EMPLOYMENT

FC Barcelona operates under the criteria detailed in the **Recruiting and Employment Standards** document for all relationships with professionals and persons participating in other capacities (volunteering, training, internships, etc.) in any project with children and young people.

Both nationally and internationally, contracts between FC Barcelona and partners that carry out activities in Spain or other countries must include a clause stipulating the partner's responsibility to comply with the criteria detailed in the **Recruiting and Employment Standards** document, either by adopting that same document, or by having a similar one of their own addressing these issues.

3.4. DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM

Everybody must be familiar with the operating procedures for dealing with unacceptable behavior. Taking the relevant disciplinary system as a guide, the Safeguarding Committee will decide on the appropriate disciplinary measures that are legitimate in proportion to the events under applicable regulations, collective agreements in force and internal procedures:

- ▶ If employees are involved, the Safeguarding Committee will inform the Human Resources department for the measures to be implemented within the applicable employment framework.
- ▶ If FC Barcelona partner staff or persons working in other capacities (volunteering, internships, training etc.) are involved, there will be two options. One will be to terminate the relationship with the organization to which the person involved belongs. The other will be to terminate only the relationship with the person involved, if the organization demonstrates a genuine commitment to an ethical culture and is able to show that it had used all possible means to prevent such situations (request for criminal record checks of its staff, annual training sessions etc.).
- ▶ If another child or young person from FC Barcelona is involved, the Safeguarding Committee will consider what measures to take, such as excluding the child or young person from the FC Barcelona project in which they are participating.

Since any adult, especially FC Barcelona professionals and partner staff, is under the obligation to report any situations that endanger children and young people, disciplinary measures may also be taken against anyone who is aware of such a situation but does not report it as they should.



4. STRUCTURE AND ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

4.1. SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

To coordinate the efforts of the FC Barcelona teams of professionals in favor of the comprehensive education and safeguarding of children and young people, it is vitally important to be clear about the measures for preventing, detecting and responding to violence that FC Barcelona is to adopt in the various areas of action.

To implement this Child Safeguarding Policy and ensure that all children and young people receive the care and treatment to which they are entitled by right, FC Barcelona has created three types of key safeguarding roles: **Safeguarding Coaches**, **Safeguarding Delegates** and the **Safeguarding Committee**.

A **Safeguarding Coach** is someone from within the organization who is in close contact with the children and young people, is familiar with the sports environment, has adequate training in safeguarding children and young people against violence, and has special sensitivity and communication skills to deal with the issues described in this Child Safeguarding Policy.

To support the Safeguarding Coaches in their day-to-day activity and when a case of violence is identified, there are **Safeguarding Delegates**, who have an in-depth knowledge of child safeguarding and the ability to manage interventions, including notification and reporting when required.

All children and young people should have a relationship of trust with their Safeguarding Coaches, know who their Safeguarding Delegates are by meeting them in person, and know how to ask for help quickly and easily.

All adults in the sports environment, both professionals and persons working in other capacities, as well as the families and legal guardians of children and young people, must also know the Safeguarding Coaches and Safeguarding Delegates and the quick contact methods.

A **Safeguarding Committee** has also been set up to support the Safeguarding Delegates in their handling of cases, including the procedures for reporting them to the competent authorities. With the assistance of the Safeguarding Delegates, the Safeguarding Committee is also responsible for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy in order to ensure transparent accountability.

The **Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities** document sets out the duties of these safeguarding roles and the authority they carry. It also stipulates the duty to safeguard and assist that is incumbent on every adult.



4.2. ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

4.2.1. Action Protocol

FC Barcelona has an **Action Protocol** that details the steps to take in any situation that may negatively affect a child or young person in any of its programs, facilities or events. This Action Protocol includes guidelines for a variety of situations, ranging from conflict and vulnerability, through mild and moderate risk, to situations of violence and abuse, including disclosures by the child or young person themselves or by any other person who has identified the situation. Situations of conflict or vulnerability are to be addressed taking a preventive non-violent conflict resolution, and inclusion and equity-based approach. When there is mild and moderate risk, or violence and abuse, the reporting and support mechanisms detailed in the **Action Protocol** are to be used.

The **Action Protocol** is mandatory for any person with a formal link with FC Barcelona, whether as an employee, contractor, service provider, volunteer, intern or of any other kind. However, the level of responsibility varies according to the type of relationship, as detailed in the document.



4.2.2. Professionals with appropriate training

FC Barcelona will disseminate the content of this Child Safeguarding Policy and its supplementary documents, and will facilitate the proper training and awareness of this matter among the professional teams at its centers and facilities, the FC Barcelona partner staff, persons working in other capacities, the children and young people concerned and their families or legal representatives. It will do this based on the document that sets out the **Training Plan** and the additional materials available.

It is essential that all people employed by the organization or who have any type of relationship with it regularly receive specific refresher training on risk prevention, adapted to their roles and responsibilities, to enable them to review concepts and internal procedures.

4.2.3. Prevention activities with children and young people and their families

• Training for children and young people:

Training for children and young people has a two-fold objective: for them to be aware of their rights and duties; and for them to be able to identify situations of risk and know who to contact when they need help. Children and young people can be seen as the “protectors” of their peers, and victims can sometimes go to them to ask for help. Therefore, it is of vital importance to train children and young people in these areas, including teaching them how to identify situations of violence that they themselves or other people may experience, that they know their Safeguarding Coaches and their Safeguarding Delegates, and that they clearly understand the communication channels available to them.

• Training for families of children and young people:

Training for the families of children and young people seeks to raise their awareness and provide information on the actions that FC Barcelona takes in relation to possible situations of violence against children and young people.

Families will also be introduced to their children's Safeguarding Coaches and Safeguarding Delegates and be given an explanation of the procedure to be followed if there is any sign of abuse, as well as the preventive measures that everyone can take to avoid possible risk situations at the facilities where the programs are carried out.

They will also be given the details of the specific safeguarding communication channels for inquiries that are available to parents, families or legal representatives.



4.2.4. Risk Mapping and Protective Measures for Child Safeguarding

Sports facilities must have in place the safety measures that are required of premises that cater for children and young people. The **Risk Mapping and Protective Measures for Child Safeguarding** document is based on a detailed analysis of everyday situations made by collecting information on the experience of the teams of professionals, identifying potential risks and establishing the necessary elements for each facility to provide a safe and protective environment. It thus serves as a guide for assessing facilities and implementing the relevant protective measures. Each site or facility has a specific regulation intended to guarantee these safety measures.

It is essential to evaluate every three years the risk situations of each of the activities and projects in which children and young people are directly involved. The Safeguarding Delegates must keep an updated list of risk situations in the sports environments for which they are responsible and, at least once a year, they must provide a written analysis of risks and the protective measures taken, for submission to the Safeguarding Committee.

4.2.5. Child Safeguarding Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Safeguarding Committee is to carry out an annual evaluation of whether the Child Safeguarding Policy adequately meets the needs for which it was established and submit any proposals it may have for appropriate modifications to the competent body.

Prior to this annual session, participatory activities will have been held with children and young people from the various programs to gather their comments, opinions and suggestions. The leading role of children and young people in their own safeguarding is not only a right and something that helps them to protect themselves better, it also provides a first-hand look at the measures, offering practical ideas to improve the various safeguarding initiatives.





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