

Arsenal Soccer Schools Greece & Cyprus Safeguarding Code – Policy

Arsenal Soccer Schools **Greece & Cyprus** seeks to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who engage in activities within its network of soccer schools.

The Policy and Procedures that the Arsenal Soccer Schools in Greece and Cyprus seek to develop a positive and proactive welfare program to enable all children and young people to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. Our aim is to provide children and young people with relevant information, skills and attitudes to help them to resist abuse and prepare for the responsibilities of adult life including home and family. Together with these skills we hope that children and young people will feel confident that they can confide in our coaches on issues of neglect, abuse and deprivation. At the same time this Policy and its Procedures equally applies to the safety and security of those working with (or are responsible for) children and young people that are members of our soccer schools network.

Safeguarding procedures

Arsenal Soccer Schools Greece and Cyprus and Arsenal FC (The Club) are taking any form of safeguarding poor practice or abuse seriously to promote a culture of best practice and accountability. They both encourage all employees, workers, consultants, agency staff and volunteers to raise concerns they may have about any safeguarding poor practice or abuse as early as possible to the designated personnel. We will respond appropriately to promote a safer environment in our soccer schools. If you have any questions regarding this section of the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, please contact the National Safeguarding Manager.

Procedure for Raising a Safeguarding Concern

If a child, young person, parent, employee or other adult is concerned about the welfare of a child or young person or is concerned about an adult's behavior towards a child or young person one must act. Do not assume that someone else will help the child. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

How to raise a concern

You do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern. But we do ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

Step 1

If you have a concern of any form of safeguarding poor practice or abuse, raise it first with the designated Coach and/or Safeguarding Officer of your local soccer school, who will raise it with the Safeguarding Manager.

Step 2

If you feel unable to raise the matter with the Coach or Safeguarding Officer local soccer school for whatever reason, raise the matter with the Safeguarding Manager directly.

Step 3

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact the National Safeguarding Manager of the Arsenal Soccer Schools Greece & Cyprus.

What to do if you receive a safeguarding disclosure from a child or young person

Children or young people who may be vulnerable are likely to disclose abuse to those they trust and how one responds to a disclosure is crucial.

Stage 1

Deal with the disclosure as it happens and ensure that the child or young person's immediate needs are met and that they feel supported. When a disclosure is made, it is most important to understand that you must not investigate the disclosure yourself. The disclosure must always be taken seriously and dealt with according to the guidance in this Policy and Procedures, even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain. You are not expected to act as a social worker, counsellor, judge, and jury or avenge the abuser; you are however expected to act in the best interest of the child or young person who may be at risk.

You must:

- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational.
- Allow the child/young person to lead the discussion and to talk freely.
- Listen to what the child/young person is saying. Try not to interrupt them or ask lots of questions. Being asked a lot of questions can feel like being interrogated.
- Let them tell you at their own pace. Don't worry if the child/ young person stops talking for a while - silences are OK. You don't have to rush in to fill the gaps.
- Accept what the child/young person says without challenge.
- Listen to the child/young person without investigating.
- Allow the child/young person to talk but protect them from sharing the information with too many other people.

- Provide reassurance that you are taking them seriously.
- Let the child/young person know it is recognised how hard it is for them to tell.
- Reassure them that they are doing the right thing by disclosing.
- It is ok to let them know if you are unable to answer all their questions.
- Avoid using questions such as “Is there anything else you would like to tell me?”
- Avoid asking leading questions like “Did the coach hit you?”.
- Never ask questions that may make the child/young person feel guilty or inadequate.
- If physical abuse has taken place, you may observe visible bruises and marks but do not ask a child/young person to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Tell the child/young person who you will be contacting e.g., soccer school’s Safeguarding Officer, National Safeguarding Manager, statutory agencies etc, and that you will support them through that process.
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure.
- Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than those who need to know. Those who need to know are those who have a role to play in protecting children/young people.

You must not:

- Panic or show that you are shocked. It is important to remain calm and in control of your feelings.
- Document the conversation while the child/young person is disclosing. This should be done as soon as possible after the child/young person has disclosed to you.
- After the child/young person has disclosed, the conversation must be documented remembering as accurately as you can, the words and phrases used by the child/young person to describe what has happened to them.
- Investigate but do listen and reassure the child/young person that they are doing the right thing by disclosing. • Give the impression that you might blame the child/young person e.g. Don’t ask: “why did you let him?”, “what were you doing there anyway?” or “why didn’t you tell me before?”.
- Press for details by asking questions such as “what did he/ she do next?”
- Ask leading questions.

- Pass judgement on what is said, but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the child/young person may have.
- Make false promises and/or promise confidentiality – it should be explained that the child/young person has done the right thing, who will need to be told and why.
- Approach the alleged abuser yourself.

Do remember, when a child/young person discloses they may feel:

Guilt: They may blame themselves for the abuse and often feel guilt for telling.

Ashamed: They may feel ashamed about the abuse itself.

Confused: They may be confused about their feelings for the alleged abuser.

Scared: They may be fearful of the repercussions of telling. They may be scared of the alleged abuser.

Be careful about touching (e.g. hugging or cuddling) the child/ young person if they have not initiated the contact. They may be upset by physical contact.

Stage 2

As soon as possible, once the immediate comfort and safety of the child/young person is secured, you must inform the soccer schools Safeguarding Officer of the disclosure. You may make a referral yourself directly to a statutory agency if you are concerned about the child/young person's immediate safety and/or are having difficulty contacting the designated safeguarding person/s or if the designated safeguarding person is the alleged abuser. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Stage 3

You should note down details as soon as possible after the disclosure has been made. What is clearly etched at the time can become blurred after a few hours. It is vital that you make clear and concise notes soon after the disclosure in order to complete a more detailed record and incident sheet later.

Immediate notes should include:

- Date and time.
- Place and context of disclosure or concern.
- Important facts provided, e.g. names mentioned. Wherever possible, you must record information as it was relayed to you using the language of the child/young person rather than your own interpretation of it. It is important to report factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. You might convey your intuitive thoughts but these should be recognised as such and should not form part of the record.

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. You should be informed by the Safeguarding Officer of the local soccer school what has happened following the report being made. If you do not receive this information, you should be proactive in seeking it out. If you have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, you should inform the National Safeguarding Manager and ultimately contact the relevant statutory agency

A disclosure is not the only way that you may be made aware of a problem. Sometimes another adult or even a child may say something about a possible abusive situation.

On occasions you may witness an incident that may cause concern or indeed you may pick up on things that cause concern or information may be passed to a coach or manager anonymously by a person or persons who do not want to be directly involved for whatever reason. However you come upon information that causes concern and may put others at risk, the result should always be the same.

Taking no action is not an option.

All matters will be fully investigated and appropriate action will be taken. Action may include referral to the Police, Children's Services or the Greek FA as appropriate. Any referral to an external agency shall also be reported to the National Safeguarding Manager.

Full details of dealing with concerns in a football setting at Arsenal Football Club can be found in **Appendix 2** at the end of this policy.

List of child protection / safeguarding agencies in Greece and Cyprus

"The Greek Ombudsman for children"

The Greek Ombudsman is an Independent Authority sanctioned by the Constitution.
17 Halkokondili st. 10432 Athens - web: <http://www.0-18.gr/> - email: cr@synigoros.gr
tel. 213 1306703 - 213 1306605 (Secretariat), 800.11.32000 (line for children)

"THE SMILE OF THE CHILD"

A non-profit voluntary Organisation, cooperates closely with state authorities (**Police, the General Attorney's Office, hospitals** etc.) but also with all responsible individuals wishing to contribute to alleviating issues affecting children.

National helpline for children (24-hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year-basis): **Greece:** 1056 – **Cyprus:** 116000
Greece: Web: <http://www.hamogelo.gr/>, Cyprus: <http://www.paidikoxamogelo.org.cy/>

The Commissioner for Children's Rights CYPRUS

An independent institution which deals exclusively with the rights of the child and whose competences and obligations are prescribed by law. The Commissioner is appointed by the Council of Ministers pursuant to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law.

Address: Apelli and Pavlou Nirvana str corner, 1496, Nicosia.

Tel. 22-873 200, Fax: 22 872 365, E-mail: childcom@ccr.gov.cy, URL: <http://www.childcom.cy>