

# Whistle Blowing Policy

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Blackpool Football Club & Academy

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# **Whistleblowing Policy**

## **Purpose**

This policy will set out how individuals can raise concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Blackpool FC & Academy activities.

It will provide a method of raising concerns and how they can receive feedback on any action taken. Blackpool Football Club & Academy will ensure individuals will:

- Receive a response to their concerns.
- Be made aware of how to pursue the concern further if they are not satisfied with the response.
- Be re-assured that individuals will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

## **Scope**

Everyone involved in activity carried out under the jurisdiction of Blackpool FC & Academy are covered by this policy.

## **Policy Statement**

Staff, participants, coaches, officials and parents are often the first to realise that a child's safety and welfare are under threat. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be too difficult to handle. It may also be that they fear harassment or victimisation.

In these circumstances, it may be easier for them to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of poor practice. Blackpool Football Club & Academy would urge anyone to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy details how individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within Blackpool FC & Academy rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of potential abuse or irregularities are dealt with properly, quickly and discreetly.

## **Safeguarding**

Blackpool Football Club & Academy realise that raising a concern and reporting allegations are often difficult to make through fear of reprisals from those responsible for the alleged poor practice. If the individual believes what they say to be true and are not deemed to be malicious Blackpool Football Club & Academy will fully support the whistle-blower and will not tolerate any bullying, harassment or victimisation whatsoever. If this does occur, any perpetrators will

be dealt with under Blackpool Football Club and Academy's disciplinary policy/procedure resulting in possible expulsion from the Club.

### **Confidentiality**

Blackpool Football Club & Academy will do its utmost to keep confidential the identity of a whistle-blower. Should any allegations be made through whistleblowing it should be noted that a statement may be needed to form part of the evidence.

Should the whistle-blower need to be identified or it becomes apparent that the whistle-blower will be identified because of any subsequent investigation, notice will be given to the whistle-blower, by the club's Safeguarding Officer to which persons the identity disclosure will be made, with a chance to discuss any likely consequences.

### **Raising a Concern or Making an Allegation**

Anyone wishing to raise a concern should do so either verbally or in writing to the trusts safeguarding officer.

Blackpool Football Club Designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Will Cowell

Email: [william.cowell@blackpoolfc.co.uk](mailto:william.cowell@blackpoolfc.co.uk)

Telephone: 01253 348691 / 07835900239

### **Protocol**

The concern needs to be as specific as possible including any names, dates and locations where possible.

The burden of proof does not lie with the whistle-blower.

Should any concerns or allegations be made, Blackpool Football Club & Academy would encourage the whistle-blower to put their name to the allegation. Any concerns or allegations that are anonymous are much less powerful and are therefore much harder to prove. Should Blackpool Football Club receive any anonymous allegations these, of course, will be investigated.

If, after the course of an investigation, it has been found that the concerns or allegations are untrue or have not been substantiated then no action will be taken against the whistle-blower. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, Blackpool Football Club & Academy disciplinary policy/procedure will apply.

All investigations will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Officer who may be supported by an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team. However, should you feel that you have not received a satisfactory response to your concern you can approach the following people/organisations:

#### **Will Cowell, Welfare Officer, Blackpool Football Club**

Email: [William.cowell@blackpoolfc.co.uk](mailto:William.cowell@blackpoolfc.co.uk)

Telephone: 01253 348691 / 07835 900239

#### **Alex Richardson, Child Protection Advisor, The Football League**

Email: [arichardson@football-league.co.uk](mailto:arichardson@football-league.co.uk)

Telephone: 01772 325811

**The FA/NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline**

Telephone: 0808 800 5000