

Full policy handbook

The complete Grimsby United FC policy set: safeguarding and welfare, behaviour and inclusion, matchday health and safety, media and data, and club governance.

Safeguarding & welfare

Adopted in line with The FA Safeguarding Children Policy and the club's FA Accredited One Star status. Reviewed annually.

Safeguarding children policy

Every child and young person who plays for Grimsby United has the right to enjoy football in a safe environment, free from harm.

- All coaches, managers and committee members working with under-18s hold an in-date FA DBS check (renewed every three years).
- All youth team staff complete FA Safeguarding Children and FA Introduction to First Aid in Football, and refresh every three years.
- The club appoints a qualified Club Welfare Officer who completes the FA Welfare Officer workshop.
- Concerns are recorded and referred to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, and to police or children's social care where a child may be at risk.
- No adult should be alone and unobserved with a child. One-to-one coaching happens in sight of others with parental consent.

Reporting a concern

If something doesn't feel right, report it. It is never your job to investigate.

- Step 1 — Make sure the child is safe. If there is immediate danger, call 999.
- Step 2 — Tell the Club Welfare Officer the same day (details below). Write down what you saw or were told, using the child's own words, with the date and time.
- Step 3 — The Welfare Officer refers to Lincolnshire FA Safeguarding, and to the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) or children's social care where needed.
- Step 4 — Information is shared only with those who need to know. The person raising the concern is kept informed of the outcome as far as confidentiality allows.

Anti-bullying policy

Bullying of any kind — physical, verbal, emotional, cyber or exclusion — is unacceptable at Grimsby United.

- Bullying reported to any coach is passed to the Club Welfare Officer and treated as a welfare concern.
- Both the person bullied and the person bullying are supported; sanctions can include warnings, suspension or removal from the club.
- Online bullying between teammates is treated exactly as seriously as face-to-face bullying.

Missing child & late collection

Clear procedures for the two most common matchday welfare incidents.

- Missing child: search the immediate area, inform the Welfare Officer and the parent, and call police if the child is not found within 20 minutes.
- Late collection: two members of staff stay with the child, in an open area, until a parent or emergency contact arrives. Staff never take a child home alone.
- Repeated late collection is discussed with the family and recorded.

Changing rooms, showers & trips

Sensible boundaries that protect children and adults alike.

- Adults do not change or shower at the same time as children.
- Mobile phones, cameras and smart watches with cameras are not used in changing areas.
- Mixed-gender teams have separate changing provision and supervision from adults of the appropriate gender.
- Away trips and tournaments require written parental consent, a named lead and appropriate adult-to-child ratios.

Zero tolerance & fair play

Official club notice — August 2026. Abuse, intimidation, threats or violence have no place at Grimsby United.

Zero tolerance of abuse towards match officials

Applies at all Grimsby United fixtures, home or away, including league, cup, friendly and tournament matches, and to every person representing or supporting the Club.

- Match officials must be treated with respect at all times — disagreement with a decision is never a reason to verbally abuse, threaten, intimidate, surround, approach aggressively or make physical contact with a referee or other match official.
- Concerns about officiating must be raised with the team manager or a Club official, not by confronting the match official directly.
- Grimsby United FC will support its members and formally raise legitimate concerns through the correct Club and FA channels.
- Club action can include removal from the technical area, suspension from training or matches, restrictions on attending fixtures, committee/Welfare Team referral, formal disciplinary action, or removal from the Club in the most serious or repeated cases.
- Physical violence or threats of violence towards a match official will be treated as an extremely serious matter and referred to the relevant league, County FA or The FA.
- This applies during the match, at half-time, after the final whistle, around changing areas, in car parks, online and through social media.

Zero tolerance across the club

Extends to abuse of players, coaches, managers, volunteers, parents, spectators or opposition — at training, fixtures, tournaments, socials and online.

- Verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, aggressive behaviour or violence towards anyone involved in the club is unacceptable.
- Coaches and senior players lead by example. Younger players are watching how adults behave when decisions do not go their way.
- Reports should be made to the team manager, Club Secretary, Club Welfare Officer or committee member.
- Sanctions escalate from a quiet word or written warning through touchline bans, suspension, and removal from the club in serious or repeated cases.
- Passion is part of football. Disagreement is part of football. Abuse is not.
- Respect the badge. Respect the game. Respect the officials.

Behaviour, Respect & inclusion

The FA Respect programme applies to every player, coach, parent and spectator at our grounds.

FA Respect codes of conduct

Signing on with the club means signing up to the Respect codes for players, spectators, coaches and match officials.

- Spectators stay behind the Respect line, on the opposite side to coaches and substitutes.
- Referees — including young referees — are supported, never abused. Dissent is a club matter as well as a league one.
- Coaches encourage, they do not shout instructions over the whole game.
- Breaches are dealt with by the committee: a quiet word, a written warning, a touchline ban, then removal from the club.

Equality, diversity & inclusion policy

Grimsby United is committed to football for everyone, in line with The FA's Equality Policy and the Equality Act 2010.

- We will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.
- Discriminatory abuse at any Grimsby United activity is reported to the league and County FA and can result in immediate removal.
- We actively welcome disabled players, female players and players from every background, and we adapt sessions so nobody is left out.
- Cost is never a reason a child can't play — speak to the committee in confidence about subs support.

Anti-discrimination & reporting

Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and faith-based abuse have no place here.

- Report incidents to your coach, the Club Secretary or the Welfare Officer on the day where possible.
- Incidents are reported to Lincolnshire FA and, where appropriate, to Kick It Out.
- Witnesses and victims are supported through the process; retaliation against a reporter is itself a disciplinary matter.

Alcohol, drugs & smoking

A clean, family-friendly environment at all club activity.

- No alcohol on the touchline at junior or youth fixtures and training.
- No smoking or vaping within sight of children at any club activity.
- Coaches do not manage or coach under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Matchday, health & safety

How we keep sessions and fixtures safe at Bradley Football Development Centre and Barretts Recreation Ground.

Health & safety and risk assessment

Every session starts with a check of the pitch, goals and surroundings.

- Goalposts are checked for stability and anchored before every session — no exceptions.
- Pitch walk for glass, dog fouling, holes and standing water before players arrive.
- Shin pads are compulsory. No shin pads, no play.
- Jewellery, including earrings and smart watches, must be removed before playing.
- Sessions are cancelled in unsafe weather (frozen or waterlogged pitches, thunder and lightning, extreme heat).

First aid & concussion

We follow The FA's 'If in doubt, sit them out' guidance.

- Every team has a stocked first aid kit and at least one first-aid-trained adult at fixtures and training.
- Any suspected concussion means immediate and permanent removal from that session or match.
- A player with suspected concussion must not return for a minimum of 21 days and only with medical clearance and a graduated return.
- Injuries and near misses are recorded on an accident form and reviewed by the committee.

Emergency action plan

Everyone should know what happens if the worst happens.

- Call 999 and give the ground name, postcode and nearest access gate.
- Send someone to the entrance to meet the ambulance.
- Contact the player's parent or emergency contact immediately from the registration record.
- Report serious incidents to the Club Secretary within 24 hours and to the league and County FA as required.

Adverse weather & cancellations

Decisions are made as early as possible and communicated the same way every time.

- Cancellations are announced by the team manager on the official team group and the club's social channels.
- Never assume a fixture is off — wait for confirmation from your manager.
- Referee and ground authority decisions on pitch playability are final.

Media, data & communication

How we use photos, run our channels and look after your information.

Photography & filming policy

Photos celebrate the club — but only with permission, and never in a way that puts a child at risk.

- Written parental consent is taken at registration for any photography or video of under-18s.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time by emailing the club; images are removed as soon as we can.
- Children are never named alongside a photo with any personal detail beyond a first name.
- No photography or filming in changing rooms, toilets or medical areas.
- Anyone wishing to film a session must identify themselves to the coach first.

Social media & communication policy

Adults and children communicate through open, parent-visible channels only.

- Coaches do not message under-18s privately; all communication goes to parents or an open team group that includes a parent.
- No coach should be personally connected on social media to a child they coach.
- Club channels are moderated. Abusive, discriminatory or defamatory comments are deleted and reported.
- Team results and content should never criticise individual children, opposition players or match officials.

Data protection & privacy (UK GDPR)

We collect the minimum information we need to run the club safely.

- Registration data (name, date of birth, contacts, medical notes) is used only for team administration, safeguarding and FA/league registration.
- Data is stored securely, shared only with the league, County FA and The FA as required, and never sold.
- Records are kept for the period required by The FA and then securely destroyed.
- You can request a copy of your data, correction or deletion by emailing the club secretary.

Governance & club administration

The rules that keep the club fair, financially sound and properly run.

Club constitution & committee

Grimsby United is a member-run community club governed by an elected committee.

- Officers are elected annually at the AGM; members are given at least 14 days' notice.
- The committee meets regularly and records minutes and decisions.
- Accounts are presented to members annually.

Subscriptions, refunds & financial support

Fees pay for pitches, referees, league entry, kit and equipment — nothing else.

- Registration fees and weekly subs are set annually and published before the season.
- Subs are payable whether or not a player attends, as costs are fixed — talk to us if that causes hardship.
- Confidential hardship support is available so no child misses out for financial reasons.

Player registration & transfers

All players must be correctly registered before they play.

- Registration is completed through the FA Whole Game System and the relevant league.
- Playing an unregistered or ineligible player can forfeit fixtures and bring league sanctions.
- Transfers between clubs follow league and County FA transfer rules and windows.

Recruitment & safer recruitment of volunteers

Everyone in a role of trust is checked before they start.

- Roles working with under-18s require an FA DBS check, references and a completed volunteer form before any unsupervised contact.
- New coaches are inducted on safeguarding, first aid and this policy set.
- The club maintains a register of DBS, safeguarding and first aid expiry dates.

Complaints, grievances & disciplinary procedure

A clear, fair route if something goes wrong.

- Stage 1 — Raise it informally with your team manager.
- Stage 2 — If unresolved, email the Club Secretary with the details. You'll get an acknowledgement within 7 days.
- Stage 3 — The committee reviews the complaint and responds in writing within 21 days.
- Stage 4 — Matters not resolved internally can be escalated to Lincolnshire FA. Safeguarding matters bypass this process and go straight to the Welfare Officer and County FA.

Kit, equipment & sponsorship

Club property and partner relationships are looked after properly.

- Match kit remains club property and is returned at the end of the season.
- Sponsor branding follows FA and league regulations, with no gambling or alcohol branding on junior kit.
- Equipment is checked termly and damaged items withdrawn from use.

Safeguarding contact: Club Welfare Officer — grimsbyunitedfootballclub@gmail.com · 07783565426. Immediate risk to a child: call 999. NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000. Where a club policy is less strict than an FA, league or legal requirement, the FA, league or legal requirement always applies.