Sudbury Chess Club Safeguarding Policy

Version History

Version	Date	Approved by	Changes
1.0	24 June 2026	Annual General Meeting	Policy adopted
1.1	4 November 2026	Club committee	Revised following review against the ECF Safeguarding Policy (February 2026), the venue's rules, and the county association's requirements. To be reported at the 2027 AGM.

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1. Introduction

Sudbury Chess Club is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all players to enjoy chess and be respected by others.

This policy sets out how the Club keeps junior players and vulnerable adults safe, and what is expected of everyone who takes part in Club activities.

2. Overview

Sudbury Chess Club (the 'Club') welcomes to its sessions and other activities relating to the Club all players who are interested in chess and will strive to ensure that everyone is treated with care and respect.

The Club recognises that the welfare and interests of junior players (anyone under the age of 18) and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It also aims to ensure that, regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or identity, or socioeconomic background, all members and visitors have a positive and enjoyable experience of chess in a safe and sociable environment, and that everyone promotes the safety and wellbeing of junior players and vulnerable adults, and values, listens to and respects them.

This is the Club's own policy. It is based on, and aligned with, the English Chess Federation (ECF) Safeguarding Policy (version 2.0, February 2026), which is available on the ECF's Safeguarding page. Where

this policy refers to a specific section of the ECF policy, that section applies to the Club. Where this policy does not cover a matter, the Club's Safeguarding Officers will be guided by the ECF policy.

The policy applies to all members of, and visitors to, the Club when taking part in Club activities. Club activities are club nights and the Club's home and away league matches.

At the Club's home venue, the Club's arrangements cover the area used by the Club during its sessions: the private events room at the front of the building and the tables adjacent to the bar area. They apply from the start to the end of a session only. Other parts of the venue (such as the bar, snooker and other social areas), time before and after a session, and travel to and from Club activities are outside the Club's control, and junior players are the responsibility of their parent or carer at those times. This does not affect anyone's responsibility to report a safeguarding concern, wherever or whenever it arises.

It is a condition of membership that all members abide by and promote this policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All club members are responsible for ensuring that our high standards are upheld and that safeguarding is at the forefront of our considerations.

Officials

The Club does not currently run junior coaching or junior sessions, and no Club official or member takes responsibility for junior players in place of a parent or carer. If the Club creates a role involving regular contact with, or responsibility for, junior players, it will only appoint someone to that role after confirming the role is eligible for a DBS check, obtaining an Enhanced DBS check (or verifying an existing certificate through the DBS Update Service), and obtaining an independent reference, in line with the ECF's DBS Guidance for Chess Clubs.

Safeguarding Officers

The Club appoints a Lead Safeguarding Officer and one or more Deputy Safeguarding Officers (together, the "Safeguarding Officers").

Each Safeguarding Officer must have an Enhanced DBS check where the role is eligible for one, and otherwise a Basic DBS check. Where a Safeguarding Officer already holds a suitable DBS certificate registered with the DBS Update Service, the Club will, with their consent, check its status instead of applying for a new one. The Club records the certificate number, date of issue, level of check and date of each status check, and does not keep copies of certificates.

Each Safeguarding Officer must complete recognised safeguarding and child protection training, such as the NSPCC's *Introduction to safeguarding and child protection* course, within six months of appointment, and refresh it at least every three years.

The Safeguarding Officers' role is as described in Appendix 11 of the ECF Safeguarding Policy, except that the DBS requirement above applies in place of the one in Appendix 11, and duty (ix) does not apply: the Club does not arrange for members to supervise or transport junior players, and any such arrangements are the responsibility of the parent or carer.

Role	Name
Lead Safeguarding Officer	Jon Pascoe
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Steven Hembery
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Antony Voller

Any safeguarding concerns or allegations, and any comments or questions about this policy, should be directed to them.

The Safeguarding Officers can be contacted by email at safeguarding@sudburychessclub.co.uk. Their mobile numbers are available to members in the members' area of the Club website, and are included when the policy is circulated each year (see section 8).

Any allegations or concerns will be taken seriously, listened to and recorded. The Club's Safeguarding Officers will make initial enquiries to decide whether the matter is a safeguarding concern, and may seek advice from the appropriate authorities or the ECF. These enquiries will be limited to clarifying what was seen or said, by whom and when. The Safeguarding Officers will not question the person at risk in detail, approach the person the concern is about, or attempt to establish whether an allegation is true. Matters that are not safeguarding concerns will be dealt with by the Club in the normal way.

Where there is a suspicion that someone has been, or is at risk of being, harmed or abused, the Safeguarding Officers will refer the matter to the appropriate authorities (children's or adult social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer, or the police; see Appendix A) and, where appropriate, inform the ECF. Any allegation against an adult who works or volunteers with juniors will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer. Any internal action by the Club (see section 9) will only follow once the authorities have advised that it can. Where a decision is taken not to refer a concern, the reasons will be recorded.

Concerns will be handled in accordance with this policy and with the procedure for acting on a concern set out in section 3.3 and Appendix 5 of the ECF Safeguarding Policy, and recorded using the form in Appendix 4 of the ECF policy.

4. Raising a Concern

Anyone at the Club, whether a member, visitor, parent, carer or junior player, who is worried about the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult should act on it. You do not need to be certain that something is wrong.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999, then tell a Safeguarding Officer.

Otherwise, tell a Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, and on the same day. If no Safeguarding Officer is present, tell a committee member if one is present, who must pass the concern to a Safeguarding Officer the same day. If neither is present, contact a Safeguarding Officer by email using the address in section 3, or by phone if you have their number.

We recommend that you raise any concern with a Safeguarding Officer first. If you do not feel comfortable raising it through the Club, you can contact the services listed in Appendix A directly.

If someone tells you about something that has happened to them:

- Listen, stay calm and take what they say seriously.
- Let them explain in their own words. Do not ask leading questions or press them for detail.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret. Explain that you will need to pass it on to someone who can help.

Write down what you saw or were told as soon as possible, using the person's own words where you can, and including the date and time. Give this to a Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours. You are welcome to use the form in Appendix 4 of the ECF Safeguarding Policy to record the details; the Safeguarding Officer will complete the formal record.

Do not approach the person the concern is about, or discuss the concern with anyone other than the people named in this section.

If your concern is about a Safeguarding Officer, tell one of the other Safeguarding Officers, or contact the ECF safeguarding team at safeguarding.officer@englishchess.org.uk.

Junior players can raise a concern themselves, with a Safeguarding Officer or any adult at the Club they trust. They do not need to go through a parent or carer. Juniors can also contact Childline in confidence (see Appendix A).

Raising concerns in good faith
Anyone who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith will be supported by the Club, even if the concern turns out to be unfounded. Raising a concern in good faith will never be treated as a breach of this policy.

Confidentiality
Safeguarding concerns will be treated confidentially and shared only with those who need to know. However, confidentiality will never take priority over someone's safety. Where there is a risk of harm, information will be shared with the appropriate authorities, even if the person concerned asks for it not to be. This applies regardless of any other expectation of confidentiality, including the house rules of the venue.

If you raise a concern, a Safeguarding Officer will acknowledge it. You may not be told the outcome, to protect the privacy of those involved and any enquiries by the authorities.

5. Junior Players

The Club welcomes junior players to its club nights, and allows juniors of an appropriate level to play in league matches.

The Club and its officials are not able to act 'in loco parentis' at any club night or match.

This does not remove the Club's own responsibility. During Club activities, within the area and times set out in section 2, the Club will take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of junior players through the arrangements in this policy, and will act on any safeguarding concern.

6. Parental Supervision

Parents, guardians and carers remain responsible for their child at all times during Club activities, at home and away. The Club's Junior Member Guidance, available on the Club website, summarises these arrangements for parents, carers and junior players.

Under 14
A parent, guardian or carer must remain on the premises for the whole of any Club activity their child attends, and remains responsible for their child throughout. A parent may instead nominate another responsible adult to do this, either as a standing arrangement on the Club's junior registration form, or for a particular session by emailing the Club Secretary before it. The nominated adult then takes on the parent's responsibility for the child.

Aged 14 to 17
A junior aged 14 to 17 may attend Club activities, at home and away, without a parent or carer present, if a parent, guardian or carer has given written permission on the Club's junior registration form. The form asks separately for permission to attend without a parent or carer, and for permission to travel to and from Club activities alone.

Travel and away matches
The Club does not arrange transport for junior players. Travel to and from home and away matches is the responsibility of the parent or carer. Any arrangement a parent makes with another adult, including a Club member, for transport or supervision is a private arrangement between them. The Club does not arrange, approve or take responsibility for it.

Visiting juniors
Junior players from visiting clubs are the responsibility of their parent or carer, or of the arrangements their own club has made. This policy applies to everyone in the Club's area during a session (see section 2), and the home team captain may ask who is responsible for a visiting junior.

7. Supervision and One-to-One Contact

The Club follows the principle known as the "Rule of Three": an adult other than their own parent or carer should not be alone with a junior player. At least three people should be present, for example two adults and one junior, or one adult and two juniors.

If a one-to-one conversation with a junior is unavoidable, such as going over a game, it must take place in the open playing area, in view of others. Adults should not take a junior into another room, or anywhere out of sight of others.

8. The Venue and Other Organisations

Venue risk assessment
The Safeguarding Officers will carry out a safeguarding risk assessment of the Club's home venue at least once a year. It will cover the areas the Club uses and their position relative to the bar and other areas, the venue's rules on children (including any conditions in its premises licence), toilets, entrances and exits, and arrangements at the start and end of sessions. The assessment will be recorded and its results reported at the Club's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The Sudbury Institute Club
The Club will share this policy with the Institute and agree a named contact there for safeguarding matters. Junior players and their parents and carers must follow the Institute's rules while on its premises, including its rules for signing in guests. Where a concern involves a member of the Institute or its staff, the Safeguarding Officers will follow this policy as normal, including any referral to the authorities, and will also inform the Institute so it can take action under its own rules.

Leagues and county association
The Club will tell the leagues and county association it plays in (currently the Bury Area Chess League and the Suffolk County Chess Association) who its Safeguarding Officers are, and share this policy with them on request.

Circulating the policy
As well as being published on the Club website, this policy will be emailed each year, after its annual review, to all members and to the parents and carers of registered junior players. That email will include the Safeguarding Officers' mobile numbers.

9. Conduct

Code of conduct
Everyone taking part in Club activities, including members, visitors and parents, is expected to:

- treat everyone with respect and fairness, and not discriminate against anyone;
- not bully, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone, in person or online;
- avoid bad language and inappropriate behaviour, particularly in front of junior players;
- not have any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with junior players or vulnerable adults;
- not spend time alone with a junior player (see section 7);
- not add junior players to personal social media, or exchange personal phone numbers or private messages with them, without their parent's or carer's permission;
- not give gifts to, or accept gifts from, junior players without their parent's or carer's permission;
- not photograph or film junior players except as set out in section 10;
- not buy or supply alcohol for anyone under 18;
- not be under the influence of alcohol when acting as a nominated adult for a junior player (see section 6);
- report any safeguarding concern (see section 4).

Junior players are expected to treat others with respect, stay in the Club's area during sessions, follow the venue's rules, and tell a Safeguarding Officer or an adult they trust if anything makes them uncomfortable.

Online and the Club WhatsApp group
The same standards apply in the Club's WhatsApp group and any other Club online channel. Junior players may join the Club WhatsApp group only if a parent or carer is also a member of the group. Adults should not message junior players privately, and Club communication about a junior player should go through their parent or carer.

Breaches of this policy
A breach of this policy or the code of conduct may lead to a warning or suspension from Club activities, decided by the Club committee. Removal from membership is decided under the Club's Constitution, including its right of appeal to a General Meeting. Visitors and parents who breach this policy may be asked to leave, or refused attendance at future Club activities. A committee member who is the subject of, or otherwise involved in, a concern takes no part in the decision. Where a matter has been referred to the authorities, the committee will act only once the authorities have advised that it can (see section 3).

10. Photography and Recording of Images

Consent
The Club will only photograph or film a junior player, or publish an image of one, with their parent's or carer's consent, and will check that consent before publishing any image. Consent is given or refused on the junior registration form, and can be withdrawn at any time by telling any Club officer or Safeguarding Officer. Parents and carers who object do not need to give a reason.

Adult players who do not wish to be photographed, or to have their image published, can tell any Club officer, and the Club will respect this.

At Club activities
Photography and filming at the Club's home venue also needs the Institute's permission. Anyone other than a junior's own parent or carer who wants to photograph or film at a Club activity should ask a Safeguarding Officer first. Parents photographing their own child should avoid including other junior players.

Publishing images
When publishing images on the Club website, social media or the Club WhatsApp group, the Club will use group photos where possible, and will not publish a junior player's full name alongside their image. Members posting in the WhatsApp group must follow the same rules.

Junior players' full names may be published in match results, as they are in the ECF's public rating records.

Away matches and other events
Photography may take place at away matches and other chess events, which are outside the Club's control.

11. Adult Players

All adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status, have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice, and to take part in chess in an enjoyable and safe environment. Concerns about a vulnerable adult are raised in the same way as concerns about a child (see section 4).

The Club will seek to ensure that our chess is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment.

12. Record Keeping

All records relating to this policy are held by the Club. The Club Secretary is responsible for storing them, and access to each type of record is limited to the people who need it. Safeguarding records are kept securely, separately from general Club records, and are only shared as set out in this policy. Concern records about different individuals are kept in separate files.

Record	Collected by	Access	Kept for
Safeguarding concerns, referrals and related correspondence	Safeguarding Officers	Safeguarding Officers only	7 years from when the concern was raised, or until any junior involved turns 25, whichever is longer
DBS details (certificate number, issue date, level, status checks)	Lead Safeguarding Officer	Safeguarding Officers	While the person holds the role, then deleted within 6 months
Junior registration forms (contact details, consents, nominated adults)	The Club, through its online registration form	Club Secretary and Safeguarding Officers; the person publishing images may check photo consent	While the junior attends, renewed each year, and deleted within 12 months of their last attendance
Venue risk assessments	Safeguarding Officers	Club committee	Current and previous versions
Versions of this policy	Club Secretary	All members	Current and previous versions

The Club handles personal information in line with UK data protection law, as described in the Club's privacy notice.

13. Review

This policy was adopted at the Club's AGM on 24 June 2026. The committee may amend it between AGMs. Any amendments will be reported at the next AGM, where members can raise concerns or ask for further changes.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and at any other time the Club considers necessary, for example following a safeguarding incident or a change in legislation, recommended practice or the Club's circumstances. The next review is due by the 2027 AGM.

The Club shall abide by any further mandated rules, regulations or guidelines which may be set out from time to time by the Club committee, the venue, the leagues and county association, or the ECF, where these are deemed necessary to support the Club's policy objectives.

Appendix A: Useful Contacts

Situation	Contact
Someone is in immediate danger	Police / ambulance: **999**
Concern about a child, or an adult at risk (Suffolk Customer First)	**0808 800 4005** (freephone), or online via the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership
Allegation against an adult who works or volunteers with children (Suffolk Local Authority Designated Officer)	**0300 123 2044**, LADO@suffolk.gov.uk
Advice if you are unsure whether something is a concern (NSPCC Helpline)	**0808 800 5000**
ECF safeguarding team	safeguarding.officer@englishchess.org.uk
For children and young people (Childline)	**0800 1111**

The Club's Safeguarding Officers are listed in section 3.

Contact details checked November 2026.