

Senior Appearances

U18 Policy and Procedures



Contents

Policy statement	3
Principles	3
Procedures	
UI8 Debut-best practice guidelines	3
Additional vulnerabilities	4
Process	4
Talking to player	4
Talking to the “Buddy”	5
Preparing the staff	6
Talking to the Manager and team	6
Key contacts	7
Appendices	
1.Letter to parent/carer	8
2.Club consent form	9
3.Code of Conduct	11
Reference Materials	
The “Company” Safeguarding Children Policy	
The “Company” Safeguarding Adults Policy	
FA guidance	



Senior Appearances U18 Policy

**Date of Policy: August 2020 updated September 2021 reviewed Sept 2022
September 2023 September 2024**

This policy super-cedes any other Senior Appearances U18 policy.

Policy Statement

Bristol City Football Club, Bristol City Academy, Bristol City Women's Football Club, PGA-ETC PGA, Bristol City Robins Foundation, Bristol Bears Rugby, Bristol Bears Women, Bristol Bears Academy, Bristol Bears Foundation, Bristol Flyers, Bristol Flyers Foundation, Bristol Sport Foundation, Ashton Gate and Bristol Sport are collectively referred to as "the Company".

The "Company" is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe environment for all of its members so that they can participate in any sport in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Principles

For an U18 player to get the opportunity to play in the First Team, or Development Squad is for many, their ultimate sporting ambition and as such should be supported by appropriate safeguarding practice.

A senior team match is not an activity that is specifically designed for U18 players. It is therefore important that some safeguards should be considered.

Whilst this guidance is written around a debut appearance, the principle will apply for more regular senior appearances. The younger the player is, the more vulnerable they may be.

The "Company" has a 'duty of care' to ensure that you put in place safeguards to protect those young people who are under 18 and who, in law, are still considered to be a child.

This guidance provides information on good working practices which will be regularly reviewed and, where appropriate, improvements made.

For Bristol Bears The club needs to adhere to Regulation 15 RFU Guidelines & Governance.

A POOAG application needs to be made to the Gloucester RFU & permission sought from Premiership Rugby who would sign them off centrally once they have seen an up-to-date annual plan and a signed supportive statement from a club doctor, S&C, parent/carer, and school.

All staff that work with young players are in a **position of trust**. The "Company" recognises that all young players, parents/ carers must have confidence in the organisation and as such will provide a professional, trained workforce that understand their roles and responsibilities when working with U18s

U18 Debut – best practice guidelines

Speaking with the player, his parents/carers, and all other interested parties, before any debut, would ensure that all of those involved will know what to expect.

If the team is travelling to an away game. It is important to ensure that everybody understands that no single person is solely responsible for the care of the young player. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, all of those involved should be made aware of their personal responsibilities when a young player is making his debut for the first team.

Additional vulnerabilities to consider include:

1. The excitement and anxiety of playing for the first team or senior squad;
2. The player's keenness to do well and to impress and please the manager, coaches and team;
3. Traveling to an away game as the only U18;
4. Wanting to be one of the 'grown-ups' but being cautious and reminded of the code-of-conduct for U18s.

Away game - At least one person travelling with the player must have a current DBS certificate. Recent changes to the DBS/CRC (previously known as CRB) means that the certificate is now workforce specific. This means that the document will state if the person has clearance for work with the children's workforce or for work with the adult workforce. Those medical professionals who work with both adults and with U18s will require '**child and adult workforce**' on their DBS/CRC certificate. The club physio must also have an existing CRB or new DBS/CRC certificate.

When using changing and shower facilities these should be separate for any U18 player(s).

Should the game involve an overnight stay the young player must be provided with a bedroom on his own unless there are other U18 players in the squad that he can share with.

Process

Talk to parents/ carers outlining some of the issues detailed in a) – e) below then follow up with a letter enclosing a consent form. Ask the parents/carers to sign and return the consent form. Template examples of: a letter to parents/carers, a consent form and Code of Conduct are enclosed as Appendix 1- 3.

- Outline what a great achievement it is that their son has been offered the opportunity to debut with the First Team. If the match is an away game, explain that they are likely to be the only U18 travelling (if that is the case). Explain that they may have been called up, but that does not automatically mean they will play on the day.
- Explain that you understand that their son may be thrilled at the prospect of playing but you are aware that he may be nervous and even a little anxious.

Also, tell them that you will be speaking to him (or have already done so) to reassure him and ensure he is comfortable and knows what to expect.

- Explain that if away travel is involved, he will be in a hotel room alone and will not be sharing with any of the other players. The only exception to this would be if two U18s are travelling with the team, in which case they can share a room.
- Explain that you intend to 'buddy up' their son with one of the senior players. Seek their support, explain that you would like them to talk to their son to prepare him and try to ensure he knows that this is a great opportunity and he should enjoy it. Reinforce the fact that if he is uncomfortable about anything he should talk to someone he trusts.
- Explain that the reasons you are going through this process with them is to try to ensure that everything goes as smoothly as possible for his potential first team appearance.

Talk to the player - It is highly likely to have been the Academy Manager or First Team Manager who has informed the player that he has been called up. The following should form part of a follow up conversation which should be undertaken by either the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or by another appropriate person who the player knows and trusts. Therefore, the timescales for talking to players, parents / carers may be interchangeable.

- Congratulate the player on being selected to join the first team squad. Explain that he may have been called up, but that does not automatically mean he will play on the day. Be diplomatic in preparing them for this possible disappointment.
- Discuss with the player that while you understand that he must be very proud at the prospect of playing, you also understand that he may be nervous and even a little anxious.
- Explain that you will try to identify a 'Buddy' for him, and this may be a senior player who can provide support for him during his possible debut. Ask him if there is anyone he thinks he would feel comfortable with. However, be clear that this may not necessarily be the person who is identified as his 'Buddy'.
- Explain to the player that he does not have to tolerate any unacceptable 'banter' or behaviour and that he needs to set his own boundaries and know what 'line' must not be crossed personally. Explain that there may quite a bit of 'down-time' and he should think about what he takes with him to fill the time.
- He also needs to know that if the team are travelling to an away game, he will be staying in a separate hotel room and should not share a room with any adult over 18.
- Outline what is expected of him in respect of a 'code of conduct'. That is what his personal responsibilities are during the trip. This includes, specifically, ensuring that he understands he must have no access to alcohol (including the mini-bar); no access to adult television or any adult materials; he should not engage in gambling; that he should use any social media platform in a responsible manner and in line with any "Company" policy and must be careful about comments which may be misinterpreted or insulting to others in any way; clarify that he must not make any

inappropriate comments about the football environment. The club may have additional responsibilities to add to this list.

- Ensure that the player knows and understands that if he has ANY concerns he can speak to his 'Buddy', or someone else that he trusts.

Talk to the 'Buddy': The DSO and or manager will need to identify who may be the most suitable 'Buddy' for the young player. Advice from the Academy Manager and other members of staff will help the decision. The idea is to try to support the player through a well-planned transition and not to create an environment where he 'stands out more' and is the focus of more attention.

Also remember the 'Buddy' should be someone that the player will feel comfortable with, however, it should be one of the senior players.

When you talk to the 'Buddy', it is important to stress that they are not responsible for the care of the young player. You are simply asking them to be a sympathetic ear, if required, and a mentor for the young player.

Preparing the staff - When you talk to the physio, or other person with the appropriate DBS clearance, it is important to stress that they are not the only one responsible for the care of the young player during any trip. The young player will not need constant independent supervision. They are simply be asked to be available for the young player, if required.

Young people over 16 years of age are often capable and legitimately entitled to live independently. A one-night stay in a hotel room alone is something young players may already have done as part of family holidays.

Talking to the Manager and the team - It is important to ensure that everyone knows and understands their responsibilities when a young player is called up into the First team. The key messages are:

- Young players U18 are defined in law as children. Adults working with children need to not only protect those young players, but to also demonstrate standards of behaviour which do not leave the adults open to allegations against themselves.
- If the game involves away travel, players U18 should be in a hotel room alone and should not share with an adult over 18. An exception to this would be if two U18s are travelling with the team, in which case they can share a room.
- Players and staff should not encourage young players U18 to engage in any inappropriate activities such as gambling; the use of alcohol or other inappropriate or illegal substances; or watching or engaging in any inappropriate adult behaviours.
- Regardless of what experiences they, as experienced older players, encountered in the past, especially on their debut for the first team, players and all staff should recognise the vulnerability of young U18 players and the risks associated with encouraging young players to engage in inappropriate activities.
- It is important to remember that the younger the player, the more vulnerable they will be.
- The best way to inspire young players to play well and fulfil their potential is to provide encouragement and praise, especially during times of challenge and anxiety, such as on their debut for the first team. Providing positive role models

in the form of more experienced players who demonstrate appropriate behaviour can help the player and the club.

Planning and preparing for the time when U18s will be called up for a first team or senior appearance will help to provide protection for; the players, and the “Company”. It will also provide reassurance for families that their’ player will be provided with the right guidance and support during their development.

Key contacts;

Safeguarding team safeguarding@bristol-sport.co.uk or 07880140411

Further support on football safeguarding issues:

Alexandra Roberts

The Football League Child Protection Advisor	Mob: 07795 628379
FA/NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on	Tel: 0808 800 5000
Local Social Care Duty Contact Details	Tel: (0117 9037795)
LADO : Nicola Laird	Tel: 0117 903 7795

Date reviewed	Position	Owner
September 2020	Executive Board	M.A.Martin
September 2021	Executive Board	
September 2022	Executive Board	
September 2023	Executive Board	
September 2024	Executive Board	



Date:

Club logo

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are delighted to inform you that your son, **NAME** has been selected to join the first team squad this weekend in the match against **NAME of Club** . We are looking forward to having **NAME** with us for the match. As he is under 18 years of age, it is important that certain safeguards are put in place.

- A senior player who will be nominated to act as a mentor and will 'buddy up' with your son. This will provide the player with someone he can turn to if he needs advice or support.

It would be helpful if you discussed with him what a great opportunity this is, and encourage him to enjoy the experience, If at any stage he feels uncomfortable or has any concerns he should talk to his 'buddy' or someone he trusts.

- If the game should involve an overnight stay, he will be in a hotel room alone and will not be sharing with any of the other players.

The only exception to this would be if two U18s are travelling with the team, in which case they would share a room.

- Where possible a separate changing facility will be provided for any U18 players.

Please note that this may not always be possible due to the limitations of some Clubs' facilities.

- Your son will be provided with a Code of Conduct and will be expected to adhere to this at all times.

This is just to outline standards of behaviour which the "Company" expects of players U18 when placed in an adult environment. Please support this guidance and reinforce the requirements.

Please complete the consent form attached to this letter and return it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (contact details below) as soon as possible. An electronic copy with your typed signature will suffice.

Once again can we take this opportunity to congratulate **NAME** on this achievement And to wish him luck with the opportunity and challenge.

Yours sincerely,

(Name & title)

(Mob: Email contact DSO)

U18 First Team Appearance Consent Form

Club logo

CLUB CONSENT FORM

Congratulations to you and your son: he has been selected to join the senior squad in a forthcoming match against **NAME OF CLUB. In order that your child may participate in this fixture we are seeking your consent and support in preparing him for the game. It is essential that you complete and return this form to **NAME OF PERSON AND CONTACT DETAILS**, supplying relevant information and your consent as parent/carer.**

- By consenting to this I am stating that my child is in good health and that he is not participating contrary to medical advice.
- In the unlikely event of an accident occurring, I give my permission for a designated representative of the club to authorise emergency medical treatment, including the use of anaesthetic if deemed necessary.
- Appearance as part of the senior squad will include TV and use of photographs/digital images. A separate images consent form should have been signed by you at the start of the season/contract, if not ensure you speak to the DSO to request that consent form also.

Player/Child's name Date of birth
.....Age

Name of parent/carer

Relationship to child:

Address:

.....
.....

Emergency contact telephone no. Mobile tel:
.....

Please provide a second emergency contact name and telephone number:

Name Relationship to child
.....

2nd Emergency contact telephone no. Mobile tel:
.....

Please note: It is essential that we are able to contact one of these two numbers in the event of an emergency.

If your child has any medical conditions that may need to be taken into account, please give details below. The following information will assist the party leaders in caring for your child.

Special dietary needs:

Does your child suffer from: Asthma ☐ Hayfever ☐ Diabetes ☐ Epilepsy ☐
Nut Allergy ☐

Any other allergies (e.g. Penicillin/nuts/anaesthetic)

.....

Please add any other relevant information:

.....

Important information to parents/carers: The use of any regular medication by a professional player must be reported to the club medical team to ensure that anti-doping regulations are met. You must inform the team manager of the use of any medications including over the counter purchases.

I consent to my child participating as a member of the first team/senior squad on this occasion **and for the rest of the season or scholar contract if required.**

Signature: Date:

Please write your name in full

.....

Code of Conduct U18 Player Senior Appearance

Congratulations on being selected to join the senior squad for the forthcoming match. When representing the club at a senior level we expect certain standards of behaviour and we have outlined below a code of conduct which we expect you to maintain.

- Represent the club and the "Company" in a manner and to a standard expected of a professional player.
- Recognise that whilst being invited into the squad, you may not be selected to play on the day. Understand that the Manager's decision is final and that any response to any such decision will be that expected of a professional footballer.
- Understand that you must not engage in any inappropriate adult activity and that you **must not** consume alcohol; access adult literature of any kind or engage in gambling whist with the first team.
- Agree to only use any social media platform in a responsible manner and not post any comments which may be misinterpreted or are insulting to others in any way, including making inappropriate comments about the team or the playing environment.

This is an exciting and challenging time for you however, it is important that you understand that if you have any concerns you can speak to someone you trust or to the manager.

- We hope to identify a 'Buddy' who will act as a mentor for you. If you need advice or support, he will be available to provide this.
- It is critical that you understand that you do not have to tolerate any unacceptable 'banter' or behaviour. Know your own boundaries and do not be afraid to talk to someone you trust if you have any concerns.
- If you are travelling to an away game, you should be staying in a separate hotel room and must not share a room with any adult over 18. If there are two youth team players travelling, you may be expected to share a room.

If you have any concerns and would like to discuss these issues further, then you can contact the Safeguarding team on safeguarding@bristol-sport.co.uk or

Tel: 07880140411

Enjoy the experience, and good luck!