



## Carlisle United – Guidance for U18s with the First Team

Where reference is made to Carlisle United this covers Carlisle United, the Academy Department, not the Community Sports Trust or Carlisle United Ladies which have their own safeguarding arrangements.

### Overview

If an U18 player gets the opportunity to play in the First Team, or U23 Development Squad it probably feels to him like the many years of training and coaching have resulted in him achieving his ultimate footballing ambition.

This guidance should be used as a toolkit when any player under the age of 18 is considered to be included within the Carlisle United First Team environment for any reason.

First Team provisions, from an FA, PL, EFL and NL perspective, are “open age”. In general terms, for clubs outside the EPPP, open age football is for anyone over the age of 16 years.

As an employer we have a ‘duty of care’ to ensure that we put in place safeguards to protect those young people who are under 18 and who, in law, are still considered to be a child.

The Club has Safeguarding Policies in place (see our club website link [HERE](#)).

The Academy will continue to support players from the Professional Development Phase (PDP) who are provided with the opportunity to train and/or play with the First Team.

There will also be a designated Liaison Coach (LC). The LC has a specific job description.

### Identified Contacts

- **Mark Birch** – Lead Professional Development Phase
- **Gavin Skelton** – Liaison Coach (LC)
- **Scott Taylor** – Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- **Sarah McKnight** – Academy/Club Secretary
- **Steven Rudd** – Academy Manager (AM)

### Preparation

#### DBS checks

As detailed above First Team provisions are open age, therefore the following guidance from the EFL and FA should be followed.

*“When a player U18 is staying overnight at a hotel as part of the senior team, does everyone travelling need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and must the First Team Manager have a DBS/CRC when a player who is U18 is involved in a First Team game?”*

The answer to both questions is **NO**. Current definitions to activate a DBS are that an adult has to lead, care or supervise groups of under 18s frequently and at an established place of work and specifically for groups of children. Where provisions are open age, this is only required where the majority (over 50%) of the squad are under 18.

If the debut of the young U18 player is going to occur during an away game, then good practice would be to ensure that at least one person travelling has a DBS/CRC certificate. Changes to the DBS/CRC means that the certificate is now workforce specific. This means that the document will state if the person has clearance to work with the children’s workforce

or to 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. So generally speaking, the club physio is likely to already have an existing DBS/CRC certificate. The LC will also be appropriately FA DBS checked by the Club.

Speaking with the U18 player, his parents, and all other interested parties, before any debut, would ensure that all of those involved will know what to expect, especially 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 U18 player. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, all of those involved and especially the identified contacts above should be made aware of their personal responsibilities when a young player is making his debut for the First Team. Whilst this guidance is written around a debut appearance, the principle will apply for more regular senior appearances.

**Note:** The younger the player is, the more vulnerable he may be, such as:

- the excitement and anxiety of playing for the First Team or U23 Development Squad
- his keenness to do well and to impress and please the Manager, Coaches and Team
- travelling to an away game as the only U18 player
- wanting to be one of the 'grown-ups' but being cautious and reminded of the code-of-conduct for U18s.

### **Parent/Carer**

Following the identification of a prospective First Team player who is under 18 years of age the club will meet or contact the parents or carers where they will be informed of the Club's desire to register their son with the First Team and the following points should be discussed:

- Explain that you understand their son may be thrilled at the prospect of playing but you are aware that he may be nervous or even a little anxious, inform them of who is available to support. 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.
- Outline what a great achievement it is that their son has been offered the opportunity to debut with the First Team. Explain that away travel maybe involved and that they are likely to be the only U18 travelling (if that is the case). If that is the case, 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 twin room.
- Explain that they may have been called up, but that does not automatically mean they will actually play on the day.
- Explain that you intend to 'buddy up' their son with one of the First Team 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. They should reinforce the fact that if he is uncomfortable about anything he should talk to someone he trusts.
- Reinforce the fact that if he is uncomfortable about anything he should talk to someone he trusts such as the DSO.

- Explain the logistics around possible adjustments available at the stadium (home or away). This could include alternative changing/shower provision, alternative kit (if a betting sponsor is present) and a Risk Assessment being put in place if a pitch incursion was to happen.
- 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.
- Explain that it is an adult provision, and they should be aware that he may be exposed to adult language, behaviours and traits. All necessary steps will be taken to ensure that he will not be able to drink alcohol, gamble or engage in any other activity that may be detrimental or illegal to someone of his age.

**Following this meeting a letter and consent form should be sent to the parent/carer requesting agreement which must be signed and return to the club, see Appendix 1-2**

## **Player**

It is highly likely to have been the Lead PDP Coach or First Team Manager who has informed the player that he has been called up. The information below is a follow up conversation which should be undertaken by either the DSO or by another appropriate person who the player knows and trusts.

Therefore, the timescales for talking to players and parents 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 actually 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 he is still able to speak to anyone in the club who he feels comfortable with.
- 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 someone, 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 be quite a bit of down-time and he should think about what he takes with him to fill the time when staying away.
- 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 the First Team '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, in

line with the club 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 appropriate comments about the football environment.

- Discuss with the player any reasonable adjustments around changing/showering facilities, changes to playing kit and procedures around pitch incursions. Ensure the player, knows and understands that if he has ANY concerns, he can speak to his 'Buddy', or someone else that he trusts.

### **Talking to the Buddy**

The DSO will need to identify who may be the most suitable 'Buddy' for the young U18 player and may need to seek advice on this from the AM or LC of other members of staff. Remember, however, to be sensitive when making a decision on this issue. 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. Ideally one of the senior players.

When talking to the 'Buddy', it is important to stress that they are not responsible for the care of the young U18 player. You are simply asking them to be a sympathetic ear, if required, and a mentor for the young U18 player.

### **Liaison Coach (LC)**

As stated earlier a First Team or Development Squad Match is not an activity designed for U18s, therefore DBS/CRCs are not required by all of the adults involved. However, to provide additional safeguards, the LC and at least one other member of the support team should have an FA DBS/CRC certificate and be cleared through The FA for work in football. Generally, the club physio may hold an appropriate disclosure.

When you talk to the LC, or physio, it is important to stress that they are not solely responsible for the care of the young U18 player during any trip. The young player will not need constant independent supervision. You are simply asking them to be available for the young U18 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.

### **First Team**

Through well planned training and using this guidance as part of a club education programme, you should be better prepared for last-minute confirmations of call-up which may occur a couple of days before an important game, as realistically, it may be only a few days before a game that a young U18 player is going to be called up. Therefore, it is imperative that everyone understands their role as an employee and the associated responsibilities undertaken when working with under 18's. With this in mind the DSO will address these issues during an in-house safeguarding training session with all adults who will engage with the young player(s).



The training will cover the following key messages:

- Young U18 players are defined in law as a children and 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 twin room.
- Players and staff should not encourage young U18 players 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.

All staff that work with young U18 players are in a position of trust. Young players, parents and carers must have confidence that any professional football club working with children will ensure that they provide a professional, trained workforce that understand their roles and responsibilities when working with U18s.

Planning and preparing for the time when U18s will be called up for a First Team or U23 Development Squad appearance can only help to provide protection for; the players U18, the senior players, the club, the business and The Brand. It will also provide reassurance for families that their son will be provided with the right guidance and support during his development.

## Travel

In line with the EFL/NL and FA it is recognised that the governing bodies do not feel it appropriate for any player under the age of 18 to share a room with any person over the age of 18. If a player is unable to share a room with another player under the age of 18, a single room close to the allocated member of staff should be arranged by the Club Secretary.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that any player under the age of 18 can arrive and depart from any meeting point safely. For each U18 player there must be clear and understood pre-planned arrangements to get them home safely after the game. It is a collective responsibility. Where a young U18 player is to make their own way home then parental consent should be sought. The circumstances will differ every time, but the **prime responsibility** is the parent to collect and take home, which is simpler if locally based. Less so if not locally based and living with Host families, so therefore, it is the Club's responsibility to get them to their Host accommodation safely as per our Transport policy.



## Development

Any player under the age of 18 will still be developing and growing physically. The club must ensure, for the players long term welfare, that any development plans in place with the Academy physiotherapy department are followed. These will take into account consequences relating to overuse as prescribed by the FA. Therefore, a sound working relationship should exist between all physiotherapy departments, where the player's best interests are paramount.

**Should we fail to consider these then it may be deemed negligent or physically abusive.**

Our practice of encouraging Academy players to communicate with the club in relation to any changes in their medical history throughout the season should be supported and continue. The club will work and communicate with all relevant parties regarding any new medical concern, in the same working way that is adopted by our U16 and U18 teams.

## EPPP

As all players under the age of 18 are deemed to be included within all EPPP provisions at the club it is imperative that all functions involved continue. This should include logging playing and training time via performance clock, match time, gym work etc, as directed by the member of staff responsible for this within the academy. The inputting of this date will be completed by a member of the staff from the relevant age provision that the player emanates from on a weekly basis, all information should be sent directly to Lead PDP coach. Similarly, any injuries sustained should be entered onto the system.

## Review

This guidance will be kept up to date, particularly as the Club changes in nature and size and new requirements emerge.

To ensure this, the guidance, and the way it is implemented, will be reassessed and amended on an ongoing basis and reviewed annual basis will be as follows:

- Safeguarding issues will be considered as agenda items and discussed at the:
  - Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) meetings
  - Academy Management Team (AMT) and Technical Board (TB) meetings
- The guidance will be reassessed and amended on an ongoing basis by the CEO in consultation with the SWG.
- The 1921 Board will:
  - include Safeguarding as an agenda item and feature in the Board Report
  - conduct an annual review of this guidance as part of the annual review of safeguarding policies

## Safeguarding contacts

Remember that in an emergency or where there is risk to life you should contact the police immediately.

If you have a concern you wish to raise with the Club please contact:

- SSM is Nigel Clibbens [nigel.clibbens@carlisleunited.co.uk](mailto:nigel.clibbens@carlisleunited.co.uk)
- DSO is Scott Taylor [Scott.taylor@carlisleunited.co.uk](mailto:Scott.taylor@carlisleunited.co.uk) 07708 959007
- MDSO is Sarah McKnight [sarah.mcknight@carlisleunited.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mcknight@carlisleunited.co.uk) 0330 094 5930





## Other Safeguarding contacts in football

Whilst any safeguarding concern should be raised with the Club Safeguarding contacts in the first instance, we recognise that this may not always be possible or appropriate. Below are the contact details for footballing partners with whom safeguarding concerns in relation to the Club can be discussed:

### The National League Safeguarding Team

Tel: 0121 714 2207

Email: [safeguarding@thenationalleague.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@thenationalleague.org.uk)

### The English Football League Safeguarding Team

Tel: 01772 325940

Email: [safeguarding@efl.com](mailto:safeguarding@efl.com)

If they concern regards a person in employed in footballs conduct towards a child:

### The FA Safeguarding Team

Tel: 0800 169 1863

Email: [Safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com)

## Mental health


Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of us all. Players and staff who are struggling under the current circumstances should contact the Club safeguarding staff as outlined above. Support can also be accessed through a number of national organisations including:

- The Samaritans Tel: 116 123 <https://www.samaritans.org>
- ChildLine: Tel: 0800 1111 <https://www.childline.org.uk>
- NSPCC: Tel: 0808 800 5000 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
- Mind: Tel: 0300 123 3393 <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- PFA: Tel: 07500 000 777 <https://www.thepfa.com/wellbeing>

## Online safety

It is important that both players and parents are aware of the help and support available should they be concerned about something they have seen or experienced online. These include:

- UK Safer Internet Centre <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>
- CEOP <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- Internet Matters <https://www.internetmatters.org/>
- ThinkuKnow <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

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Signed		Nigel Clibbens Chief Executive



## APPENDIX 1 – TEMPLATE EXAMPLE – PARENTS' LETTER

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

We are delighted to inform you that your son, **(insert name)** has been selected to join the first team squad **this weekend/tonight** in the match against **(insert opposition)**. We are looking forward to having **(insert name)** with us for the match, but we want to ensure we put appropriate safeguards in place as he is still under 18 years of age.

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.

This is a fantastic opportunity, and we hope he really enjoys the experience. It is important to remember that being called into the squad does not automatically mean that he will play on this occasion; however, he should be congratulated on this achievement at such a young age. If he does not play on the day, we hope you can reassure him of how well he has done by being selected.

We understand that your son may be nervous and even a little anxious with this new and exciting challenge. In order to support him through this we are hoping to put a few things in place, and we hope that you will also talk a few things through with him before the game.

We intend to identify a senior player who will act as a mentor and will 'buddy up' with your son. This is to provide him 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, that he should try to enjoy the experience but that if he is uncomfortable about anything or has any concerns then he should talk to his 'buddy' or someone he trusts.

**Please note:** If the game involves away travel, 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 will share a twin room.

We will also be reminding your son of the Clubs Code of Conduct which we expect him to adhere to. This is just to outline standards of behaviour which the club expects of players U18 when placed in an adult environment. It would be helpful if you could support this guidance and reinforce the requirements of the club.

We know this is a great occasion for **(insert name)** and wish him luck with the opportunity and challenge.

Yours sincerely

(Name & title)

(Mob: Email contact DSO)





## APPENDIX 2 – TEMPLATE EXAMPLE – U18 FIRST TEAM APPEARANCE 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/legal guardian.

- 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/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ 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:** 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/physio 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: \_\_\_\_\_



### **APPENDIX 3 – TEMPLATE EXAMPLE – CODE OF CONDUCT U18 PLAYER SENIOR APPEARANCE**

Congratulations on being selected to join the senior squad for the forthcoming match against **(insert opposition)**.

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 in a manner and to a standard expected by a professional football club.
- 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 whilst 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 football 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 don't 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 twin room.

If you have any concerns and would like to discuss these issues further then you can contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Scott Taylor) on Tel: 07708959007

Enjoy the experience, and good luck if you are selected to play during the match.