

SEND and Inclusion Commitment

Created July 2026

Our Commitment

Sevenoaks Town FC ("**STFC**" / "**the Club**" / "**we**") believes that everyone should be:

- Treated with dignity and respect.
- Valued as an individual.
- Supported to participate wherever reasonably possible.
- Protected from discrimination, bullying, harassment and exclusion.
- Provided with equitable opportunities to develop skills, confidence and enjoyment through football.

We are committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and supportive football environment where equality, participation, wellbeing and respect are at the forefront of everything we do. All players, Club volunteers and staff, should feel welcome, valued and included within our football community.

We recognise that there is a wide range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (**SEND**), whether formally diagnosed or not. We are committed to working collaboratively with players, parents and carers, club volunteers and staff, to understand individual needs, remove barriers to participation where reasonably possible, and support every player to enjoy football in a safe and positive environment.

Sevenoaks Town FC. Together we are more than just a football club.

Purpose

The purpose of this Commitment and associated guidance is to:

- Promote equality, inclusion and participation.
- Clarify communication and support processes.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered where appropriate.
- Reduce barriers to participation.
- Promote safe, respectful and child-centred football environments.
- Support coaches and volunteers in delivering inclusive football opportunities.
- Support compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant FA guidance.

By recognising individual strengths, reducing barriers and considering reasonable adjustments where appropriate, STFC aims to create an environment where all players can participate, develop confidence and enjoy football, working collaboratively with club volunteers, staff, players, parents and carers to explore alternative approaches and support participation wherever possible.

This guidance is underpinned by the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and informed by The Football Association's safeguarding, inclusion and disability football guidance.

This Commitment and Guidance should be read alongside: Safeguarding Children Policy; Safeguarding Open Age with U16/U17 players; Managing Challenging Behaviour Policy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Complaints and Concerns Procedure; Player Record Access Management Policy

Scope

This document applies to all players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers and officials involved with STFC.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Club

So far as is reasonably practicable, STFC will:

- Manage any SEND-related information it receives about a player with sensitivity.
- Signpost families to support where required.
- Ensure all coaches and volunteers receive the guidance attached to this Commitment.
- Signpost opportunities for coaches and volunteers to develop awareness and understanding of SEND.
- Support coaches in considering reasonable adjustments for a player where appropriate.
- Manage SEND-related concerns in accordance with applicable policies.

Coaches and Volunteers

Coaches and volunteers are not expected to diagnose SEND conditions, assess SEND needs or act as SEND specialists. Their role is to make reasonable efforts to facilitate player participation where possible.

Coaches and volunteers are expected to:

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all players.
- Communicate openly with parents, carers and players.
- Seek support from the Club when required.
- Incorporate reasonable adjustments for players where appropriate.
- Follow safeguarding policies and procedures.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination relating to SEND will not be tolerated and will be managed in line with the club's Managing Challenging Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Parents and Carers

To help the Club meet its SEND Commitment, it needs to be informed of any known SEND conditions, requiring openness and collaboration from parents and carers.

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Support Process

During registration and throughout the season, parents and carers are encouraged to share relevant SEND information concerning their child including:

- Communication preferences.
- Support strategies.
- Sensory considerations.
- Medical information relevant to participation.
- Emotional regulation needs.
- Any other information that may assist coaches in supporting the player.

All information will be handled sensitively and managed in accordance with our Player Record Access Management Policy.

Parents and carers are also encouraged to speak directly with their coach in the first instance and may also contact the Club Welfare Officer's at any time to discuss support needs.

Once a player's SEND need is known and identified, the Club will use reasonable endeavours to adopt the following process:

1. The coach and/or Club Welfare Officer's will consider the information provided and seek appropriate guidance, as necessary.
2. Reasonable adjustments and support strategies will be discussed with the player and family where possible.
3. Where appropriate, details of any reasonable adjustment plan will be agreed (between the coach, parents/carers, and the child) and recorded.
4. The recorded plan will be shared with others on an agreed and needs-to-know basis.
5. Support arrangements will be reviewed periodically and amended as necessary to meet the reasonable needs of the child or the Club.
6. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed through the club's safeguarding procedures.

Access and Participation

Whilst we are committed to support SEND needs, participation, team placement, playing level and activity arrangements will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account:

- Player welfare and safety.
- The needs of the player.
- The needs of the wider team.
- Available resources and support.

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- The nature of the football activity.

Decisions will never be based solely on a diagnosis, disability or perceived limitation.

Monitoring and Review

This Club will review this Commitment and Guidance annually to ensure consistency with:

- Any applicable legal requirements.
- FA guidance.
- Safeguarding requirements.
- Good practice in inclusive sport.
- The needs of Sevenoaks Town FC players and families.

The Club welcomes feedback from players, families, coaches and volunteers to support ongoing improvement.

Contact

If you would like to discuss your child's needs, request support, raise a concern or provide feedback regarding this guidance, please contact:

Name – Club Welfare Officer's

Email Address: welfare@sevenoakstownfc.co.uk

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Guidance for coaches, volunteers and parents

Getting to know the player

Every player is unique and will have their own individual strengths, preferences, and support needs. It is important for coaches to get to know the child as an individual rather than focusing solely on a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis.

Taking time to understand what helps each player feel comfortable, engaged, and successful can support a positive and inclusive sporting experience.

Examples of questions that can be asked to parents/carers, or to the player themselves where appropriate, include:

- What helps the player feel confident to succeed?
- Are there any situations, environments or triggers that could cause dysregulation or stress?
- Do they have any sensory needs we should be aware of?
- What motivates them and helps them stay engaged?
- How do they typically communicate or show when they are struggling?
- What is the best way to support the player if they become overwhelmed or start to struggle?
- Are there any behaviours, communication differences or support needs related to their neurodiversity that would help us better understand and support them?

Inclusive Coaching Strategies

Providing clear information about what to expect can help some neurodivergent players feel more comfortable and prepared. As with all players, individual preferences and support needs will vary. The examples below offer a starting point for considering how best to support your players.

Examples of practical support

- Making the start of sessions predictable each week if possible.
- Explaining what will happen in the session, at the start of each session.
- Give warning before transitions "5 minutes left of this drill".
- Give time for the players to process the instruction before expecting a response.
- Providing visuals if appropriate.
- Focus on positive reinforcement
- Checking the player understands the instruction, without putting the player on the spot in front of others.
- Allowing players to stand/move if needed during instructions – not all players are able to sit still and need to move to listen and stay regulated.
- Check in with players who may have shown signs of struggling, or being dysregulated during the session or match, and offer support before they leave.

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- Where possible, any concerns or issues affecting the player should be addressed before the player leaves the session.

Behaviour and Emotional Regulation

“Behaviour” is a form of communication and may sometimes be influenced by a player's developmental stage, communication needs, disability, emotional wellbeing or additional support needs.

Coaches and volunteers should:

- Seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour.
- Consider whether behaviour may be linked to disability-related needs.
- Review whether reasonable adjustments may be appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with parents and carers.
- Increase the number of coaches, staff or volunteers involved in this activity.
- Seek support from Club Welfare Officer's when required.

At the same time, all players are expected to behave safely and respectfully towards others.

Where behaviour presents a risk to the player or others, or significantly impacts participation, the Club will work with families to identify appropriate support and next steps in line with the Club's Challenging Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may include:

➤ Communication Support

- Using clear and concise language.
- Demonstrating activities visually.
- Providing visual prompts or instructions.
- Allowing additional processing time.
- Using alternative communication methods where appropriate.

➤ Environment and Sensory Support

- Providing access to quieter spaces where available.
- Supporting predictable routines.
- Preparing players for changes to activities.
- Considering sensory demands and reducing them where reasonably practicable.

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➤ **Coaching adjustments**

- Breaking activities into smaller steps.
- Modifying tasks, drills or activities.
- Adjusting equipment where appropriate.
- Allowing flexibility within activities.
- Providing additional support during sessions where feasible.
- Holding additional parent or carer consultations.
- Developing individual support plans where necessary, in partnership with families and relevant club personnel.

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