



Host Family Policy

Version:

X

Date:

July 2022

Approved by:

The Policy Group



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1. AMENDMENT TO STATUS RECORD

Version	Description of Amendment	Authorised by	Date
Issue 1	Policy produced.	The Policy Group	July 22



2. OVERVIEW

- 2.1 This policy outlines the responsibilities of the Company and its employees, workers, contractors, consultants, interns, agency workers, volunteers (“Staff”) and anyone else under the Company’s control who are expected to adhere to the high standards we have set for conducting our business affairs. You will find specific guidance in this policy on the safety, care, and welfare of players in Company appointed accommodation. The behaviour expectations for Players, Parents, and Host Families are also outline within this policy.
- 2.2 The Host Family Policy should be read in relation to all other company policies; however, it specifically relates to our Child Safeguarding Policy. It also relates to the Disciplinary Policy.
- 2.3 The Company values the diversity of its staff and is committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination, please see our Equality and Diversity Policy. All staff must apply and operate this policy fairly and in doing so ensure that there is no discrimination.
- 2.4 This policy must be followed and a failure to act in line with its provisions could result in disciplinary action being taken. This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, worker, volunteer, or service agreement and can be amended at any time.

3. PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY

- 3.1 Our board of directors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day to day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to managers including any necessary training requirements.
- 3.2 All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy to ensure that all staff understand the procedures they are required to follow and to take action when behaviour falls below requirements. Managers will be given training should they need it in order to comply with this policy and support their staff in adhering to policy.

4. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The Safety, care, and welfare of players in ECFC appointed accommodation is of paramount importance to our Club. We aim to identify host families who actively welcome the player and seek to create a second home environment for our players. Our players are treated as a member of the host family.
- 4.2 Our host families must house a minimum of 1 player and a maximum of 2 players per household on the basis that each player in their household is provided with their own room.
- 4.3 Each host family will work in partnership with the player’s family/legal guardians, the Academy and school or college where appropriate to ensure each player is safe, well supported and provided with every opportunity to achieve their ambitions in a football context and in other areas of their lives and development.



- 4.4 The Company does not routinely or regularly offer scholarships and or Apprenticeships to under-18 players who cannot commute from home or family-based accommodation. On occasion, families request these arrangements because they feel it offers the best option for their son and because their son feels strongly about progressing through the Academy. For most children we believe that the best place will always be within their home community living with their family. Consideration for hosting or accommodating players will only be given to those under-18 players where families and the player present a convincing case of need or where players are with the Club on a short-term trial or a player on loan. The Company is committed to ensuring that all players have safe and comfortable a place to live while at the club.
- 4.5 Apprenticeship Players aged 16 to 18 years will sign a two-year scholarship contract with the Company, and, in these circumstances, the Company is sensitive to the enormous step a player has made going from schoolboy training into full time training. These pressures and potential vulnerabilities are increased where Apprentices are accommodated away from home. All host families and staff are alert to the need for any concerns about an accommodated player to be shared without delay with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) so that all those involved in supporting the player through their apprenticeship (including parents, staff at Exeter College, Academy staff and the host family) can ensure appropriate support can be provided and/or action taken. Players' growing independence and maturity as young men will be respected but any safeguarding concerns will be taken very seriously and responded to in accordance with the Company's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.6 Whilst the Company appreciates that positive trusting relationships develop between players and their host family; it is important to recognise that the Academy and its staff are an integral part of the care process and as such must be kept informed of key issues involving the player's wellbeing and happiness. It is also imperative that if a player fails to adhere to the agreement set out in their placement plan and/or the behavioural expectations set out in section 10 of this policy the Company's DSO should be informed without delay.
- 4.7 The players' programme will provide young players with a hectic schedule. They will have to cope with a comprehensive training schedule along with a challenging academic workload. This hectic schedule coupled with the change in living away from home for the first time can put pressure on a players' mental health. Host families and/or parents are alerted to these issues, and it is expected that if they notice that the players start to become homesick, lose confidence and becomes unhappy or if they notice sudden mood swings and/or behavioural changes then please notify the Company's DSO as soon as possible. If these problems are identified as soon as possible then the Company can work with all involved to rectify quickly and effectively in accordance with the Company's Child Safeguarding Protection Policy.

5. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 Parents and legal guardians retain parental responsibility for their Child/ren. They have the power to delegate exercise of their parental responsibility, and it is important to establish clearly what aspects of parental responsibility have been delegated. Parents may want to retain their power of decision-making in different areas, depending on the strength of their



feelings on different issues. A parent who does delegate the exercise of their parental responsibility may change their mind at any time.

- 5.2 Where parents are divorced or separated, the Company will avoid becoming inappropriately involved in disputes between the parents and always maintain a focus upon the player's needs and expressed wishes which will remain central to all decision-making. If parents are not fully in agreement with any proposed arrangements for their child the Company will seek to establish whether both parents share parental responsibility and, if not, give priority to the parent who does.
- 5.3 Mothers always have parental responsibility, as does a father who is or was married to a Child's mother. Unmarried fathers whose name is on a child's birth certificate will automatically acquire parental responsibility if the Child is born after 1 December 2003. Unmarried fathers (before 1 December 2003) and stepparents can only acquire parental responsibility through a court order or by registered agreement with the Child's mother. Any person in whose favour a residence order has been made will also have parental responsibility. In any decision where the consent of a parent with parental responsibility is required, the consent of only one is sufficient. However, the Company rarely agrees arrangements for young players to live away from home and would be very cautious about agreeing any hosting arrangements for Under-18 players where it appears that there is not agreement between each parent and those with parental responsibility as to important decisions of welfare such as education and accommodation. In such event either parent may make an application to court which can take several months to reach conclusion. Where disputes cannot be resolved between parents and, as a result, Staff have concerns about the welfare and impact of parental conflict upon a player external advice will be sought through Children's Social Care in order that appropriate assessment and arrangements can be supported in the interests of the young person.

6. PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 Accommodation for 12 to 15-year-old players is not currently provided.
- 6.2 It is a legal requirement that Children's Social Care must be informed of and agree the care arrangements for any player who is housed away from their parents for 28 consecutive days or more.
- 6.3 Devon County Council Children's Services will be informed of any player at the Club who is aged under 16 and arrangements are being made for accommodation with a host family. This is classed as a private foster care arrangement, but the parents of the player retain parental responsibility as detailed in section 5, above.
- 6.4 In these circumstances the player and their family will be allocated a social worker and the host family is also allocated a social worker from children's services. This is nothing to worry about as it is to ensure that every possible safeguarding consideration is considered and that host families are supported effectively and that the Company is taking its duty of care very seriously. This enables external scrutiny of the care being provided for each child and seeks to ensure that each child's welfare and happiness is promoted.



7. Placement Plans

- 7.1 Each Young Player accommodated and cared for within a host family arrangement must have an individual Placement Plan setting out the following:
- How they will be cared for on a day-to-day basis.
 - How their welfare will be safeguarded and promoted by others during any Substitute Accommodation arrangement (e.g., if the host parent is on holiday or unwell).
 - Arrangements made for their health care and education.
 - Arrangements for contact with parents, legal guardians, relatives, and friends.
 - Arrangements for regular review of the arrangements and how well they are working for each party.
- 7.2 Parents of any under 18 scholar or apprentice must be kept informed regularly about the welfare of their child particularly about their child's health and education.
- 7.3 The development of the Plan will be coordinated by the ECFC Academy DSO, Player Care Lead and Head of Operations, with the player, their parent(s)/legal guardian, and the host family. Behavioural expectations of players and host family members over 16 years of old will be incorporated into placement plans as set out in sections 10 and 11 of this policy with any agreed changes highlighted.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF HOST FAMILIES

- 8.1 Host families are identified through advertising in the Company's website. Any prospective host will be interviewed to explore their suitability to provide care and support for young people (including their professional and personal expertise and experience), motivations for applying, understanding of the pressures faced by young people and specifically those progressing through the Academy and understanding of the role and responsibilities involved in this provision.
- 8.2 The Company is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect the accommodation providers to demonstrate a shared understanding of this commitment. Host families must be alert to diversity issues and the need for boys to establish familiar routines and practices including dietary needs and cultural differences. The Academy DSO will seek to explore whether prospective host families are committed to working with a player's parents to ensure that any diversity issues are addressed in a way that would make a huge difference to a child's sense of being welcome and being valued as an individual e.g., the sharing of favourite food recipes and treats, important elements of home life etc.
- 8.3 Training needs will be assessed with each prospective host family and appropriate learning opportunities and support identified to address any gaps in knowledge and understanding (e.g. safeguarding training; equality and diversity, health and safety, first aid etc.)
- 8.4 Before the Company agrees any hosting arrangement or accommodation, the DSO will interview the family or landlord. Each host family carer will be subject to appropriate safe



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recruitment checks including DBS (criminal record) checks and references in accordance with the club's safe recruitment policy.

- 8.5 The Company will look for suitable residence for our players which will provide a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. The Company will also look to provide a suitable property that will only house our players and no multiple occupancy. This will be done by visiting the residence before taking on board the property as a place for our players to lodge at. The Company will also arrange for the player to visit along with their parents/carers to inspect the property before he makes any commitment to stay there.
- 8.6 The Company will assess the property both internally and externally to identify:
- Any risks or concerns.
 - If the decoration is clean and welcoming.
 - Is the home in a safe area where there are community facilities.
 - If there are appropriate and affordable public transport routes for the Club's Training Ground and Exeter College that run close by at regular intervals.
 - Whether the eating area and cooking facilities are of good standard.
 - If the players would be eating alone or together with the family/landlord.
 - If bathroom facilities are suitable, how many people will use them and how the use of the bathroom will be affected if more than one player is living there.
 - How laundry will be managed.
 - If there is plenty of space for work, rest, and play.
 - Whether the player, if there for any extended period, can adjust the room to provide a personal space and familiar environment.
 - All these issues will be assessed and agreed to ensure arrangements and provision are clear and appropriate.
 - Opportunities will also be explored in relation to the player being able to have visitors while living at the property and parental boundaries around curfews, relationships, and other key issues around a young person's social development. If communal areas like the living room are available or restricted for players usage - are communal areas provided for the players to meet and whether they are of a good standard.
 - Fire precautions will be looked at including the fitting and maintenance of smoke alarms.

9. JOINING A HOST FAMILY

- 9.1 The DSO, Player Care Lead and Operations Manager will consider the player's personality and support needs before deciding which of our accommodation providers is best suited to a particular player and which players can be suitably housed together. Once a decision has been made then this is discussed with the player and their family.
- 9.2 The player and their family are then introduced to the host family at the host family's house by the DSO. All parties must be comfortable with the proposed arrangements and can talk through any concerns and issues and explore the accommodation and local community including transport links and any potential risks. The introduction is essential for the player, player's family, and the host family as they all get to know each other face to face. More than



one visit may be required especially if parents are separated and wish to assess the proposed arrangements independently.

- 9.3 Accommodation arrangements and the individual care plan must be in full agreement between the Academy, host family and the players' parents for all under-18 players. For those who have not yet reached their 16th birthday these arrangements will also be overseen by Devon County Council Children's Social Care services as outlined in section 6 above.
- 9.4 On a mutually suitable date the player then moves into the accommodation.
- 9.5 The player is then monitored on a fortnightly basis for the first 4 months by the DSO and/or the Player Care Lead to see how the player is settling in. After 4 months, if the placement is working well, the monitoring is changed to once a month. All monitoring including any concerns arising and how these will be addressed/resolved will be in the form of a recorded review.

10. Accommodated Player Behaviour Agreement

- 10.1 The young player shall demonstrate conduct and behaviour to a high standard, and this will include showing courtesy and respect to all persons at the Home (not limited to the Host Family), the home itself, the appropriate treatment of furniture and appropriate use of language at all times. This may include 'house rules' such as removal of outdoor footwear on entry to the Home.
- 10.2 The young player shall not frequent public houses, nightclubs or the like and the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden. However, young players are permitted to use public houses to view football matches or other sporting occasions provided they are accompanied by the host family.
- 10.3 The young player will not smoke or have any contact with drugs even for medicinal purposes without informing the club, unless by direction of a Medical Practitioner, Sports Scientist, or Physiotherapist.
- 10.4 The young players will not use 'Legal Highs' i.e. - Nitrous Oxide - known as Balloons, Hippy Crack, Laughing Gas, Cheeky Chargers etc.
- 10.5 The young player shall be within the Home by 9.30pm on any day prior to a match; by 10.00pm between Sunday and Thursday and by 10.30pm on Saturdays unless involved in Club approved external activities.
- 10.6 The night before a competitive match the young player shall not participate in any physical activity unless approved by a member of the Academy Management Team.
- 10.7 The young player shall not be away from the Home overnight without prior approval from the DSO to the host family.
- 10.8 The young player shall inform the host family of any special dietary needs or choices and notify them a minimum of 24 hours in advance if they wish to vary the normal mealtime.



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Young players are required to eat all evening meals with the Host Family before going out for the evening except by agreement.

- 10.9 The young player should eat meals at the same time and with the host family where possible and engage in conversation to improve social skills and enhance relationships. The young player should also play their part in cleaning/washing up after meals.
- 10.10 The host family must always permit the parent or guardian of the young player access in the accommodation and the young player is expected to make all reasonable efforts to advise the host family of any expected visits.
- 10.11 No guests are permitted in the accommodation without the express permission of the host family. Under no circumstances should guests be allowed in the young player's bedroom the only exception being the young player's parents or siblings.
- 10.12 The young player must keep their own bedroom and any other room used by them tidy at all times.
- 10.13 The young players own room and the home in general may be inspected by any club official at any reasonable time, without prior notice to the host family or the young players.
- 10.14 The young player must ensure that any clean laundry is stored tidily and soiled laundry either placed in laundry bags or where directed by the host family.
- 10.15 The young player must ensure that any shared bathroom facility is cleaned after they use it and all toiletries stored in the appropriate place or in the young players own room.
- 10.16 All music/television noise is to be at a sensible level as directed by the home rules and turned off by 10.30pm at the latest or earlier if requested by the host family.
- 10.17 The young player shall only use their mobile telephone after 10.30pm in an emergency.
- 10.18 The young player's internet/computer usage shall be of a reasonable duration and shall cease by 10.30pm at the latest or earlier if requested by the host family. The young player may not access any inappropriate websites, which shall include (but will not be limited to) sites advocating violence, racism, adult themes, guns, sexism, homophobia.
- 10.19 The young player should turn off all electric appliances when not in use.
- 10.20 The young player is to follow the same behavioural guidelines if visiting players at other host family addresses.
- 10.21 The young player is to inform the host family and the Academy staff immediately if he has lost or misplaced their copy of the host family's house keys.
- 10.22 If the player has lost or broken any personal items belonging to the host family, they will be expected to replace the item like for like or pay for a replacement. This also includes lost house keys or the cost to replace locks. If the player is unable to pay for a replacement, then the host family will contact the club to resolve.



10.23 All players are allowed to travel back home to their families as long as they have informed their host family and informed the Academy at least 24 hours in advance. Travel arrangements must be agreed between the host family and the player's parents.

11. Host Family Behaviour Expectations

- 11.1 All host family members over the age of 16 will sign the host family undertaking and will agree to act in accordance with the Company's Child Safeguarding Policies at all times.
- 11.2 If any member of the host family see conduct, hear comments, or are in any way alerted to concerns about an adult in contact with a child then they should raise this with the Company DSO for further guidance in the first instance.
- 11.3 However, if there are any concerns about a child's immediate safety or welfare a referral to the Police or Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub should be made and then the DSO should be informed straight away. <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-in-devon/>
- 11.4 Host families are required to contribute to the drafting of the Placement Plan for each player, including highlighting any 'house rules', which will be agreed by all parties before any placement can commence.
- 11.5 Host families will be required to attend Safeguarding Children training, first aid training and other meetings/learning opportunities to support their role and responsibilities as requested by the Company.
- 11.6 Host families are required to report any persistent infringements of house rules to the Company.
- 11.7 Host families will provide a single bedroom for each young player placed, unless it has been agreed in advance by the Club to permit two players to share.
- 11.8 The host family should always inform the club in advance if the player's bedroom is required for another person whilst the young player is on leave, away playing or is legitimately absent from the host family home but is still registered as living there e.g., player is resident.
- 11.9 All host families will be expected to befriend, nurture and support young players, including them wherever possible in the social activities of the household, especially mealtimes, the watching of TV and playing of music etc. They should be given a feeling of belonging within the family.
- 11.10 The host family are entrusted to maintain a professional caring relationship with the young player and under no circumstance is any form of personal intimate relationship permitted, irrespective of the age of either the young player or the person from the household, whether a relative or any visiting friend of the family.



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- 11.11 The Duty of care that exists is implicit. If a relationship appears to be developing, then immediate contact with the Company's DSO is necessary so that alternative living arrangements can be sought.
- 11.12 The host family will follow the dietary guidelines provided by the Academy staff at the Company and this will include ensuring that there is appropriate food available for the young player to have access to upon return to the accommodation following evening matches or training.
- 11.13 The host family will not offer or encourage young players to drink, smoke, or use any drug that has not been prescribed by the Company's physiotherapist or by a doctor.
- 11.14 The host family will contact the Company if they have any suspicion that the young player may be using alcohol or drugs.
- 11.15 The host family will notify the club contact immediately if a young player fails to return by the return time.
- 11.16 The host family will contact the club if a young player intends to stay away overnight.
- 11.17 The host family will at all reasonable times permit the club contact to inspect the young player's room and those shared areas without prior notification or warning.
- 11.18 The host family agrees to respect the privacy of the young player and generally will not enter the bedroom unless invited to by the young player, or if it has reasonable grounds to do so.
- 11.19 The host family will also ensure that the bathroom used by the young player is lockable and will never enter this room whilst the young player is using it.
- 11.20 The host family will bear in mind the need for the young player to rest and recuperate and will therefore restrict noise after 10.30pm.
- 11.21 The host family agree to maintain the basic cleaning of the young players room and to provide all appropriate bedding/towels. In addition, the host family will ensure that the young player has access to laundry facilities and will encourage the young player to be involved in the laundering of their own clothing.
- 11.22 The host family must not share prohibited sites on the internet with a young player. Wherever possible they should encourage the safe use of social media by the young player.
- 11.23 It is unusual for the host family to be required to transport the young players. If a member of the host family transports a young player, the driver must ensure that the vehicle is road worthy, they are fully insured and that the club have approved them as a driver.
- 11.24 Under no circumstances are the host family to lend money to the young player or their family. Nor must the host family seek even short term to borrow money from the young player.
- 11.25 You must never physically chastise a young player.



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- 11.26 Everyone living or staying in the family home must wear appropriate nightwear when in communal areas, for example when visiting the bathroom in the night.
- 11.27 The club requires every host family to make the Company DSO aware of any concerns they have regarding a young player, whether it is health, well-being or conduct related. Any contact made will be kept confidential unless it raises a Child Protection concern and a referral to the Local Authority is deemed necessary.
- 11.28 If any contact is made through club appointed accommodation or accommodation providers become aware of contact by representatives of any other club, the media or any unknown third party, such contact should be referred to the Academy Operations Manager.
- 11.29 If the player themselves has any contact with anyone from any other Professional Club, then the Academy Operations Manager must be informed of this immediately.
- 11.30 If players use the telephone in Company appointed accommodation, itemised billing should be arranged by the host family with the service provider.
- 11.31 Accommodation providers are to adhere to the individual placement plan for all players in their care. If any issues arise about the player themselves, their parents or the player's school then the Academy is to be informed immediately.
- 11.32 All accommodation providers are required to complete a full DBS check at the expense of the club.
- 11.33 All accommodation providers are to have undertaken an appropriate recognised and certificated safeguarding and protecting children workshop and this training need will be facilitated and paid for by the club. This training should be updated at least every three years.

12. Parent Behaviour Expectations

- 12.1 Parents are to adhere to the individual Placement Plan agreed between themselves, the Company, and the host family.
- 12.2 Parents are to encourage the player to interact with the host family as much as possible and encourage the player to demonstrate conduct and behaviour to a high standard which will include showing courtesy and respect to all persons at the Home (not limited to the Host Family), the home itself, the appropriate treatment of furniture and appropriate use of language at all times.
- 12.3 Parents are to show courtesy and respect to all persons at the host family address.
- 12.4 Parents are to give the host family at least 24 hours' notice of any potential visit from themselves or permitted members of the family.
- 12.5 Parents are to give the host family at least 24 hours' notice if the player is going to stay overnight at the family home also informing them how the player will be transported to and from the host family address.



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- 12.6 Parents are to discuss any minor concerns or issues they may have with the host family in a calm manner in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved, then the parents are to contact the club in the second instance.
- 12.7 Parents are to work together with the host family and the club with regard to the player's education.
- 12.8 Parents are to ensure that the player always has the host family's house keys on them and is to ensure that these keys are returned to the host family immediately after the players has left the host family.
- 12.9 All players must be able to access the accommodation at all times.



Appendix A

Key Contacts: Exeter City Football Club Safeguarding Team

Director Lead for Safeguarding: Clive Harrison

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Email: clive.harrison@ecfc.co.uk

ECFC Designated Safeguarding Lead: Justin Quick

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ECFC Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Simon Snell

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Email: simon.snell@ecfc.co.uk

ECFC Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer: Josh Cann

Telephone: 07736 912049

Email: josh.cann@ecfc.co.uk

Match Day Designated Safeguarding Officer: Kay Crawford

Telephone: 01392 413951 (Matchdays Only)

Email: kay.crawford@ecfc.co.uk

EFL Safeguarding Manager: Alex Richards

Telephone: 01772 325940

Email: arichards@efl.com

Devon County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

Telephone: 0345 155 1071

Email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk