



Port Vale Football Club

Guidance for Bringing Children to Football Matches / Enjoying your visit

Version control

Document Title:	Guidance for bringing Children to Football Matches Policy 2022/2023
Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Rich Talbot
Reference:	Mar 2021

Document review

Last reviewed	Position
December 2022	Review & Update policy to include “Lost Child Meeting Point” information

Version history

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	Mar 2021	Tim Bailey	Board	New Policy
1.1	Aug 2021	Tim Bailey	Board	Revised version
1.2	Aug 2022	Tim Bailey	Board	Revised version
1.3	Dec 2022	Rich Talbot	Board	Revised version

The purpose and Scope of this Policy statement

Guidance for Bringing Children to Matches and enjoying your visit. (Review Aug 2023)

This Policy is for use across the club and is to be observed by all those who attend football matches with members of their family. The Policy exists to ensure that best practice is promoted and adhered to. Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are under the remit of this policy which include:

- Port Vale Football Club and the Vale Park Stadium
- Port Vale Foundation Trust
- Port Vale First Team
- Port Vale Academy and Youth Development Teams
- Port Vale Ladies Team
- Port Vale Retail Store
- HUBB Foundation

Introduction

Port Vale Football Club endeavours to ensure that attending a football match is a positive experience for everyone. When considering whether to bring your child to a match please consider their age, time of the match including both start and finish, weather conditions, crowds and any other applicable risks.

Stadium Age Restrictions

When attending football matches at the Vale Park Stadium, Port Vale FC have several rules relating to any child or young person visiting same:

- A child is anyone that is under the age of 18 years (they have not yet reached their 18th Birthday).
- A child or young person attending a match must have a valid ticket regardless of age.
- Anyone under the age of 12 years is eligible for concessions through our Junior Valiant club but must be accompanied by an adult. (Anyone accompanying someone under the age of 12 years must be over 18 years)
- A child or young person aged between 12 and 17 years are eligible for junior concessions.
- Any young adult aged between 18 and 21 years is eligible for a young adult concession.

*Please note: these rules may be amended where a third party uses the stadium for non-football events. All current ticketing prices are contained on the Port Vale club website via this link <https://www.port-vale.co.uk>

Weather Conditions

Throughout the football season weather conditions change considerably and visitors are likely to experience all weather types.

- Early and late season may mean high temperatures and strong sunshine – parts of the stadium may be in full sun for long periods of time.
- Mid-winter games, especially at night, may mean sub-zero temperatures, rain, wind and snow. Frost and ice underfoot may also be an extra hazard for those carrying or walking with small children so be very careful in cold, wet, or windy conditions. Babies and small children can become cold very quickly, even at times of the year where adults feel that it is warm outside. They will more than likely be inactive at the stadium and get cold quickly so keep an eye on your child - Don't forget – unusually quiet with bright red skin doesn't necessarily mean they are warm and happy; this could be a sign of hypothermia (their skin will be cold). If you do choose to bring your child to a match, remember to dress them in appropriate layers.

We want you and your child to enjoy your visit. If you are bringing a child to the stadium, think about their needs first, if you cannot guarantee their comfort or safety then please consider other childcare options so that you can still attend and enjoy the game if possible.

Noise

Football matches are noisy events, the noise levels can go up and down throughout the game. Small children are more sensitive to noise and thus are more prone to hearing damage. Whilst long term damage from the noise at football grounds is unlikely, the peak sounds can reach the same levels experienced in a nightclub. Ear plugs or muffs may help to protect the child's hearing and may also help to keep them a little bit warmer on cold days or evenings.

Some children may also find the cheering, singing and chanting in some parts of the stadium a little frightening and unfortunately there may also be some spectators occasionally using language that is inappropriate for young people to hear.

Racist Language

It makes no difference who hears this type of language, if the person **perceives** it to be of a racist or offensive nature then it is. This is a criminal offence and should be reported to a Safety Steward at the soonest opportunity. The 'Kick it Out' movement is available for reporting, and this can be done by going to the website via this link <https://www.kickitout.org>.

Stay Alert

Footballs are hard, being struck by a ball can hurt and even cause injury. In many areas of spectator seating there is a risk of being struck by a ball from the pitch. This risk is escalated behind the goals particularly during team warm-ups when there are multiple balls on the pitch that may come from any angle. Please ensure that you and your child stay alert to the possibility of this.

What to do if you have a concern at the match

If you have a concern about a child or young person, then contact the Safeguarding Team at the club at any time. On a match day please do not hesitate to report a concern to one of our Safety Stewards who will notify a member of the Safeguarding Team, who are present on match days and who are headed by the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the club.

Staff at Port Vale FC are trained and experienced in providing a safe environment for all our visitors but where there are large gatherings of people there are risks. As a result, we have developed a safeguarding code of conduct which is attached at Appendix A.

Authority from Port Vale Board and acceptance of Policy

Signed by:

_____	Name Board member	Review Date:
_____	SSM	Review Date:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or following learning outcomes due to a significant incident, or when legislation / statutory guidance changes, by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.



Appendix A

Port Vale Football Club



Match Day Safeguarding Code of Conduct

- Anyone under the age of 12 years must be accompanied by an adult, an adult is anyone over the age of 18 years.
- Parents or other responsible adults have primary responsibility for the safety of their child/young person who accompanies them. You should always keep them close and always be aware of their location during your visit.
- Please familiarise yourself with the “Lost Child Meeting Point” clearly signed within each section of the Stadium and have a plan to meet there if you get separated. Ensure your child/young person is aware of this location.
- Should you get separated from your child/young person please contact a Safety Steward immediately and listen to announcements over the stadium speakers.
- On a match day the Designated Safeguarding Officer, along with a number of Safeguarding Stewards, will be available to help. They are identifiable by their pink coloured high visibility vests.
- Other Safety Stewards are situated around the stadium in high visibility clothing for your safety and confidence.
- Our Safety Stewards are trained in how to deal with lost children, please ensure your child/young person knows not to go off with a spectator they do not know.
- In an emergency, please ensure your child/young person is aware what to do including how to evacuate the stadium and where to meet up with you.

- Should you see anything that causes you a concern or does not look right please report this to a Safety Steward.
- Ensure that your child/young person knows who to contact should they become lost or worried.

Remember if something doesn't look or feel right, it probably isn't.....Report it!