

FC Cougars



2021 - 2022

Club Members' Handbook

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FC Cougars Club Members Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to FC Cougars Club Handbook. The content of this handbook outlines the following:

- Club rules
- Code of Conducts & Responsibilities
- H&S and Accident Policy
- Equality Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy

We as a club fully support the FA Respect campaign and our three codes of conduct (Players, Parents/Spectators, and Team Manager/Coaches) are derived from this.

FC Cougars philosophy is to create a safe and positive environment where fun, learning and autonomy takes place for girls and boys.

This handbook is designed to assist players and members of the club in understanding how the club is operated and the important role everyone has in, ensuring our philosophy is followed.

This handbook must be read and understood by all players, parents/guardians and any other applicable family members.

The club always requires additional volunteers to assist with both the running and the activities of the club. Anyone is welcome to volunteer and all assistance is gratefully received. If you would like to help our club (in any capacity) please contact the Club Secretary at graham@fccougars.com

Club Rules

1. Name

FC Cougars shall be referred to as the “Club”, in this document.

2. Status of Rules

These Rules (the “Club Rules”) form a binding agreement between each member of the “Club”.

3. Club Board

The Board of the “club” is as follows, details of current members can be found on the Club website.

- **Chairman:** John Lambourne
- **Secretary:** Graham Loader
- **Welfare Officer:** Graham Loader
- **Treasurer:** John Loader

The Club Board shall be responsible for the management of all the affairs of the Club. Decisions of the Club Board shall be made by a simple majority of those attending the Club Board meeting. The Club Board will meet on a regular basis to discuss any required club business. The Chairman of the Club Board meeting shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie. Meetings of the Club Board shall be chaired by the Chairman or in their absence the Club Secretary or welfare officer.

The club must at all times adhere to the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association and the County Association to which the Club is affiliated, the Club Board shall have the power to decide all questions and disputes arising in respect of any issue concerning the Club Rules.

4. Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held in each year to:

- Receive a report of the activities of the Club over the previous year
- Receive a report of the Club’s finances over the previous year
- Consider any other business.

Team Managers/Coaches are requested to attend the AGM.

5. Membership

Membership of the “Club” entitles players to:

- Attend weekly training sessions as arranged by the team managers at the arranged location.
- Be registered for any applicable leagues, which the “Club” has entered.
- Be available for selection for matches (however it does not guarantee selection).
- The team managers/coaches are only responsible for the registered members of the “club”.

6. Fees

Each “playing” member of the “Club” shall pay a season membership fee, which is due in the last week in July to complete registration before the next playing season.

However, in the event of an increase of players wishing to join the “Club” at the start of each playing season, Team managers can create a window of opportunity whereby “Club” signing on forms can be issued and returned with full membership fees at an early date and closed before the last week of July.

Non-payment of the “Club” membership subscriptions by the end of July will result in the player being suspended until the outstanding amount is paid.

Payment of fees cover membership of the club for the season that runs from 1 August to 31 July. The club may reduce membership fees for those joining midway through the playing season.

The “Club” does not intend to profit from any membership fees and will budget for the season based on registered player numbers. Any membership fee refund requests, due to a member leaving the “Club” during the season, will be reviewed by the “Club” committee. Partial refunds will be at the Club’s discretion to ensure the “Club” is not out of pocket due to insurances, affiliation, and league fees and commitment to match and training costs. Refunds will only be considered on return of playing kit and any club issued training kit or equipment. No refunds will be issued after 31 January of that season.

7. Additional Fees

If training is required to take place indoors or under floodlights, due to weather and/or situations out of the control of the “club” a payment might be requested for indoor or floodlit training.

Additional payments apply for entry in optional tournaments.

The “club” makes no arrangement for transport to and from matches.

8. Teams

The “Club” endeavours to run teams at all age groups and where possible multiple teams per age group to allow for the maximum amount of players to participate in organised football.

When there are multiple teams in an age group, players may be separated in social (meaning fun and enjoyment) and development (meaning progression) teams, due to the change in the game format and structure.

Players who play in the teams need to complete League registration forms. Only players registered with the Club and the League are allowed to participate in organised matches.

Details of current team managers/coaches can be found on the Club website.

9. Attendance

Players of the “club” are expected to attend the arranged training sessions. This is important part of the players and teams development.

Parents/Guardians are expected to stay for the duration of the training/match, unless agreed by the Team Manager.

Players are expected to attend training session and any matches with the necessary kit including:

- Suitable Footwear
- Shin Pads (Players without shin pads, will not be allowed to play/train)
- Drink (Water - No fizzy drinks)
- Warm Clothing and Coat (Weather depending)
- Any applicable Medical needs (Inhalers, Auto-Injector (Epi-Pen))

If a player is unable to attend a match, it is the responsibility of the player and/or parents to inform the team manager/coach at the earliest opportunity.

The “club” reserves the right to de-register a player from the relevant league, due to persistent failure to attend training sessions, so that others may use the limited number of registrations available.

10. Transport to and from Matches and Training Sessions

It is entirely the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are provided with transport both to and from matches and training sessions.

The Club can take no responsibility for accidents which may take place whilst members are travelling in other parents or Committee members' cars or other vehicles.

Parents are asked to be punctual when dropping off and collecting players from training and matches. Please advise the team manager/coach if you are running late at the earliest opportunity.

Players must be dropped off and collected in person for matches and training, it is not acceptable for Players to be walking unsupervised through car parks and/or roads.

11. Discipline

The “club” will provide an environment for players to develop their football skills in a safe and enjoyable way. It is expected that all players will act in a sensible and respectful manner towards all other players and club officials.

All players attending training session are to involve themselves fully in the training without argument or dissent.

During matches, the “club” expect all players to conduct themselves reasonably, in a sporting manner and within the rules of the “club”, league and the Football Association.

If a player or club official fails to act in an acceptable manner, it may result the following sanctions taking place:

- Exclusion from training sessions
- Exclusion from league and/or cup teams
- De-registration from league teams

The Final sanction for unreasonable behaviour will be exclusion from the “club”. Should this sanction be considered then it will be decided upon by the Club Board/Committee.

Any appeal against discipline decision will be the Club Board/Committee whose decision shall be final.

Any fine for a booking or red card received by a member playing for the club must be reimbursed within 21 days of the club receiving the fine. Failure to pay the fine may result in the member being suspended by the club from playing or training until the fine is paid in full.

12. Kit

All football kit and equipment, which is supplied by the “club” must be kept in good order and is the responsibility of the coaches and players to make sure this happens.

Kit provided for the use by the “club” shall:

- Only issued once all the required membership forms are completed and returned and the annual membership payment is received in full. Kit will be issued on a first come basis.
- Be only used for club league, friendly, cup matches no training.
- Be returned at the end of each playing season or upon request by the “club”
- Lost kit will only be replaced at the player’s own expense.

13. Support

Football is a spectator sport as well as a participant sport. The “club” and particular the players benefit from touchline support. We encourage family and friends to support their children on the touchline whenever possible.

While it is appreciated that football is an emotional and passionate game, parents/family members/friends are requested to refrain from coaching on the touchline, to avoid conflict of managers/coaches instructions during training or matches.

14. Social Media

The “club” appreciates that social media is a popular form of communication. Social Media may be used by the club to promote the club and to communicate. No individuals will be identified in any public communications, and photographs and videos will only be published with appropriate consent. The Club request that all members ask permission before publishing items on social media and follow our guidelines to not identify any individuals.

15. Code of Conducts & Responsibilities

PLAYERS

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game. As a player, you have a big part to play. That's why The FA is asking every player to follow a Respect Code of Conduct. When playing football,

I will:

- *Always play to the best of my ability*
- *Play fairly – I won't cheat, complain or waste time*
- *Respect my team-mates, the other team, the referee or my coach/manager*
- *Play by the rules, as directed by the referee*
- *Shake hands with the other team and referee at the end of the game*
- *Listen and respond to what my coach/team manager tells me*
- *Talk to someone I trust or the club welfare officer if I'm unhappy about anything at my club*

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/ all of the following actions may be taken by my "club", County FA or The FA:

I may:

- *Be required to apologise to my team-mates, the other team, referee or team manager/coach*
- *Receive a formal warning from the coach or the club*
- *Be dropped or substituted*
- *Be suspended from training*
- *Be required to leave the club*

In addition:

- *My club, County FA or The FA may make my parent or carer aware of any infringements of the Code of Conduct*
- *The FA/County FA could impose a fine and suspension against my club.*

SPECTATORS AND PARENTS/CARERS

Remember children's football is a time for them to develop their technical, physical, tactical and social skills. Winning isn't everything. Play your part and observe The FA's Respect Code of Conduct for spectators and parents/ carers at all times.

I will:

- *Remember that children play for FUN.*
- *Applaud effort and good play as well as success*
- *Always Respect the match officials' decisions*
- *Remain outside the field of play and within the Designated Spectators' Area (where provided)*
- *Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do*
- *Encourage the players to Respect the opposition, referee and match officials*
- *Avoid criticising a player for making a mistake – mistakes are part of learning*
- *Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour.*

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/ all of the following actions may be taken by my club, County FA or The FA:

I may be:

- *Issued with a verbal warning from a club or league official*
- *Required to meet with the club, league or CFA Welfare Officer*
- *Required to meet with the club*
- *Obligated to undertake an FA education course*
- *Obligated to leave the match venue by the club*
- *Requested by the club not to attend future games*
- *Suspended or have my club membership removed*
- *Required to leave the club along with any dependents*

In addition:

- *The FA/County FA could impose a fine and/or suspension on the club*

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.

TEAM MANAGER/COACH

On and off the field, I will:

- Show Respect to others involved in the game including match officials, opposition players, coaches, managers, officials and spectators
- Adhere to the laws and spirit of the game
- Promote Fair Play and high standards of behaviour
- Always Respect the match official's decision
- Never enter the field of play without the referee's permission
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Never take part in a training session in a way which could cause injury (adults must not take part in any training matches and adult/children matches are not permitted).
- For non-competitive football (U6s to U11s) coaches will do their best to give all players equal game time
- Ensure all players, in both competitive and non-competitive football, play a minimum of 50% of matches in which they are selected to play.
- When working with players, team managers and coaches will:
 - Make fun and progression the focus of matches and training
 - Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning
 - Explain exactly what they expect of players and what they can expect from the manager/coach

Responsibilities

- All team managers and assistant coaches must:
 - Have a valid CRC in place
 - Have a valid FA safeguarding qualification
- Ensure an FA qualified first aider attends every training session or match.
- Ensure every player has completed the required forms and understands the Club codes of conduct.
- Ensure only League registered players take part in any League organised fixture

- Ensure football kit is only issued when all required forms are completed and the annual membership fee has been received in full.
- Communicate with the Club Secretary regarding the attendance and registration of players, and any pitch/training requirements.
- Communicate with the Welfare Officer any safeguarding concerns
- To arrange all home and away friendlies/league matches, liaising with other clubs/managers/referees to confirm locations and times of games.
- To cancel training/matches in advance if the pitch is unplayable or the conditions are not considered safe considering the age of the children
- Communicate via email, text, social media group, or the club website to parents/players about training and fixtures, ensuring if matches or training are cancelled that as much notice as possible is given.

Health and Safety & Accident Policy

In line with best practice, the club have carried out Risk Assessments of all normal club activities, a copy of these are available from the Club Secretary. The Club will carry out further Risk assessments should things change or we undertake other activities.

First Aid Kits are always available and a qualified Emergency First Aid person will always be in attendance at all training and matches.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

In line with best practice the club has developed the following accident procedure for all team managers/Coaches whilst all players are under their care. The procedure is as follows:

Any player feeling sick should be settled to one side with adequate supervision. Consideration should be given to contacting the parents/carers dependent on Childs wishes or condition.

In all cases of illness/injury a first aid shall be rendered so far as knowledge and skill admit – the patient shall be removed from any hazards.

In the event of any injury the adult must remain with the casualty and send for help. Do not move anyone who has fallen heavily until a qualified First Aid person can make a full check. Report any serious injury immediately to the Team Manager/Coach (i.e. head or facial injury). Consideration should be given to immediately contacting parents/carers.

Take care over minor symptoms when there are specific know circumstances (e.g. asthma, allergies). A list of children with specific medical conditions shall be made know to all coaching staff/team managers.

After treating minor scrapes and bruises make sure the treatment is recorded and that you tell the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.

Any injury, which needs to be reported to a parent/carer, must be recorded on the Accident Report Form. This form should also be completed for any accident to an adult.

If further medical/hospital attention is needed the parents/carers shall be notified at once and asked to transport the casualty. If parent/carers cannot be contacted the emergency contact number (999) shall be used. The casualty shall always be accompanied by a responsible adult (i.e. coach or team manager).

Where necessary a child may be taken home, to a Doctors Surgery or to the Casualty Department by a responsible adult (i.e. coach or team manager)

Accident forms and guidance notes are available on the clubs website.

Equality Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect and that the "Club" is equally accessible to them all. The "Club" is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Football belongs to and should be enjoyed by, anyone who wants to participate in it.

Our commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability and to encourage equal opportunities. This policy is fully supported by the Club Board who are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The "Club", in all its activities will not discriminate, or in any way treat anyone less favourably on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion.

The "Club" will ensure that it treats people fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities.

The "Club" will not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of an individual, which for the purposes of this policy and the actions and sanction applicable is regarded as discrimination. This includes sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal. or belief, ability or disability. It means that the "Club" will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs. The "Club" is committed to taking positive action where inequalities exist and to the development of a programme of ongoing training and awareness raising events and activities in order to promote the eradication of discrimination and promote equality in football.

The "Club" is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members to abide and adhere to these policies and the requirements of the relevant equalities legislation - Race

Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as well as any amendments to these acts and any new legislation. The "Club" commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims when brought to its attention, of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice stop and sanctions are imposed as appropriate.

Child Safeguarding Policy

SAFEGUARDING

1. The Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity. We subscribe to The Football Association's (The FA) Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.
2. The key principles of The FA Safeguarding Children Policy are that:
 - the child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
 - all children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief
 - all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
 - Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.
3. We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. The Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.
4. The Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA

Handbook) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, club official or medical staff.

5. We endorse and adopt The FA's Responsible Recruitment guidelines for recruiting volunteers and we will:
 - Specify what the role is and what tasks it involves
 - Request identification documents
 - As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them. Ask for and follow up with 2 references before appointing someone
 - Require an FA CRB Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with FA policy.
6. All current Club members who are regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children and young people will be required to complete a CRB Enhanced Disclosure via The FA CRB.
7. If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of the Club guidance will be sought from The Football Association. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via The FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure and that all decisions will be made in the best interests of children and young people. It is accepted that The FA aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children and to minimise the risk of 'grooming' within football.
8. The Club supports The FA's Whistle blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can 'whistle blow' by contacting The FA Safeguarding Team on 0844 980 8200 4787, by writing to The FA Case Manager at The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW10 9EQ or alternatively by going direct to the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC. The Club encourages everyone to know about it and utilise it if necessary.
9. The Club has appointed a Club Welfare Officer in line with The FA's role profile and required completion of the Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officers Workshop. The post holder will be involved with Welfare Officer training provided by The FA and/or County FA. The Club Welfare Officer is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person. The Club Welfare Officer will liaise directly with the County FA (CFA) Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst club members.
10. We acknowledge and endorse The FA's identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the Club Welfare Officer in cases of serious bullying the CFA Welfare Officer may be contacted.
11. Respect codes of conduct for Players, Parents/ Spectators, Officials and Coaches have been implemented by The Club. In order to validate these Respect codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level and

acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by the County FA in more serious circumstances.

12. Reporting your concerns about the welfare of a child or young person. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility if you are worried about a child it is important that you report your concerns – no action is not an option.

13. If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer.

- If the issue is one of poor practice the Club Welfare Officer will either:
 - deal with the matter themselves or
 - seek advice from the CFA Welfare Officer
- If the concern is more serious – possible child abuse (where possible) contact the CFA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Social Care.
- If the child needs immediate medical treatment take them to a hospital or call an ambulance and tell them this is a child protection concern. Let your Club Welfare Officer know what action you have taken, they in turn will inform the CFA Welfare Officer.
- If at any time you are not able to contact your Club Welfare Officer or the matter is clearly serious then you can either:
 - contact your CFA Welfare Officer directly
 - contact the Police or Children's Social Care
 - call the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

ANTI-BULLYING

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

As a club we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

1. Objectives of this Policy

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying **will not be** tolerated.

2. Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- has possessions go “missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

3. Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

4. What to do if bullying is reported?

- Report bullying incidents to the Club complaints Officer or a member of the club board (Serious cases will be passed on to the Welfare Officer)
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team
- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club rules.

5. Recommended club action

If we as a club decide it is appropriate to deal with the situation we will follow the procedure outlined below:

- Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (made up from the Welfare Officer and the Chairman) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

- The same two persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
- If bullying has in their view taken place the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action (i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues). Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club board should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
- All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process (i.e. the warning).

6. In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

- The County Welfare Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate; this may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation
- is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme maybe recommended.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

You may also wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

Guidance for parents/carers

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

www.stoptextbully.com

www.beatbullying.org.uk

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

Guidance for young people

www.youngstonewall.org.uk/

www.cybermentors.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

Complaints Policy

1. In the event that any member feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way, or that the Club Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct has been broken, they should follow the procedures below.

2. They should report the matter to the Club Welfare Officer, providing:
 - Details of what, when, and where the occurrence took place
 - Any witness statement and names
 - Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way
 - Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made
 - A preference for a solution to the incident

3. The Club Board will sit for any hearings that are requested and will have the power to:
 - Warn as to future conduct and agree a joint improvement plan with the member
 - Suspend from membership
 - Remove from membership any person found to have broken the Club's Policies/Rules or Codes of Conduct

4. The Club Board decision is final; there is no appeals procedure.