

# PITSHANGER FOOTBALL CLUB



## RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Updated September 2023

# 1 RULES

## 1.1 General

1. Pitshanger Football Club's activities shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, policies and procedures, under the direction of the Club's Executive Committee and in accordance with the Club's Constitution.

## 1.2 Rules, Regulations and Status

2. The Club shall have the status of an Affiliated Member Club of The Football Association by virtue of its membership of The Middlesex County Youth Football Association. The Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and parent County Association and any League or Competition to which the Club is affiliated for the time being shall be deemed to be incorporated into the Club Rules.
3. The Executive Committee shall affiliate the Club to any other organisation which it considers to be beneficial to Club members in meeting the stated objects of the Club (e.g. The National Association of Clubs for Young People and the Middlesex Young People's Clubs).
4. These Rules, Policies and Procedures form a binding agreement between each member of the Club.

## 1.3 Executive Committee

5. In accordance with the Club's Constitution, the Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers (the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) along with not less than four and not more than twelve members elected at the Annual General Meeting.
6. Immediately following the AGM, the Executive Committee shall elect, from amongst its membership, members to undertake the following roles for the duration of that season: - Vice Chairman, Communications, Social Engagement, Fundraising, Welfare Officer, Administrator and such other roles as may be considered necessary from time to time. No person shall be responsible for more than two roles at any one time. The names of the appointees will be notified on the Club's website and will be listed in the 2023/24 PFC handbook.

## 1.4 Membership, Conduct and Fees

7. Applications for membership of the Club from young people and their parents/guardians and other helpers shall be considered by the Executive Committee following receipt by the Honorary Secretary of a completed application form and appropriate annual subscription. This subscription and other necessary fees will be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee, as reasonably necessary to fulfil the objectives of the Club.
8. The Club Records and Membership Secretary shall maintain a Membership Register which shall be considered confidential and covered by the relevant Data Protection regulations. The Football Association and County Football Association and other organisations to which the Club is affiliated shall be given controlled access to the Register, on demand. No other person or organisation shall be given access without the express permission of the Executive Committee.
9. All Club members shall be expected to respect and follow the Club's Code of Conduct and other applicable policies, as included in this document. The Executive Committee shall consider all complaints in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

10. All Club players shall be expected to respect and follow the laws, rules and spirit of the sport or other recreational activity in which they are participating. Players and other members receiving disciplinary fines or administration charges for misconduct in or at matches or other events, shall be responsible for reimbursing the Club in full by the due date, or shall be suspended from further participation in Club activities until payment is received.
11. A member whose annual subscription or other participation fees are more than two months in arrears shall be deemed to have resigned. In the event of a member's resignation or expulsion, his or her name will be removed from the Membership Register.

## **1.5 Team Management and Coaching**

12. The appointment of managers and coaches to supervise the running of the Club's football teams shall be at the absolute discretion of a sub-committee of five elected members which shall include the chairperson, honorary secretary and honorary treasurer, plus two other members of the Executive Committee appointed by the Executive Committee for that purpose.
13. In accordance with the Club's Child Protection Policy, all team managers, coaches and assistants shall complete the Club's Volunteer Application and Personal Disclosure Forms prior to appointment.
14. All team managers and coaches and any helpers shall perform their duties and act in accordance with the Club's Rules, Policies and Procedures, as presented in this document.

## **1.6 Policies and Procedures**

The Club and its members shall abide by the following Policies and Procedures, as included in this document:

- i. Child Protection Policy
- ii. Equal Opportunities
- iii. Anti-Discrimination
- iv. Discipline and Complaints
- v. Manager and Coach Development
- vi. Team Administration

## **2.1 Child Protection Policy**

1. Pitshanger Football Club will strive to ensure that its child members are able to participate in football and other sporting activities organised by the Club in an environment that is safe and one in which they will be protected from abuse. The Club recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.
2. The Club believes that the following key principles are fundamental to this policy:
  - 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, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
  - All suspicious circumstances and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to.

3. In order to uphold these principles, Pitshanger Football Club has adopted the Football Association's (F.A's) Child Protection Policy and intends to implement the advice in the F.A Child Protection Procedures and Practices Handbook.
4. In compliance with F.A. policy, the Club has appointed a Principal and Deputy Child Protection Officers, confirmed annually by the Executive Committee, following the AGM. These Officers have attended the accredited F.A Child Protection Workshop.
5. All current team managers/coaches who are in contact with the Club's child/young person members will be required to complete a Personal Disclosure Form. This will be obligatory for all future recruits to positions of team management/coaching prior to their appointment.  
  
In addition, and at the club's discretion, potential volunteers will also be asked to complete a Volunteer Reference Form. All information will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1984.
6. In addition to the F.A Child Protection Policy, the Club has a Code of Conduct in operation. This document serves to advise potential Club members (children/young persons and their parents/guardians) of the Club's expected standards of behaviour and of the fact that there is a child protection policy in effect.
7. The Club's Child Protection Officers and, where appropriate, other club officers, will attend child protection courses and workshops organised by the F.A in order to comply with current regulations and maintain quality.
8. A system is in place to ensure that all of the Club's Officers are aware of the procedures for managing incidents of child abuse and in the event of such an occurrence, the appropriate F.A. procedure will be strictly adhered to.

## **2.3 Equal Opportunities**

1. Pitshanger Football Club is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members, of whatever level or authority, to abide and adhere to this general principle and the requirements of the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.
2. All members are expected to abide by the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1986 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Specifically, discrimination is prohibited by:
  - treating any individual, on grounds of gender, colour, marital status, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability, less favourably than others;
  - expecting an individual, solely on the grounds stated above, to comply with requirement(s), for any reason whatsoever related to their membership, which is different from the requirements for others;
  - imposing on an individual, requirements that are in effect more onerous on that individual than they are on others. For example, this would include applying a condition that makes it more difficult for members of a particular race or sex to comply, than others not of that race or sex;
  - victimisation of an individual;
  - harassment of an individual, by virtue of discrimination;

- any other act or omission of an act, which has as its effect the disadvantaging of a member against another, or others, purely on the above grounds.
3. Thus, in all the Club's recruitment, selection, promotion and training processes, as well as disciplinary matters, it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.
  4. Pitshanger Football Club commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice cease forthwith, restitution of damage or loss (if necessary) and to the investigation of any member accused of discrimination.
  5. Any member found guilty of discrimination will be instructed to desist forthwith. Since discrimination in its many forms is against the Football Club's policy, any members offending will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
  6. The Pitshanger Football Club commits itself to the disabled person whenever possible and will treat such members, in aspects of their recruitment and membership, in exactly the same manner as other members. The difficulties of their disablement permitting assistance will be given, wherever possible, to ensure that disabled members are helped in gaining access. Appropriate training will be given to such members who request it.

## **2.4 Anti-Discrimination**

1. Pitshanger Football Club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the Club at every level. Football belongs to and should be enjoyed by everyone, equally. Our commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination, whether by reason of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.
2. Equality of opportunity at Pitshanger Football Club means that in all our activities, we will not discriminate or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

This includes:

- Advertisements for volunteers.
  - The selection of candidates for volunteers.
  - Courses.
  - External coaching and education activities and awards.
  - Football development activities.
  - Selection for teams.
  - Appointments to honorary positions.
3. Pitshanger Football Club will not tolerate sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal, and will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.
  4. Pitshanger Football Club is committed to the development of the programme of ongoing training and awareness-raising events and activities, in order to promote the eradication of discrimination within its own organisation, and within football as a whole.

## 2.5 Discipline and Complaints

### Background

1. Pitshanger Football Club activities are conducted in accordance with various Rules and Policies, under the direction of the Club's Executive Committee and in accordance with the Club's Constitution. Under the Club's Rules, the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and parent County Association and any League or Competition, to which the Club is affiliated, for the time being, are incorporated.

### Offences at Matches

2. Disciplinary offences at football matches initially come under the jurisdiction of the match referee and are dealt with through F.A. and County disciplinary procedures. Offences will be reported to the Club Secretary who will communicate with the named party and respond to the County Association, as required. In accordance with Club Rules, offenders are responsible for fully reimbursing the Club for any fines and charges levied. The Executive Committee may, in addition, deal with serious and/or persistent offenders under this procedure, Item 7.
3. The Club is responsible for the behaviour of its players, officials and supporters. In all cases where a complaint is made about the conduct of a Club member at a match, this shall be reported to the Club Secretary who will bring this to the attention of the Executive Committee for action in accordance with the following paragraphs.

### Other Offences and Complaints

4. The Club's Constitution and Rules identify the powers of the Executive Committee to expel members for non-payment of subscriptions and fees after appropriate notice has been given. The Club Secretary or Treasurer will notify the Executive Committee of such occurrences prior to consideration of the appropriate action.
5. In the event of any member feeling that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way, or that the Club Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken, this should be reported to the Club Secretary or another Club Officer. A written report will be required detailing:
  - What, when and where the occurrence took place
  - Witness statements and names
  - Names of any others known to have been treated in a similar way
  - Details of any previous complaints
  - A preference for a solution to the incident.
6. The matter will then be considered at the following Executive Committee meeting, or should the matter require urgent attention, at a Special Executive Meeting convened with not less than four days' notice or by a sub-committee formed by the Executive Committee for that purpose.

### Executive Committee Actions

7. Following notification of any of the aforementioned occurrences to the Club Secretary, he/she shall inform the Executive Committee of the situation and the Committee shall consider the evidence at its following meeting.

The Executive shall have the power take the following actions any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Code of Conduct:

- warn as to future conduct,

- suspend from membership,
- remove from membership,

## 2.6 Manager and Coach Development

1. Pitshanger Football Club recognises that its Team Managers and Coaches are key to the quality and standard of the football played by Club teams and the attitude and behaviour of the young players in their charge. The health, safety, welfare and moral education of the young people are a first priority, even before their team's sporting achievements. The reputation of the Club depends on both.
2. To promote better management and coaching of its teams, Pitshanger Football Club will actively seek to promote better qualification and development of its management and coaching volunteers and other members willing to assist in these matters. It is imperative that all coaches hold a recognised F.A. qualification or are working towards becoming qualified.
3. Team Managers and Coaches who require training in any aspect of their responsibilities, in addition to that available through guidance from existing Club members, should inform the Club Secretary of their perceived needs. Such courses are generally available through the County Football Association and include:
  - F.A. Level 1 – Club Coach Award
  - F.A. Level 2 - Coaching Certificate
  - F.A. Level 3 - Coaching Licence
  - Child Protection
  - Emergency Aid
  - Injury Identification & Recognition
  - Football Fitness
  - F.A. Basic Treatment and Management of Injury
  - Laws of the Game
  - Goalkeeping Coaches Certificate.
4. The Club Secretary will bring training requests to the attention of the Club's Executive Committee and, following their approval, will book the courses through the relevant provider. Subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, the Club will meet the full cost of the training course.
5. From time to time, where demand is sufficient, the Club may provide the courses at a local venue booked and paid for by the Club.
6. Those Club Managers and Coaches booked onto such courses paid for by the Club will be expected to attend for the full duration of their training, or will reimburse the Club for the full cost unless exceptional circumstances prevail.
7. Once qualified, Club Managers and Coaches will be encouraged to undertake continued development in their skill base by taking other relevant courses or joining appropriate organisations, such as the F.A. Coaches Association.

## 2.7 Team Administration

### General

1. Pitshanger Football Club will appoint Team Managers to take responsibility for all aspects of managing a team, including coaching, conduct and administration. The Club's policies on manager and coach development and conduct are dealt with separately.
2. Important issues within the administration's responsibility are covered by this procedure, which should be read in conjunction with various proformas as appended, including the Club Membership Form and the Monthly Income and Expenditure Record.

### Player Details and Records

3. Team Managers are responsible for maintaining records of those in attendance at training sessions, matches and other Club activities. After attending a maximum of two trial training sessions, all young people are required to have completed a Club Membership Form along with their parents or guardians, where appropriate, and to have paid the appropriate subscription. Completed Membership Forms shall be passed to the Club Secretary for processing, before the player represents the Club in any match, or within two weeks in other cases.

### Player Registration for Matches

4. The Team Manager will also be responsible for ensuring that all players taking part in league or cup matches will have been properly registered in accordance with the rules of that competition. The Club Secretary will assist in this process and approve all completed league registration forms. Registration cards, on their return from the League or County Registration Secretaries, will be returned to the Team Manager for safekeeping. These cards must be taken to all matches for inspection, if required, by the opposition manager and/or League and County officials.

### Player Subscriptions

5. At the commencement of the season, the Team Manager will obtain the correct Annual Subscription for each playing or training member and shall forward this promptly to the Club Treasurer. The subscription may be combined with match and training fees in a single payment at the start of the season if paid by the date determined by the Executive Committee and set out on the Membership Form. In the case of a young person enrolling at a later stage of the season, the annual subscription may be reduced with the agreement of the Club Treasurer, if that is considered appropriate.

### Match and Training Fees

6. The Team Manager will collect and record appropriate match and training fees (as determined by the Executive Committee at the commencement of the season) from all those participating in that session or match. This excludes those playing members who have paid the single combined annual subscription and match/training fees at the start of the season.
7. Monies gathered at training sessions and matches will be recorded less approved expenses as detailed below.

### Expenses

8. All approved expenses incurred by Team Managers will be fully reimbursed by the Club. This includes league-appointed referees fees, kit washing (where no volunteer can be found) and first aid kit refills (see below). Approval for all other proposed expenses must be obtained in advance from the Club Treasurer, who may refer the matter to the other Club Officers or the Executive Committee, as necessary.



### **Team Kits and Equipment**

9. Team Managers will be responsible for the safekeeping, availability and cleaning, as appropriate, of various items of team kit and equipment. Requests for the replacement of such items must be made to the Club Secretary, who may refer the matter to the Club Treasurer or Executive Committee, as necessary.
10. Where items of Club kit are handed to the parents or guardians of playing members of the Club to look after between matches, records must be kept so that the kit can be recovered promptly if required at any time. Those handed Club kit must be informed of their responsibility for the safekeeping of Club property and its return when requested. A Club proforma is available to assist in this matter.
11. Playing members wanting to leave or transfer away from the Club are required to settle all debts and return all Club property, under F.A. rules. Compensation will be sought for lost or damaged kits.
12. First Aid kits will be provided to Team Managers and should be made available at all training sessions and matches. Team Managers should have attended an F.A.-approved Emergency First Aid course as a minimum and be competent in the use of the equipment provided. The use of medical sprays by those not properly qualified, without the express permission of parents or guardians, is to be discouraged.

### **Match Records and Reporting**

12. Within two days of the completion of any league or cup match, the Team Manager must post to the competition Results Secretary the correctly completed Match Card in accordance with competition rules.
13. At the times requested by the Club Press Secretary, Records and Membership Secretary and Web Site Manager, the Team Manager must communicate match results, player details, scorers, referees markings and a match summary, as required.

### **Meetings**

14. Team Managers are the Club's primary means of passing on details of Club policies and activities to their teams' playing members and their parents and guardians. To facilitate this, the Managers will be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings, as Committee Members, where elected, or as invited guests. Other meetings may also be held from time to time and appropriate attendees invited.

## **2.8 Football Club Safeguarding Children Policy**

1. PFC 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.

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.

PFC recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

3. PFC 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 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.

4. 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 references before appointing someone
  - where eligible require an FA-accepted Enhanced Criminal Record Check (CRC) with Barring List Check in line with current FA policy and regulations.

All current Football Club members working in eligible roles, with children and young people - such as managers and coaches are required to hold an in-date FA accepted Enhanced CRC with Barring List check as part of responsible recruitment practice1.

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of

Football 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 CRC Process and that all suitability decisions will be made in accordance with legislation and 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.

5. PFC supports The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy. Any adult or a young person with concerns about an adult in a position of trust in football can 'whistle blow' by contacting The FA/NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000, or alternatively by going directly to the Police, Children's Social Care.

PFC encourages everyone to know about The FA's Whistle Blowing Policy and to utilise it if necessary.

6. PFC 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.

7. 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.

8. Respect codes of conduct for Players, Parents/Spectators, Officials and Coaches have been implemented by PFC.

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.

9. 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.

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

ii. 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

iii. 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.

iv. 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.

v. 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 FA/NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice on 0808 800 5000, or alternatively by going directly to the Police, Children's Social Care.

Procedures are available via – <https://www.thefa.com>

## 2.9 Statement of Intent

PFC are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

This club is committed to playing its part in teaching players to treat each other with respect.

### 1. What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

**Bullying can be:**

- **Emotional**

being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)

- **Physical**

pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

- **Sexual**

unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

- **Discrimination**

comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments,

- **Verbal**

name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### **Cyberbullying**

This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person.

### 2. Trolling

This is the name given to posting deliberately offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

## 2.10 Our Commitment

This club commits to ensuring our website websites and/ or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

## 1. Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. 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

This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## 2. 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 will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## 3. 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.

**In more extreme cases:**

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **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.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular, it can include:

#### **• Verbal abuse**

derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so gay!” Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health-related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay.

Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.

#### **• Physical abuse**

including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.

#### **• Cyberbullying**

using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging. Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. Ensure that club members know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in this club.

## **3. HANDBOOK FOR COACHES**

### **a. What is Respect?**

Respect is the collective responsibility of everyone involved in football, at all levels, to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place. It is the behavioural code for football. Respect is a continuous FA programme, not a one-off initiative.

### **b. What do we want to achieve with Respect?**

- There will be a base of registered referees in England sufficient for the demands of the game at every level.
- There will be zero tolerance for assaults on referees.

- There will be an improvement in on-field player discipline, particularly in the area of dissent to referees and in competitions that have an established record of poor discipline.
- There will be a ‘step change’ in youth football on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from parents and spectators.

We will work with coaches to create an enjoyable learning environment for children’s football.

### c. The Four Steps to Respect

The Respect programme includes four practical steps to improve behaviour – on the pitch and on the sidelines – in and at matches throughout the country:

- Step 1: Codes of Conduct
- Step 2: Designated Spectators’ Area
- Step 3: The captain takes responsibility
- Step 4: The referee manages the game.

#### i. Step one: Codes of Conduct

Codes of Conduct aren’t new and are already in use by some clubs (for example, they are mandatory for FA Charter Standard Clubs). Some Codes are successful, some are forgotten and simply not acted upon.

All the Respect Codes of Conduct can also be downloaded from [www.TheFA.com/Respect](http://www.TheFA.com/Respect)

Respect works on placing responsibility for their actions on individuals: break your Code, and bear the consequences.

#### Codes of Conduct: a club’s responsibilities:

Each Respect Code of Conduct explains that action can and will be taken if the Code is broken.

#### A club has three main responsibilities around the Codes:

- To ensure everyone within the club (club members), whatever their role, has read, agreed and signed up to their relevant Code – and understands the actions which could be taken if Codes are broken.
- To collect and retain the signed agreement forms.
- To deal fairly and consistently with anyone who breaks ‘their’ Code.

If a club hasn’t used Codes of Conduct before – or has Codes without consequences – they are being asked to take responsibility for implementing them. League and/or County FA Respect Lead Officers are in place to give clubs further guidance in this area. It is suggested that it may be helpful for clubs to display the Respect Codes of Conduct in dressing rooms, pavilions, club houses and if applicable, displaying the Spectator Code publicly or handing down the sidelines.

The important difference is the club is responsible for ensuring its members understand and appreciate what can happen if Codes are broken. That way, there should be no subsequent debate because individuals didn’t understand the consequences of breaking a Code.

## Taking Sanctions

The Codes identify a range of sanctions that can be applied in the event of misconduct or poor behaviour.

Whilst County FAs or The FA will deal with reported misconduct, clubs also have a role to play in educating its membership as to what is – and what isn't – acceptable behaviour and taking action when the Codes are broken.

It's important for clubs to be clear about what it expects from its members and to educate people when guidance is required. Should this guidance be disregarded then the management of a club has the right to implement sanctions against offenders.

### ii. Step two: Designated Spectators' Areas

The creation of designated areas for spectators is a key element of Respect, mainly aimed at youth football. They are also designed to help referees manage the game better (see Step 4).

The Designated Spectators' Area can be marked by an additional line, the use of cones, a roped-off area or use of a temporary spectators' barrier.

The safety of the players, officials and spectators is paramount. The size of the area around each pitch will dictate which method clubs will be able to use. The areas literally draw the line which spectators should not cross. Research has shown it to have a beneficial impact on the behaviour of spectators and their impact on players and match officials.

A Respect Youth league will work with its clubs to ensure that the Designated Spectators' Area is clearly marked prior to the start of the game.

**To help implement the Designated Spectators' Area, The FA has endorsed a Respect Barrier Kit, which comprises:**

- 120 metres of specialised Respect-branded tape (2 x 60 metres lengths)
- A complete set of safety poles
- A simple-to-use and effective reeling system
- Assembly kit comprising of mallet, securing pegs and instructions
- Lightweight carry bag.

If using the Respect barriers endorsed by The FA, it's been suggested to clubs that the ideal arrangement is to mark out a Designated Spectators' Area on the opposite side of the pitch to club officials (manager/coaches etc) for spectators to stand behind. This allows the manager/coaches of both teams to stand on the other side of the pitch, meaning players can better distinguish the advice from their team officials.

The Designated Spectators' Area should start two metres from the touchline and should run the full length of the pitch. This means no-one should be watching from behind the goals.

It is recognised however that the alignment of some public pitches does not allow for this arrangement in which case other appropriate arrangements should be made.

If clubs prefer an alternative form of marking a Designated Spectators' Area, they must ensure this is safe for both the spectators and the players.



The FA strongly recommends that clubs obtain formal agreement from the facility/pitch provider about which method of marking is most suitable for the pitch, before beginning any work or buying any new equipment.

### **Referees' responsibilities:**

If a Respect League has introduced into its requirement that Designated Spectators' Areas be marked, out then it is the referee's responsibility to note whether or not they have been marked appropriately and in time for the start of the game – and that the demarcation method remains visible.

Where this has not happened, the referee is asked to record this on his/her match report. You will see from the Codes of Conduct for others involved in the game that there is very clear guidance about how the Designated Spectators' Area are to be used.

Referees are asked to work in collaboration with any league officials and club welfare officers (in Under-18 football) who may be present, to pro-actively support the correct use of the Designated Spectators' Area.

League officials and Club Welfare Officers are asked to make themselves known to the referee prior to kick-off. If there is constant disregard for the Designated Spectators' Area, particularly should a spectator enter the field of play, the referee has it within their power to:

- Speak with the relevant home club official (e.g. coach/team manager/secretary/welfare officer) and ask them to warn the people concerned, as well as pointing out if there are further infringements they may be asked to leave the vicinity of the pitch or ultimately, may result in the game being abandoned.
- Request intervention by the league official or club official at half-time to speak with spectators generally about their behaviour and remind them of their Codes of Conduct and the possibility of asking all spectators to remove themselves from the vicinity of the pitch.
- If it reoccurs, report a club for failure to control their spectators.

### **iii. Step three: The captain takes responsibility**

Often problems start at matches when individual players are abusive towards the referee, which escalates into several players confronting the referee at the same time – then it's anarchy.

Respect aims to stop this cycle before it starts. Only the captain can challenge decisions made by the referee, and the captain needs to manage his/her team to ensure this is always observed. However, this does not mean the referee can only speak to the captain. You remain free to talk to any player if this means you can manage the game better.

### **The referee's role:**

It is important to recognise that an essential skill in refereeing is having the ability to communicate effectively with players. Respect is designed to support this skill, and to support the referee's key role in controlling a match. As mentioned above, referees should continue to talk to individual players as necessary. However when harassment, abuse or challenging behaviour is exhibited referees are asked to use their powers under Law 12.

Law 12 deals with two key areas, fouls and misconduct. It clearly identifies and lists offences – such as holding or pushing – for which a referee can stop play to award direct free kicks.

It also lists the offences for which a player is cautioned or sent off. So a player committing a tripping offence has a free-kick awarded against them but also may be sanctioned with a caution if the referee deems the challenge to be reckless. Alternatively, if the challenge is so severe, excessive force is used, which may injure the opponent, then the offending player is sent off.

Law 12 also covers the sanctions which can be applied for dissent by word or action and the use of insulting or abusive language and/or gestures. Referees should show due respect when speaking with players, even in the event of infringements.

**In practice, 'The captain takes responsibility' means:**

1. Only the captain can openly ask for clarification of a referee's decision. This includes the period before, during and after a match.
2. If any other player challenges the referee, asks questions or harasses the referee about decisions made, they should first be given a public warning. This is providing a player has not committed an offence which clearly falls under Law 12.
3. If a player, including the captain, openly harasses or challenges the referee, they should be cautioned and shown a yellow card.
4. If a player, including the captain, continues to harass or question decisions made by the referee, then a second yellow card should be shown and the player sent out from the field of play.
5. The referee records the names of all players receiving a caution or being sent off, as per usual. All such incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities on conclusion of the match.
6. All referees should sensibly use the powers vested in them under Law 12 relating to cautioning and sending off.
7. Any issues relating to misconduct involving individuals other than players should be dealt with in the usual manner.
8. Referees are reminded to complete misconduct report forms as soon as possible after a match.

**NB.** The team captain is clearly an important figure but is not immune to being dealt with as defined and described above.

**Examples of unwanted behaviour:**

**Harassment:**

- Running towards the referee in an aggressive manner.
- Players surrounding the referee to protest a decision.
- Repeatedly asking questions about decisions in an attempt to influence the referee or undermine his/her responsibilities.

**Challenging:**

- Passing comments to other players about a referee's decision-making.
- Repeatedly moaning at the referee about decisions.
- Gestures that obviously are made in a derogatory manner, such as a

shaking of the head or waving of the hand.  
These examples have also been communicated to captains.

### **Here's what captains have also been told:**

As a captain, you have no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game, but you do have a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of your team.

To promote Respect, the referee will work with you, as the team captain, to manage the players and the game effectively.

Even if you are some way away from an incident when the referee feels he/ she needs you involved in a discussion with a player, the referee will call you over. This will ensure that, as the team captain, you remain the point of contact for the referee.

In some cases, a referee will proceed directly to a caution if he deems an offence to be serious enough, and is not obliged to call a captain forward for every incident – only those that will assist him/her in the management of the game.

The type of behaviour which often gives rise to problems in matches, and where captains and referees need to work together can be described as 'harassment and challenging behaviour' towards the referee.

Referees will also make use of captains to deal with persistent offending from a teammate where there is a real possibility of further offending resulting in a caution or a dismissal. Captains will also be called forward where additional support is required to calm a player down who is likely to immediately re-offend.

### **Captains have also been asked to:**

- Ensure they wear a Respect captain's armband. These will be provided by the league to clubs.
- Together with the opposition captain, make themselves known to the referee before the game. The referee will ask the captains if they are clear about their responsibilities.
- Ensure all players understand what they can/cannot do in relation to the referee and what is meant by 'unwanted behaviour'. No one's trying to curb enthusiasm – just instill more discipline. This can only benefit the specific match and football as a whole.
- Ensure vice-captains (who should be appointed one if there isn't one) is aware of these rules, in case captains are unavailable for a game, or have to leave the field.
- Ensure every player in the team has signed the Respect Code of Conduct.

Visit [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com) for further updates and tips.

### **iv. Step four: The referee manages the game**

The referee must control the game by applying the Laws of the Game, and deal firmly with any open show of dissent by players (e.g. not move away from the incident, but stay and deal with it).

While recognising that players may on some occasions make an appeal for a decision (e.g. a throw-in, corner or goal-kick), it is important you distinguish these from an act of dissent which should be punished with a caution.

**You should use a stepped approach, where appropriate, to managing players:**

1. Quiet word
2. Free-kick with quiet word.
3. Free-kick with public admonishment (this is the time referees should consider using the captain to emphasise the message)
4. Yellow card
5. Red card.

The stepped approach does not negate the fact that the referee has the authority within the Laws of the Game to issue disciplinary sanctions without recourse to the captain or to revert directly to issuing a caution or a red card if the offence warrants such action.

Whilst recognising that players may on occasions make an appeal for a decision (e.g. a throw-in, corner or goal-kick), it is important that the referee distinguishes these from an act of dissent which should be punished with a caution. Before the game – the Respect handshake protocol:

The following protocol should be applied where possible before the game starts:

1. The starting eleven from both teams together with the three match officials (excluding fourth official) should take part in the handshake.
2. Each team should line up on the same side of the pitch.
3. The home team, led by their captain, then walks to shake hands with the match officials, and then the away team's players. Once each home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player, they disperse to their favoured end to kick-in.
4. Once the last home team player has completed the handshake, the away team then follow their captain passing in front of the match officials to shake hands before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.
5. Once the handshakes have been completed, the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

Whilst we understand that it may be difficult to implement this protocol in every case, we would ask that referees do what they reasonably can to ensure its implementation.