



# Leaffield Athletic Football Club

## Disciplinary Procedures and Guidance

### 1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this Disciplinary Procedure is to provide a uniform approach for Leaffield Athletic Football Club to deal with any on or off the field behaviour by any Members (players), Members Representatives (i.e. parents and guardians), other family members and supporters of Leaffield Athletic, Team Managers, Coaches, Assistants, Club Officials that causes an offence or gross offence to any other Stakeholder in Leaffield Athletic FC.

This procedure is not limited to only Players - any Official, Parent/Guardian or Supporter may be subject to this procedure and if found to be in breach of Codes of Conduct Parents and Supporters should be aware that incidents involving them of Gross Misconduct or Violent Acts could result in not only sanctions imposed against themselves but also their playing relative.

This procedure will be published and be issued to existing Club Member(s)/Players, Team/Club Officials and included in all new welcome packs so that all Players, Officials, Parents and Supporters are fully aware of its contents.

This disciplinary procedure is laid down by the committee of Leaffield Athletic FC to achieve and maintain standards of behaviour as detailed within the Club's Rules /Code of Conduct, as well as those of the associated League(s), the Birmingham FA and the FA Respect campaign.

The emphasis of this Disciplinary Procedure is, in the first instance, on the improvement of the offending member(s) behaviour by working in partnership with them and their parent/guardian (where appropriate) rather than just imposing sanctions.

We would expect the Team Manager or Coach to resolve any minor issues with Players, Parents, Spectators prior to an issue requiring disciplinary action being instigated. The Club will impose sanctions in the most serious cases or where improvement in the offending member(s)'s behaviour has not been forthcoming. Our aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all members.

Disciplinary action against Club members, including expulsion without notice, may be taken for offences of misconduct or breach of club's rules. However it is recognised and accepted that every member:-

- Has the right to expect fair and consistent treatment
- Has the right to adequate notice from the Club
- Has the right to appeal against the Club Secretary's judgement or Disciplinary Committee's decision in all disciplinary matters.
- Has the right to representation



- No member will be expelled for the first breach of Club's rules except in cases of "Gross Misconduct". However all disciplinary actions taken by Leaffield Athletic FC will be duly recorded and placed on file for reference at a future date.

## **2. Types of Offences and Disciplinary Procedures**

### ***2.1 Formal on the Field Caution or Dismissal of Players, Officials or Supporters***

These matters will be dealt with in accordance with the Laws of the Game and the participating match officials. If incidents on the field or pre/during/post match also fall within areas of Gross Misconduct then further action may be taken by a Disciplinary Panel following the procedure laid out below.

*Within five days of the incident the Team Manager will complete a written report on the incident. He /she will report on the incident as he/she has seen it and may refer to statements from others who attended the game and are stakeholders in the Football Club. Any statements taken and included in the report must be able to be corroborated and the Committee may wish to interview the statement maker during the course of this procedure. The report must contain the Managers conclusion and recommendation. It is the Managers responsibility to circulate this report to all Club Officials who will call a Disciplinary Panel meeting.*

### ***2.2 Off the field incidents at official club events (including but not limited to): matches, training, external competitions and tours, other sanctioned club event or participation at events when representing Leaffield Athletic FC. This will include the use of Social Media sources.***

For all Minor Offences that do not fall within those covered by Gross Misconduct (Minor offences) the Team Manager or Club Official who is responsible for the person(s) involved at the "event" will deal with the matter directly following the principles and procedures laid out for Minor Offences.

For incidents falling within the scope of Gross Misconduct then the Team Manager or Club Official responsible for the person(s) involved at the "Event" will follow the procedure as detailed above for "On Field Incidents" to call a Disciplinary Panel meeting, in line with the procedures laid out for matters of Gross Misconduct.



## **2.3 Minor Offences**

***Any act or omission of the Club rules that in itself has no wider implication outside of the act or omission itself or the age group to which the alleged member belongs.***

Minor infringements by Members or Members Representatives can be dealt with by the duly appointed Team Manager for the age group to which the alleged member belongs, or is associated to.

If felt appropriate the duly appointed Team Manager may also deal with minor infringements by coaches and assistants provided the Club Secretary is informed of the outcome for noting in the Clubs records. Officers of the Club acting in their official capacity may also deal with minor infringements, by Team Managers, Coaches, Members and Members Representatives. For example the Treasurer may sanction Members Representatives and Team Managers in respect of outstanding monies, or the tardy submission of accounts. Similarly the Club Secretary may take action in respect of the none, or late submission, of information or registrations, or where Team Managers have repeatedly incurred fines from the league for the none, or late, submission of results or other information.

The Club Chairman will deal with minor infringements by other Club Officers.

Any minor infringement involving the Club Chairman will be referred to the Birmingham FA for independent advice.

***For matters falling within the Minor Offences definition the following procedure will be followed.***

(Note this should be an informal process aimed at ensuring understanding and correction of the matters involved)

The Team Manager or Official responsible will investigate the reported incident whether witnessed directly or reported to them as soon as possible after the event and in no case later than seven days following the incident. If they are unable to do so they should request another official to undertake this on their behalf.

The team manager or official should initially speak directly to the person (s) involved to ascertain the facts together with any other witnessing parties and immediately inform the parents or guardian of the player involved if appropriate.

Once the team manager/official has completed their investigation, as long as the facts do not cause the incident to fall outside of the scope of a minor offence, then they should explain to the player(s) involved the breach of the code involved and what corrective action needs to be taken. If the Team Manager or Official feels that a sanction should be imposed this should be explained to the player(s) and their parents or guardians, together with what corrective action needs to be taken and when the imposed sanction will start and end. It is imperative that communication between the parties is maintained to ensure that no misunderstanding occurs. It is important to emphasise to offending member(s) that we are all here to encourage participation in football and any restrictions on this should be seen as a last resort.



No offending member(s) will be dismissed from the Club for a first breach of the Code of Conduct unless the offence falls within Gross Misconduct or Violent Act

A disciplinary file will be opened by the Club Secretary in which will be placed copies and records of the original complaint, together with details of the outcome and any other correspondence.

## **2.4 Gross Misconduct or Violent Acts (actual or threatened), to any Club Stakeholder**

### ***For matters of Gross Misconduct or Violent Acts the following procedure will be followed***

If the offence is not one witnessed by a team manager or official the person or persons making the complaint must do so to the appropriate Team Manager within seven days of the incident and in writing.

Once the team manager or official has identified the offence falling within the scope of Gross Misconduct or Violent Act then an incident report must be submitted within 48 hours to the Club Secretary.

Once they consider that a potential breach of Codes of Conduct has occurred, the matter will be passed to the Club Welfare Officer who will coordinate the investigation and implement the disciplinary procedure and the offending member(s) may be automatically suspended depending on the severity of the offence; pending investigation/disciplinary hearing according to the Club's policy, or when superseded by Birmingham County FA Policies and procedures. In the case of suspended players, the individual will not play in a match nor be allowed to train until the outcome of the Disciplinary hearing has been agreed and communicated to all parties .

No disciplinary action will be taken against an offending member(s) until a full investigation as to the circumstances of the incident have been conducted by the Club

The Club Officials will appoint an Investigating Officer who will research evidence presented and, if possible, will obtain further written evidence, witness statements, etc.

- If necessary the Investigating Officer will consult all relevant witnesses for supportive evidence
- Contact the member subject of the complaint to advise of the official complaint and request the member to submit a written statement of events
- In cases of disputes of a personal nature, the Elected Officers will attempt to resolve the situation amicably and to the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned
- If settlement cannot be agreed between the parties, or if the offence merits it, then a disciplinary hearing will be arranged as soon as possible
- Obtain legal advice if required and supply copies of all evidence
- Notify all parties as to the hearing date and ensure the parties have all relevant copies of paperwork in good time prior to the hearing, copies to be sent by 1st class recorded delivery or via



electronic mail. All parties will be required to confirm attendance no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting.

-The offending member(s) can attend with their parent/guardian, if they are under 18, who may make a representation on their behalf and confirm that the offending member(s) fully understands the potential breach of the code, the procedure taking place and the sanction, if any, imposed by the Disciplinary Panel.

-All aspects of the investigation will remain confidential.

-The individual involved will be asked to attend the meeting or request to send a representative on their behalf and in the case of a player, will be accompanied by a parent/guardian if under 18 or other representative.

-The complainant will also be given the opportunity to attend the hearing or send a representative on their behalf.

### **3. Disciplinary Panel**

- The Club Secretary shall take charge of the hearing and all questions will be addressed through the Secretary

- A Disciplinary Panel will be appointed which will consist of: -

1. the Club Chair person
2. the Club Welfare Officer
3. two other members of the Club Committee

Any person who is a parent or relation of any charged individual, or any offending Team or Club Official is excluded from sitting on the panel.

*The Disciplinary Panel may impose some of the following actions when appropriate:*

- *No further action*
- *Verbal or written warning about future conduct*
- *Internal Suspension from participating in matches and or training – Number of Games/Weeks /Days*
- *Internal Suspension from participating in all Club activities – Period of Time*
- *Permanent Exclusion from the Football Club*

- The club will appoint a case presenter, who will normally be the Investigating Officer

- All witnesses to be interviewed and all written evidence to be reviewed at the hearing.

- No witnesses or statements can be introduced at the hearing without prior notice and copies of all written evidence produced for consideration prior to the hearing, to be available in advance to the parties



- The Disciplinary Panel may adjourn the hearing to allow further evidence to be referred to if the disciplinary committee considers it fair to do so.

- After the Disciplinary Panel has reached a decision, the subject of the complaint to be notified in writing of such decision and informed of any penalties within 7 days of the decision being reached, penalties will be effective from the date of the decision.

- Should a person charged with Gross Misconduct or Violent Act, not attend the Disciplinary Hearing then a decision will be made in their absence and the decision of the Panel will be confirmed in writing to the address noted on their registration document.

#### **4. Penalties**

Following the hearing, the Disciplinary Panel will apply such penalties as the Disciplinary Panel consider appropriate, including temporary or permanent expulsion of the offender from the Club, such penalties will have immediate effect, notwithstanding the possibility of an appeal in accordance with (Section 5) noted below.

Individuals/parents may be expected to pay any fines imposed by the League or County FA in relation to an incident and in the case of loss to the Club further litigation may be taken to recover damages from the offending member(s).

Offences considered by the Club Officials to be of the most serious nature, particularly but not exclusively those involving Violent Acts will carry automatic expulsion from the Club and will preclude the offender from taking part in any Leaffield Athletic FC organised activity in an official capacity.

The club will in all cases comply with the requirements of the Governing Body and Club child protection policies including immediate notification of the police where required.

#### **5. Appeals**

If an appeal of the decision or penalty is to be made then written notice of appeal by way of electronic mail or 1st class recorded delivery to the Club Secretary must be given by the offender, within 28 days of being notified of the decision.

No appeal will be valid or considered after that period has elapsed.

It will not be sufficient to state "I wish to appeal", the offender must give full written grounds for the appeal, stating exactly what is being appealed against and the reasons for this.

An appeal together with full and recorded argument may be considered relative to: -

- the decision
- the penalty
- other



An appeal hearing will be convened as soon as practicable and will consist of an Appeal Committee of the Club Secretary and 2 other members of the Club Committee who did not take part in the first hearing and who will elect their own Chairperson (who will have the casting vote).

New evidence cannot be presented at the appeal hearing. The Appeal Committee shall have power to amend or revoke any decision made at the previous disciplinary hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and binding on the parties and not subject to further appeal.

## **6. Definitions of type of offence** *(This list is not exhaustive)*

*Starting point for disciplinary sanctions stage in brackets:*

*Stage 1 – Verbal warning*

*Stage 2 – Written warning*

*Stage 3 – Final written warning*

*Stage 4 – Dismissal from the Football Club*

### **6.1 Minor Offence**

The following list gives examples of behaviour that are normally regarded as minor offences:

1. Persistent Bad Behaviour (Stage 1 for all)
2. Discourteous crude or offensive behaviour at matches, training sessions or organised Club event (Stage 1 for all)
3. Conduct of an unsafe nature / disregard for equipment or property (Stage 1 for all)
4. Failure to attend or participate in events or meetings organised by the Club (Stage 1 for all)

### **6.2 Gross Misconduct**

The following list gives examples of behaviour that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

1. Repetition of or series of Minor Offences or failure to comply with any warnings/sanctions resulting from previous offences. (Stage 2 for those under 19, Stage 3 for all others)
2. Deliberate damage to Club property Stage 2 for those under 19, Stage 3 for all others)
3. Bringing the Club into disrepute by actions or words (including social media) (Stage 2 for those under 19, Stage 3 for all others)



4. Serious negligence or disregard of the Club Rules that causes, or could have caused, unacceptable loss, damage or injury or which have significant and wider implications regarding equal opportunities and child welfare. (Stage 3 for all)

5. Serious act of insubordination, including the failure to follow or observe reasonable instructions of the Team Manager/ Coach /Club Official (Stage 2 for those under 19, Stage 3 for all others)

6. Racial abuse (Stage 3 for those under 19, Stage 4 for all others)

7. Drugs Offences (Use or supply) (Stage 3 for those under 19, Stage 4 for all others)

### **6.3 Violent Acts (actual or threatened)**

The following list gives examples of behaviour that are normally regarded as violent acts

1. Fighting (Stage 3 for those under 19 Stage 4 for all others)

2. Assault on another person (Stage 3 for those under 19, Stage 4 for all others)

3 Threatening behaviour (including social media) (Stage 3 for those under 16 Stage 4 for all others)