



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2025/2026*

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect and that our club is equally accessible to all.

First Touch FC (FT FC) 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. FT FC in all its activities will not discriminate or in any way, treat anyone less favourably on the grounds of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability. The club will ensure 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.

FT FC 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. The club will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.

This policy is fully supported by the Club Officers who are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

FT FC 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.

FT FC 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 Equality Act 2010.

FT FC 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.

OUR COMMITMENT

is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability and to encourage equal opportunities.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

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 actions may be taken by my club, County FA, league or The FA:

I may:

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

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

In addition:

My FACA (FA Coaches Association) membership may be withdrawn

CODE OF CONDUCT:

COACHES, TEAM MANAGERS & CLUB OFFICIALS

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

When working with players, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety & enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning
- Explain exactly what I expect of players and what they can expect from me
- Ensure all parents/carers of all players under the age of 18 understand these expectations
- Never engage in or tolerate any form of bullying
- Develop mutual trust and respect with every player to build their self-esteem
- Encourage each player to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance

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

- Required to meet with the club, league or County Welfare Officer
- Required to meet with the club committee
- Monitored by another club coach
- Required to attend an FA education course
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave or be sacked by the club

In addition:

My FACA (FA Coaches Association) membership may be withdrawn

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND SANCTIONS

YOUNG PLAYERS

I understand that if I do not follow the code, any/all of the actions may be taken by my club, I may:

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

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.

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

I may be:

- Issued with a verbal warning from a club or league official

SPECTATORS AND PARENTS/CARER

- Required to meet with the club, league or CFA Welfare Officer
- Required to meet with the club committee
- 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

MATCH OFFICIALS

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by I may be:

- Required to meet with The FA/County FA Refereeing Official
- Required to meet with The FA/County FA Refereeing Committee

COACHES, TEAM MANAGERS AND CLUB OFFICIALS

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 meet with the club, league or County Welfare Officer
- Required to meet with the club committee
- Monitored by another club coach
- Required to attend a FA education course

- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave or be sacked by the club

In addition:

My FACA (FA Coaches Association) membership may be withdraw

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

FT FC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all 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.

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

WHAT IS BULLYING?

- Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages and tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

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.

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.

PROCEDURES

- (1) Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the clubs committee or contact the County FA Welfare Officer
- (2) 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
- (3) Parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
- (4) If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted
- (5) The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly
- (6) An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- (7) If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

IN THE CASE OF ADULTS REPORTED TO BE BULLYING ANYONE

- (1) The County FA Welfare Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate
- (2) 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 may be recommended
- (3) More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Services

PREVENTION

- (1) The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
- (2) All club members and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club
- (3) The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

- (1) Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem
- (2) If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (made up from Chairman, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) 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
- (3) The same three 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
- (4) 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

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.

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:

- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.stoptextbully.com
- www.bullying.co.uk

SPECTATORS, PARENTS & CARERS

CODE OF CONDUCT

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

This club is supporting The FA's Respect programme to ensure football can be enjoyed in a safe, positive environment. 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

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 within the Designated Spectators' Area
- Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do

I understand that if I do not follow the code, any/all of the actions may be taken by my club, County FA, league 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 County FA Welfare Officer Required to meet with the club committee
- 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 suspension against my club

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(1) FT FC 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. FT FC recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

(3) FT FC 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.

(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 2 references before appointing someone
- Require an FA CRB Unit Enhanced Disclosure where appropriate in line with FA guidelines

All current FT FC 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 (CRC)

Enhanced Disclosure via The FA CRB (CRC) Unit.

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

(5) FT FC 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.

FT FC encourages everyone to know about this information and utilise it if necessary.

(6) FT FC has appointed a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) 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 CWO is the first point of contact for all club members regarding concerns about the welfare of any child or young person. The CWO 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.

FTFC Club Welfare Officer (CWO) is:

Karl Southwick
ks@firsttouchuk.com
07434 688359

(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 CWO or alternatively, 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 FT FC. 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 CFA in more serious circumstances. All registering members will be required to adopt the Respect codes.

(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 CWO.

(ii) If the issue is one of poor practice the CWO 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- they will, where possible, contact the CFA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children's Services

(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 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

Please note: The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures is available via www.TheFA.com/Footballsafe. Click on the 'downloads' under Policy and Procedures. The policy outlines in detail what to do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child and includes flow diagrams which describe this process. How to make a referral is also covered in the Safeguarding Children workshop. Participants are given the opportunity to discuss how this feels and how best they can prepare themselves to deal with such a situation.

(10) Further advice on Safeguarding Children matters can be obtained from:

- Contact FT FC
- County Football Association's Welfare Officers
- www.TheFA.com/Footballsafe

- footballsafe@TheFA.com
- The FA Safeguarding Children general enquiry line 0845 210 8080

CLUB COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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 have been broken, they should follow the procedures below:

(1) They should report the matter to the Club Secretary or another member of the Committee.

The report should include:

(i) Details of what, when and where the occurrence took place

(ii) Any witness statement and names

(iii) Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way

(iv) Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made

(v) A preference for a solution to the incident

(2) The Club's Management Committee will sit for any hearings that are requested.

(3) The Club's Management Committee will have

the power to:

(i) Warn as to future conduct

(ii) Suspend from membership

(ii) Remove from membership any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct