



OVERTON YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

#OurFootballFamily

#RespectAllFearNone

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Overton Youth Football Club (OYFC) is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment where all young people can enjoy the game of football, whether that's in training or playing in games. This policy is designed to set out the standards expected of **all** those involved in OYFC, detailing how any incidents which do not meet the Club's expectations and behavioural standards will be managed.

Standards of Conduct

This Policy is written in line with the Football Associations' (FA) Respect Codes of Conduct. On joining the Club, and on re-signing each season, **every member**, whether you're a player, parent/ carer or Club Official, is required to sign up and agree to these Codes.

The applicable Codes of Conduct depend on your involvement with the Club, and can be found on the OYFC website:

- [Players Respect Code of Conduct](#)
- [Spectators, Parents and Carers Code of Conduct](#)
- [Coaches, Managers and Club Officials Code of Conduct](#)
- [Respect the Referee Policy](#)

OYFC aims to deal with any breaches in a fair and timely manner. To support this, Club members are expected to co-operate with any investigation which is undertaken in line with this policy.

In some cases, breaches may be reported to Hampshire FA directly. This is usually the case where misconduct takes place during a match, where a Match Official (normally the referee) will be involved. As a member of OYFC, again you are expected to co-operate with any investigation undertaken by the FA. Where an external investigation takes place, OYFC reserves the right to conduct its' own investigation in line with this policy.

Players are also reminded that where red or yellow cards are issued during a match, any financial penalties will be payable by the player (or a parent/ carer).

PROCEDURE

If you are concerned about the conduct of another club member, you should contact a member of the Committee as soon as possible to discuss your concerns and agree on how you wish to take matters forward. This applies whatever your involvement with the club, whether you are a Club Official (manager/ coach), parent/ carer, or player.

OYFC has an appointed Discipline Officer, who is normally responsible for leading on investigations into incidents, at the request of the Clubs' Executive Committee. Where concerns relate to safeguarding matters in relation to Club Officials, the Club Welfare Officer will also be notified.

Details of who to contact on the Committee can be found on the OYFC website:

[OYFC Committee](#)

Informal Resolution

Some concerns may be resolved informally, where all members involved agree that this is appropriate. A member of the Executive Committee may discuss this option with any member raising concerns prior to commencing a formal investigation.

Where it is not possible to resolve matters informally, or the misconduct is of a more serious nature, the matter will be referred to the Discipline Officer and the formal investigation procedure will be followed.

Formal Investigation

On receipt of the concerns, the Discipline Officer will commence an independent investigation, normally comprising of the following steps:

Step One: Instigate investigation and gather the facts:

- i. Notify the Club members involved that an investigation will be taking place, providing a brief description of the concerns raised.
- ii. Gather all the facts, collecting witness statements and any relevant documents detailing how the incident contravenes the Club's Codes of Conduct and/ or policies/ procedures. Where the concerns involve a young person under the age of 16, their parents/ carers and the Club Welfare Officer should be in attendance when any statements are taken from them.
- iii. If the matter is deemed to be serious, the Discipline Officer may recommend to the Clubs' Executive Committee that the member be suspended for the duration of the investigation to safeguard both themselves and others involved. Suspension will usually take immediate effect and the member will be provided with written confirmation of the decision. It is important to note that suspension is not in itself a sanction and does not imply that any decision has been made about the concerns raised. Serious incidents may include those involving potential bullying, intimidation, racism, sexist remarks and physical/ verbal assault.

Step Two: Recommended action

Upon completion of the initial investigation, the Discipline Officer shall make a recommendation to the Club Chairman/ Vice Chairman whether a formal meeting is required, to consider whether further action is needed.

Where the evidence suggests that a breach of OYFC Codes of Conduct and/ or policies/ procedures has taken place, consideration may still be given at this stage, into whether an informal discussion may be appropriate to resolve matters (taking into account any mitigating factors).

Where there is a lack of evidence, the members concerned will be notified of the outcome of the investigation. An advisory discussion may, however, be considered appropriate to re-affirm the standards expected of all Club members, in line with the Codes of Conduct.

Note: Whilst the Club will take all reasonable measures to investigate any complaints, it should be noted that the Club Committee does not hold any investigatory powers to force people to engage with the process and is wholly reliant on the honesty and integrity of the complainant and any witnesses involved.

Step Three: The disciplinary meeting and decision

Should a formal disciplinary meeting be considered appropriate, the disciplinary panel will be made up of **two members** of the Clubs' Executive Committee, including where possible, the Club Chairman/ Vice Chairman. Other panel members may include:

- Child Welfare Officer
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Discipline Officer (where they are not the Investigating Officer).

A copy of any investigation report and supporting evidence may be provided to the panel prior to the meeting itself.

The member against whom the concerns have been raised will be invited to attend the disciplinary meeting. Where multiple members are involved, each member will be invited to attend a separate meeting. The members will be provided with as much notice as possible. In the event the member is unable to attend, an attempt may be made to re-arrange the meeting. Where the member fails to engage with the process, the meeting will proceed in their absence and a decision made based on the evidence presented by the Discipline Officer.

Format of the meeting:

- i. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting and the roles of those present.
- ii. The Discipline Officer will be invited to explain the key issues and present the findings from their investigation.
- iii. The panel shall have the opportunity to raise any questions, as appropriate. The member shall also be given the opportunity to ask questions and raise any additional points they feel are relevant, including any mitigating factors.
- iv. The panel will then adjourn to make a decision, taking into consideration any Club precedents and review any previous reports of misconduct by the members (where there have been issues reported previously).

- v. Where the panel agree that the member has breached Club Codes of Conduct and/ or policies/ procedures, the options available are as follows:
 - Formally warn the member as to their future conduct
 - Suspend the member from matches for a specified number of sessions/ time period.
 - Suspend the member from training and matches for a specified number of sessions/ time period.
 - Suspend the member from the Club
- vi. The member shall be informed in writing of the decision, explaining the rationale and any penalty imposed. It will also set out the members' right to appeal.

Note: Where there are multiple members involved, resulting in separate meetings, the outcomes of any disciplinary action against one member will not be shared with the other members involved.

Right of Appeal

Any appeal must be made within 14 days of receipt of the written confirmation.

Appeals should be made in writing, addressed to the Club Chairman/ Vice Chairman (whichever was not involved in the original disciplinary meeting). The member should set out the reasons for the appeal and provide any additional evidence which may be relevant.

An appeal meeting shall be arranged as soon as practicably possible, including two members of the Executive Committee who were not involved in the original meeting (preferably including the Chairman/ Vice Chairman).

Record Keeping and Retention of Information

The Discipline Officer will keep records throughout the investigation, including any notes of discussions and witness statements, which will be stored on a secure device. Such evidence may be shared with the Disciplinary panel prior to the meeting. Panel members may also make a record of the outcome of the meeting.

Any disciplinary records will be retained by the Club for the duration of the season, after which they will be confidentially destroyed.

Raising concerns about members of other football clubs

Where parents wish to raise concerns about the conduct of members from other football clubs, they are requested to make their teams manager aware of this immediately, in order that it can be recorded in the match report. These matters may then be investigated by the Hampshire FA. OYFC will support this process by gathering any witness statements and providing evidence, as necessary.

Further Queries

If you have any queries in relation to this policy, please contact a member of the [Club Committee](#).