

Coach Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy

Policy owner: Southside Star Youth FC Committee

Applies to: All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and regular volunteers

Review date: 30/06/2027 and annually thereafter

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

Southside Star Youth FC is committed to providing a safe, positive and enjoyable football environment for all players.

This policy sets out the standards expected of all coaches and volunteers and explains how the club will respond if concerns are raised about a coach's conduct, behaviour or approach.

The club recognises that coaches and volunteers give their time freely and play a vital role in grassroots football. However, all adults involved with the club are expected to act responsibly, follow club policies and place the welfare, safety and development of children above all other considerations.

2. Guiding Principles

All coaches and volunteers at Southside Star Youth FC are expected to follow these principles:

- **Player welfare comes first**

The safety, wellbeing and enjoyment of players must always come before winning, league position or personal ambition.

- **Positive role modelling**

Coaches must set a good example to players, parents, spectators and opposition teams.

- **Respect**

Coaches must show respect to players, parents, referees, opposition teams, spectators, other coaches and club officials.

- **Fairness and inclusion**

All players should be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, regardless of ability, background, sex, race, disability, religion or any other protected characteristic.

- **Development over 'win at all costs'**

Coaches should support player development, confidence and enjoyment. A 'win at all costs' approach is not acceptable in youth football.

- **Safeguarding**

All coaches must follow the club's safeguarding procedures and report any safeguarding concerns promptly to the Club Welfare Officer.

- **Accountability**

Concerns about conduct will be handled fairly, consistently and in line with this policy.

3. Coach Code of Conduct

All coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and regular volunteers are expected to:

- Act as positive role models for young players.
- Prioritise the welfare, safety and development of every player.
- Create a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Treat players, parents, referees, opposition teams, spectators and other coaches with respect.
- Communicate clearly and appropriately with players and parents.
- Give constructive feedback and avoid humiliation, intimidation or aggressive behaviour.
- Encourage fair play, teamwork and good sportsmanship.
- Respect the decisions of referees and match officials.
- Avoid inappropriate language, shouting, threats or behaviour that could upset or intimidate children.
- Never bully, discriminate against or deliberately exclude any player.
- Follow the club's safeguarding, anti-bullying, social media, equality and complaints policies.
- Be punctual, prepared and organised for training and matches.
- Maintain any required FA qualifications, safeguarding training and DBS checks.
- Avoid private one-to-one communication with children unless in line with safeguarding guidance.
- Report concerns, injuries, incidents or safeguarding matters promptly.

4. Examples of Conduct Concerns

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate language.
- Persistent dissent towards referees or officials.
- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour.
- Unsporting conduct.
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination.

- Favouritism or unfair treatment.
- Inappropriate coaching methods.
- Breach of safeguarding procedures.
- Breach of club policies or codes of conduct.
- Failure to follow reasonable club instructions.
- Serious misconduct.
- Behaviour that brings the club into disrepute.

Safeguarding concerns will always be treated seriously and referred to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

5. Raising a Concern About a Coach

Where possible, minor concerns should first be raised calmly and privately with the coach or team manager.

If the concern is serious, repeated, unresolved, or relates to safeguarding, bullying, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour, it should be reported in writing to one of the following:

- Club Welfare Officer
- Club Secretary
- Chairperson
- Another member of the Southside Star Youth FC Committee

The written concern should include:

- What happened.
- When and where it happened.
- Who was involved.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Whether the issue has happened before.
- Whether it has already been raised with anyone.
- What outcome or support is being requested.

Concerns should not be debated in parent WhatsApp groups, on social media, or in front of children.

6. Disciplinary Process

Southside Star Youth FC will deal with concerns fairly, proportionately and confidentially where possible.

The process will usually be as follows:



7. Possible Outcomes

Depending on the seriousness of the concern, possible outcomes may include:

- No further action.
- Informal discussion or reminder of expected standards.
- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Requirement to complete further training or mentoring.
- Behaviour agreement or improvement plan.
- Temporary restriction of coaching duties.

- Temporary suspension from coaching or club activity.
- Removal from a coaching or volunteer role.
- Referral to the Club Welfare Officer.
- Referral to the league, County FA or The FA.
- Referral to external authorities where required.

Serious safeguarding concerns, violence, discrimination, abuse or behaviour that may place children at risk may result in immediate suspension while the matter is investigated.

8. Suspension

Suspension may be used where the club believes it is necessary to protect players, protect the coach, allow a fair investigation, or safeguard the reputation of the club.

Suspension is not automatically a disciplinary finding. It is a temporary measure while the club considers the matter.

9. Appeals

A coach has the right to appeal a formal disciplinary decision.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary or Chairperson within 7 days of the decision being communicated.

The appeal should explain why the coach believes the decision was unfair, disproportionate or incorrect.

Where possible, the appeal will be reviewed by committee members who were not directly involved in the original decision. The appeal decision will be final within the club.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Coaches and volunteers**

Responsible for following club policies, acting appropriately and putting player welfare first.

- **Club Welfare Officer**

Responsible for advising on safeguarding matters and ensuring safeguarding concerns are handled correctly.

- **Club Committee**

Responsible for reviewing complaints, overseeing disciplinary procedures and ensuring policies are applied fairly.

- **Parents and carers**

Responsible for raising concerns appropriately and supporting a respectful club environment.

11. Confidentiality

The club will handle concerns sensitively and share information only with those who need to know.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, information may need to be shared with the Club Welfare Officer, County FA, The FA, statutory agencies or other relevant authorities.

12. Review and Communication

This policy will be reviewed annually and shared with all coaches, team managers and relevant volunteers.

Coaches may be asked to confirm that they have read and understood this policy at the start of each season.