

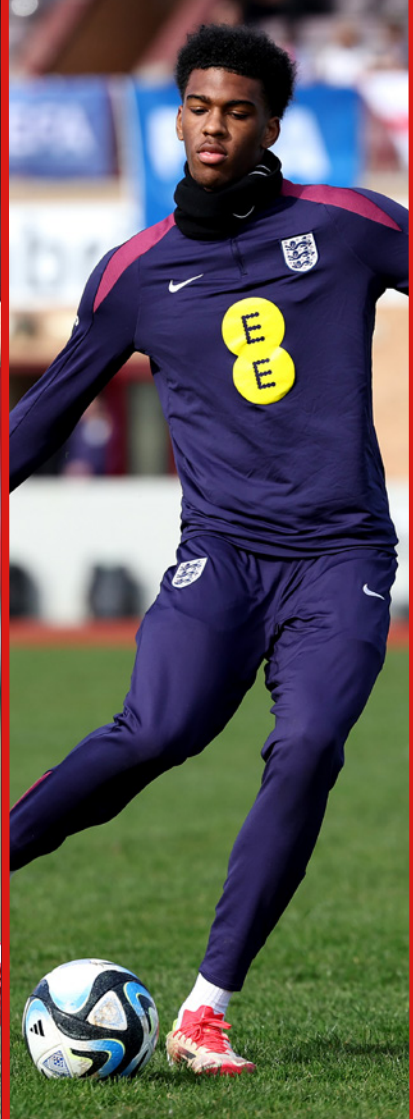


# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

## **FOR** PLAYERS

2025/26  
LEVEL: YOUTH





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# ON-FIELD MATTERS

## HOW MANY YELLOW CARDS CAN I RECEIVE BEFORE I GET AN AUTOMATIC BAN?

### Premier League, EFL Leagues and National League - Non First Team Matches (NFTM):

The cut-off dates for receiving a sanction as a result of accumulating cautions are:



COMPETITION IN WHICH CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	NUMBER OF CAUTIONS ACCUMULATED	CUT OFF POINT (UP TO AND INCLUDING)	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION/ SANCTION APPLIES
NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup)	5	31 December	1 Match	NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup)
	10	Second Sunday of April	2 Matches	
	15	Last day of the same playing season	3 Matches	
	20	Last day of the same playing season	As determined by a Regulatory Commission	
EFL Trophy	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	EFL Trophy
	4		2 Matches	
National League Cup	2	Quarter Finals	1 Match	National League Cup
	4		2 Matches	

- Suspensions which are imposed for reaching these thresholds in Non-First Team Competitive Matches will commence with immediate effect.



## IF I AM SENT OFF, HOW LONG WILL I BE SUSPENDED FOR?

Premier League, EFL Leagues and National League - Non-First Team Matches:

SENDING-OFF OFFENCE	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION	COMPETITIONS TO WHICH AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION APPLIES
Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence	1 Match	Automatic suspension to be served exclusively in NFTM (excluding EFL Trophy and National League Cup).
Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick	1 Match	<b>(EFL Trophy):</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in an EFL Trophy Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the EFL Trophy and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other NFTM, an EFL Trophy Match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension).
Serious foul play	3 Matches	<b>(National League Cup):</b> Unless specified by The Association: (a) If the sending-off offence occurs in a National League Cup Match, the relevant automatic suspension must be served exclusively in the National League Cup and (b) if the sending-off offence occurs in any other NFTM, a National League Cup Match cannot be used to serve any part of the relevant automatic suspension).
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	6 Matches	
Violent conduct	3 Matches	
Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures	2 Matches	
Receiving a second caution in the same match	1 Match	

The period of suspension will commence immediately (unless the Club have submitted a claim of wrongful dismissal or mistaken identity).

## **RETROSPECTIVE ACTION**

- Please note that The FA has the power to take retrospective action for potential Red Card offences if not fully seen by the Match Officials.
- The FA may also take action even where an incident has been witnessed or acted upon by Match Officials in serious or unusual cases.
- The FA has the power to consider retrospective action for successful deception of a Match Official. This includes (a) a clear act of simulation which leads either to a penalty, or the dismissal of an opposing Player, and (b) handling the ball in a direct and successful attempt to score a goal. Proven cases carry an automatic ban of two matches.
- Players can be reported for their reaction to being dismissed, and further disciplinary action may result.

## **SURROUNDING MATCH OFFICIALS**

- Match Officials must report incidents where two or more Players of one Club surround them in a potentially confrontational manner.
- Your Club may receive potentially significant fines in the event of an accepted or proven charge. For repeat offences, the sanctions may become considerably greater.

## **MASS CONFRONTATIONS**

- Match Officials must report incidents where two or more Players or Club Officials are involved in a confrontation with opposing Players or Club Officials.
- Again, your Club may receive a potentially significant fine in the event of a charge being accepted or found proven. For repeat offences, the sanctions may rise.

## **GOAL CELEBRATIONS/INTERACTION WITH CROWD**

- Celebrations that are considered to be inflammatory or which cause crowd issues, can lead to disciplinary action and potential match bans. A Referee may take action at the time but does not mean that The FA may not also consider additional action should it be felt necessary.
- In particular, do not celebrate directly in front of opposition supporters as in recent seasons this has led to missile throwing and risks potential injury to both players and supporters.
- Likewise, be aware that celebrating with your own supporters by going too close can lead to crowd surges and/or pitch incursions. Supporters and stewards have been injured as a result of some celebrations and again The FA may consider taking retrospective action in these circumstances.
- Please be careful when making any gestures to opposing Players, officials or the crowd. An abusive, insulting or improper gesture can lead to the Referee dismissing you and/or retrospective disciplinary action.
- It is important to note that disciplinary action can be taken for gestures which have a negative or inappropriate meaning in another country or part of the world, regardless of the fact that those gestures may not be widely known in England.
- You are reminded that any form of abusive, insulting, or improper language or behaviour which The FA considers to have been directed towards a camera may be the subject of disciplinary action.



- You are reminded that you should not approach any spectators who enter the pitch.
- It is the responsibility of stewards to deal with such incidents. Equally, you should not attempt to intervene in any matter being dealt with by stewards or the police as this can often lead to further problems.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A PYROTECHNIC IS THROWN ONTO THE PITCH?**

- In the event of any pyrotechnic device being thrown onto the pitch, you should move well away from it and you must not attempt to remove the device yourself as such matters will be dealt with by safety stewards.
- In recent seasons, there have been several examples of players being charged by The FA for celebrating with pyrotechnic devices.

### **AM I ALLOWED TO REVEAL A MESSAGE UNDERNEATH MY SHIRT?**

- Law 4 of the IFAB Laws of the Game states that Players must not reveal undergarments showing any slogans or advertising. The basic compulsory playing equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images. If you breach this Law, it may be reported and you and/or your team could be subject to a sanction.

### **USEFUL CONTACT**

If you have any questions or queries relating to on-field issues, please contact: [Disciplinary@TheFA.com](mailto:Disciplinary@TheFA.com).

# ANTI-DOPING

## WHAT IS THE FA'S ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMME?

The FA's Anti-Doping programme combines drug testing, education and research and is designed to protect football from doping.

- Youth, reserve, professional and international footballers are regularly drug tested across the men's and women's game.
- Players receive Anti-Doping education at workshops, and resources are available to assist players and parents.
- Research into the latest developments in Anti-Doping is ongoing to ensure that the Anti-Doping testing and education programme is as effective as possible.
- As soon as you sign with a club, you fall under The FA Anti-Doping Regulations and are eligible to be tested.

## WHY DO WE NEED IT?

- To protect and defend the reputation of the game;
- To protect the physical and mental health of players;
- To ensure that all players have an equal chance.

## WHAT ARE PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS?

There are lots of drugs that can improve your stamina or strength and they are known as performance enhancing drugs. Some examples are steroids, hormones and stimulants many of which are banned in football. Any player, from professional down to apprentices and youth players, caught taking drugs like these can be banned from football for as long as four years. If you take drugs to cheat, there's no place for you in football and your career will be over very quickly.

- It's not just the risk of committing a doping offence that makes performance enhancing drugs dangerous, many substances carry significant health side effects.
- Anabolic agents such as nandrolone and testosterone can be abused to aid muscle growth /recovery. However, the side effects can be very severe and include an increased risk of heart attack, liver failure, infertility and testicle shrinkage.
- EPO (erythropoietin) can be used to improve oxygen delivery to muscles and therefore improve endurance. However abuse of this substance can cause blood clots, strokes and may lead to heart attacks.



- Stimulants can be used to increase alertness but can lead to a rise in blood pressure and body temperature which can cause major organs to stop working. Often they are also addictive, can cause mood swings and lead to increased aggression.

## **WHAT IS “STRICT LIABILITY”?**

Strict liability means that you are solely responsible for any banned substance you use, attempt to use, or is found in your system, regardless of how it got there or whether there was any intention to cheat.

## **HOW DO I KNOW WHICH MEDICATIONS I CAN TAKE?**

- Be careful when taking medicines. Many medicines that you get from a chemist or from your doctor may contain substances that are banned in football. Even some types of flu remedy contain banned substances.
- Always check to see if your medication is on the banned list – you can check medications at [www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com)
- It doesn't matter whether you have taken the substance deliberately or accidentally, you are responsible for what you put into your body.
- If you are asthmatic, make sure you check the banned status of your inhaler. Certain inhalers are banned, or banned above a certain threshold.

If you have a legitimate medical condition and need to use a banned substance or method, you should check whether you need to apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). A TUE is only accepted if there are no other suitable permitted medications or treatments that can be used, and there is a strict, detailed process to determine this. You can find out more information about the TUE process in the anti-doping section of The FA website and can use the UK Anti-Doping TUE Wizard to find out whether you need to apply for a TUE, and where your application should be submitted.

## **WHAT ARE THE RISKS WITH TAKING SUPPLEMENTS?**

Players who take sports nutrition supplements to support their dietary needs may be at significant risk of inadvertently testing positive for a banned substance. Players are encouraged to seek expert advice before taking any products.

Supplement companies are largely unregulated – meaning you may never know exactly what you are taking. Some products have been found to contain banned substances that are not listed on the label and there could be a banned substance in your supplement.



## ASSESS THE NEED

The FA recommends that players should develop their diet, lifestyle and training before considering taking any supplements. You should assess the need for taking a particular supplement by consulting a registered nutritionist or your Club Doctor before taking it.

## ASSESS THE RISK

If you decide to use supplements then you need to make sure that you minimise the risk of testing positive from taking a contaminated supplement. See [www.informed-sport.com](http://www.informed-sport.com) which provides a testing and accreditation process for supplements and lists those products that have gone through the Informed Sport programme by batch number.\*

*\*The FA accepts no liability for the contents of supplements approved by Informed-Sport or any other organisations.*

*Strict liability applies and players may incur a ban as a result of using a contaminated supplement.*

## ASSESS THE CONSEQUENCES

If you test positive for a banned substance contained in a supplement you could face up to a four year suspension from football.

Be careful when taking a medication or supplement if you are not sure of its contents, check with your club doctor first.

## CANNABIDIOL (CBD) PRODUCTS

There are a growing number of cannabidiol (CBD) products that can be purchased in forms such as oils, extracts, vape and e-liquids. CBD is one of around 110 known cannabinoids produced by the cannabis plant. It has a different chemical structure to THC, which is the psychoactive compound that illicit drug users use to get “high”. CBD does not have this effect. CBD is not currently listed on the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List. As a result, it is permitted to use in sport. However, despite the permitted status of CBD, Players must still consider the risk of inadvertently ingesting a CBD product that either has a higher THC concentration than expected or contains another cannabinoid that is prohibited in sport through contamination.

**The use of any CBD product is at the Player's own risk. To view the UK Anti-Doping Athlete advisory note regarding CBD products visit:**

**[www.ukad.org.uk/cannabidiol-cbd](http://www.ukad.org.uk/cannabidiol-cbd).**

## IS ALCOHOL BANNED?

- Alcohol is not banned in football but in almost all cases where players have tested positive for social drugs, they have been drunk at the time.
- Think carefully about your lifestyle and how much alcohol you drink. It can affect your ability to say no to taking drugs.

## WHAT ABOUT NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES?

New psychoactive substances – often incorrectly called legal highs – contain one or more chemical substances which produce similar effects to illegal drugs (like cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy). Psychoactive substances can carry serious health risks. The chemicals they contain have in most cases never been used in drugs for human consumption before.

- This means they haven't been tested to show that they are safe. Users can never be certain what they are taking and what the effects might be.
- The effects of legal highs can include drowsiness, paranoia, comas, seizures and, in a few cases, death.
- Many of these risks are increased if the drug is combined with alcohol or with another psychoactive drug.
- Because the chemical ingredients in a branded product can be changed without you knowing, the risks are unpredictable.
- Even drugs that look similar or have similar names may be of varying strengths and have different effects.

## WHAT HAPPENS ON AN ANTI-DOPING DRUG TEST?

- You can be tested at anytime and anywhere. This includes; after a match, after training or even at your home address. You will not know you will be tested until you are told in person by Anti-Doping officials.
- You can be selected for urine or blood test, or both at the same time. This is because they test for different substances.
- As a player under the age of 18 you are strongly recommended to bring an adult with you to the Doping Control Station.
- You will be accompanied by an Anti-Doping official from the point at which you are notified through to the end of your test.
- The Anti-Doping official will then talk you through the process of giving a sample and answer any questions you have about the test.
- When you provide a sample you will be directly observed by an Anti-Doping official of the same gender as you.
- Please listen to the instructions of the Anti-Doping official. It is an offence to interfere or tamper with the procedures or to be abusive to Anti-Doping officials.
- Parents can be reassured in that all Anti-Doping officials have been DBS checked.
- You can view a urine or blood drug test on The FA Anti-Doping website: [www.TheFA.com/anti-doping](http://www.TheFA.com/anti-doping).
- Refusing or failing to provide a sample and complete the test may result in a 4-year suspension.

# SOCIAL DRUG REGULATIONS

## WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR SOCIAL DRUGS?

In addition to anti-doping testing, The FA also conducts a social drug testing programme. If you are selected for a social drug test you will be asked for a hair or urine sample.

'Social drugs' including cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), Ketamine and cannabis are banned by The FA at all times. A positive test for a social drug on a non-match day (i.e. at training) is a breach of The FA Social Drugs Regulations and may lead to a fine (for a first offence). The testing procedures will vary from those undertaken as part of the anti-doping programme, with hair and/or urine and/or any other suitable biological material being collected. Please note you do not get to decide which type of sample to provide.

Refusing or failing to provide a sample under the social drugs programme may result in a 4-12 month suspension.

Remember, a positive test for any banned substance, including a social drug, on a match day is a breach of The FA's Anti-Doping Regulations and may lead to a 2-4 year suspension for a first offence. Refusing or evading an anti-doping test may result in a 4 year ban.

## THINK ABOUT YOUR CHOICES

It's your career, your reputation, your responsibility.

## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I WANT TO REPORT DOPING IN FOOTBALL?

Protecting clean sport depends on everyone playing their part. Speak out if you feel something's wrong - no matter how small. There are four ways for you to speak out. You can share your concerns via WhatsApp **07587 634711**, email **pys@reportdoping.com**, online (search: Protect Your Sport) or by phone **08000 32 23 32**.

If you would rather contact The FA directly, please email **anti-doping@TheFA.com**.





## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANTI-DOPING OR SOCIAL DRUGS?

If you have any questions regarding Anti-Doping and drugs there are a number of people you can talk to:

### WITHIN FOOTBALL

- Your club doctor
- A member of club staff responsible for safeguarding
- You can contact The FA at [anti-doping@TheFA.com](mailto:anti-doping@TheFA.com)
- You can find more information on the FA website [www.TheFA.com/anti-doping](http://www.TheFA.com/anti-doping)

### SOCIAL DRUGS

- For confidential advice about drugs go to [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com) or call **0300 123 6600**
- For alcohol related issues you can visit [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) or call Drinkline on **0300 123 1110**
- If you have a problem with drugs/alcohol and need help you can visit [www.sportingchanceclinic.com](http://www.sportingchanceclinic.com) or contact Sporting Chance on **0870 2200714** or email [info@sportingchanceclinic.com](mailto:info@sportingchanceclinic.com)

# FOOTBALL AGENTS

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FOOTBALL AGENTS?

You do not need to use a Football Agent to represent you, but if you do choose to use one they must be registered with The FA.

You can check if an Agent is registered on TheFA.com and/or by requesting to see their **Digital ID**.

If you have entered into an exclusive Representation Agreement with an FA Registered Football Agent, you should not sign another agreement with a different FA Registered Football Agent.

You cannot be represented by an FA Registered Football Agent before 1 September in the Academic Year (which runs from 1st September to 31st August (inclusive)) of your 16th birthday and an FA Registered Football Agent can only receive a service fee when providing services in respect of a professional contract (and not until that contract comes into force).

FA Registered Football Agents who wish to represent Players under the age of 18 also need to receive additional authorisation from The FA.

It is against the relevant regulations for someone who does not have that authorisation to represent you if you are under 18. The FA Agent list and the Agent's Digital ID will show if they are permitted to work with Players under 18. An FA Registered Football Agent cannot contact you before your 18th birthday without the written permission of your legal guardian. Your legal guardian must also provide signed consent if you choose to sign a Representation Agreement with an FA Registered Football Agent.

You must have a Representation Agreement with your FA Registered Football Agent. Ensure that you are given a copy of that agreement and that it is signed by the FA Registered Football Agent and dated. You should check the terms of the agreement closely and seek legal advice if required. The agreement with your FA Registered Football Agent can only last for a maximum of 2 years. This term may only be extended by entering into a new Representation Agreement.

At the time of completing a Transaction, such as a new contract, permanent transfer or loan, you will be required to sign a declaration form known as an AF1 Form. You must ensure that all information on this form is accurate before you sign as you may be held liable for any information that is not accurate.

The FA Registered Football Agent must provide you with an Annual Return detailing all payments they have received in respect of services provided to you within 30 days of the 30 June each year.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING FOOTBALL AGENTS, PLEASE EMAIL [FOOTBALLAGENTSQUERIES@THEFA.COM](mailto:FOOTBALLAGENTSQUERIES@THEFA.COM).  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [WWW.THEFA.COM/FOOTBALLAGENTS](http://WWW.THEFA.COM/FOOTBALLAGENTS).**

# GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENTS

Players, Managers and Coaches who do not have the right to work in the United Kingdom will require a Governing Body Endorsement (GBE) before they can be issued with a visa.

To receive a GBE the individual must meet the requirements of the relevant criteria.

The latest GBE Criteria can be found on **TheFA.Com**.

# BETTING RELATED INTEGRITY

## WHAT ARE THE BETTING RULES?

You are not permitted to bet on any aspect of any football worldwide – this includes bets on any match or competition, events within a match or competition, or on any other football matter (such as next manager markets or transfers). Remember that events in the technical area are considered part of a match and that betting on novelty markets connected to a game is also prohibited.

You are not permitted to ask or instruct someone else to place any of the above bets on your behalf.

The rule applies to bets made in person, on the telephone, online or even with friends.

Betting operators are obliged to report any bets made in breach of FA Rules to The FA and the Gambling Commission. They can also search your betting history.

You are not permitted to advertise or promote any football related betting activity.

Sporting Chance offers help and support to Players dealing with betting and addiction issues and can be contacted at **[info@sportingchanceclinic.com](mailto:info@sportingchanceclinic.com)**.

## WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH SHARING INSIDE INFORMATION?

Inside information is information that you are aware of due to your position in the game, which is not publicly available – for example, this may include injury or team selection news.

You are not allowed to pass inside information on to someone else which they then use for betting.

You can be considered to have passed inside information by any means, e.g. word of mouth, text or other instant message, email, writing or social media postings.



## **WHAT IF I AM APPROACHED TO FIX A MATCH?**

Fixing is arranging in advance the result or conduct of a match or competition, or any event within a match or competition (i.e spot-fixing), this may include conduct within in the technical area.

Fixing is prohibited and is treated extremely seriously.

In addition, offering or accepting (or even just agreeing to offer or accept) any reward or bribe related in any way to influencing the result or conduct of a match or competition or any event within a match or competition is similarly banned and serious.

If you attempt to fix, you are likely to get caught and be charged by The FA.

If found proven, this is likely to lead to a significant suspension, and in some instances, a lifetime ban.

Fixing offences may also be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution.

## **HOW DO I REPORT A MATCH/SPOT FIXING APPROACH?**

If you are approached to fix or suspect that a colleague or someone you know has been approached to fix or is involved in fixing, then you must report it to The FA immediately on the phone number or email below.

**FAILURE TO REPORT ANY SUCH INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN AN FA CHARGE AGAINST YOU.**

## **OFFENCES COMMITTED IN OTHER SPORTS**

The FA may take disciplinary action against you if you are found by another sport's disciplinary body to have committed a betting or fixing or related offence under the rules of that other sport.

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

If you have any questions or want to send a report, please contact:

Email: [Integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:Integrity@TheFA.com)

Telephone: **0208 795 9640**

[www.TheFA.com/betting](http://www.TheFA.com/betting)

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA COMMENTS

## WHY DO I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT I POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR SAY TO THE MEDIA?

**ALL MEDIA COMMENTS AND POSTINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES SUCH AS X, FACEBOOK, TIKTOK, TWITCH, SNAPCHAT AND INSTAGRAM MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE FA'S DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION.**

### DO NOT:

- Use threatening, indecent, abusive or insulting language or images.
- Use discriminatory language.
- Imply bias or attack the integrity of Match Officials (including the VAR Officials).
- Make any comment about an appointed Match Official (including VAR Officials) before a match. Please note that The FA may take disciplinary action even in circumstances where the Match Official is not named by the Player, or the Match Official(s) has not yet been appointed for the next game.
- Be personally offensive about Match Officials.

These are examples of where charges may be brought. The above can also include repeated negative and/or inflammatory comments in respect of the Match Official's performance.

Charges may be brought in respect of any comments or postings that may cause damage to the wider interests of football or bring the game into disrepute.

**ANY QUERIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO [INTEGRITY@THEFA.COM](mailto:integrity@thefa.com).**

### REMEMBER:

- Reposting is treated the same as posting a comment yourself.
- You are responsible for everything on your account at all times whether or not you posted it.
- Only use words, phrases and images that you are 100% sure of the meaning of – ignorance will not be a defence.
- Your comments and posts may affect your future career.
- Remove any inappropriate postings as soon as possible.
- You are responsible for everything on your account, including historic postings that you may no longer remember are still on your account.
- Be careful of what you 'like'.

**SANCTIONS FOR THESE OFFENCES MAY BE FINANCIAL AND/OR MATCH SUSPENSIONS.**

## USEFUL CONTACT

If you have any questions or queries relating to media comments or social media issues, please contact: [integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:integrity@thefa.com).

# DISCRIMINATION

## WHAT IS DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

**DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE INCLUDES A REFERENCE WHETHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED TO ANY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Ethnic origin
- Colour
- Race
- Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

## CAN I BE CHARGED FOR MESSAGES SENT IN PRIVATE OR OUTSIDE OF A FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT?

Players should be aware that discriminatory language or content may result in disciplinary action even if shared in a 'private' message – For example, via text, email, private social media account or WhatsApp message. The FA may also take action for discriminatory language or behaviour that occurs outside of a football context – for example, using discriminatory language during a night out.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE OR HEAR DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE?

**IF YOU OR ANOTHER PLAYER IS SUBJECT TO DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE AT A GAME BY EITHER THE CROWD OR ANOTHER PARTICIPANT, REPORT IT TO A MATCH OFFICIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND FOLLOW THE MATCHDAY PROTOCOLS BELOW:**

## DISCRIMINATION BY SUPPORTERS

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Referee.
- The Referee should report the incident to the home club's safety officer (or responsible home club representative) and police via the Fourth Official. (If there is no Fourth Official appointed the Referee should stop play and report the incident to a member of the home club's safety management and note the incident with an assistant Referee).
- The police and safety officer should seek to identify the person/people responsible and take appropriate action while the match continues.
- If, within an amount of time agreed by the safety officer and Referee, the problem continues, the Referee (in consultation with the police and safety officer/home club representative) may remove the players from the field and suspend the match, allowing the police and safety officer/home club representative a further opportunity to deal with the problem.
- If the matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily and the welfare of any Participants, in terms of the threat of continued abuse, remains at risk, the Referee should consider abandoning the match.
- Any decision to suspend or abandon a match should be taken by the Referee after full consultation with the police, safety officer and (dependent on fixture) either the
  - Premier League Match Centre; or
  - EFL Football Services Department or Duty Director; or
  - Home club representative, and after consultation with the team managers and captains.

Where no police are present in the stadium, the initial decision-making responsibility belongs to the safety officer, including informing the police. Where the safety officer or police are not present initial decision making responsibility should be made in consultation between the Referee and home club representative.

If participating in an UEFA match, they have a slightly different 3 step protocol – visit [UEFA.Com](http://UEFA.Com) for further information.

In cases where there is clear evidence of mass discriminatory chanting by a Club's supporters within a stadium (i.e. not one or two individual supporters) then formal disciplinary action will be taken. In circumstances where The FA becomes aware of an individual supporter (or a small number of individuals) directing discriminatory abuse within a stadium, The FA will investigate the steps taken by the Club to deal with the abuse to determine whether formal disciplinary action is taken.

### **DISCRIMINATION BY PARTICIPANTS (PLAYERS AGED 16-18)**

- The incident should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Referee as soon as possible.
- The Referee will make full notes of any discussions as soon as possible.
- Match Officials may become aware of incidents which they themselves have not witnessed during the course of a game. If this occurs the Referee should ensure that full notes of the incident are made at the time. Again, this may involve using the communication system to ensure that the Fourth Official has a complete record of the words used.
- Shortly after the conclusion of the game the Referee should then invite the person who made the allegation, accompanied by a member of their club, into the Referee's changing room. The Referee should confirm with the player the exact words used in the allegation so that there is certainty on exactly what is being reported.
- Following this meeting the Referee should then invite the person who is the subject of the allegation, again accompanied by a member of their club, into the changing room. The Referee should advise this player of the nature of the allegation. If the player makes any comments these should be recorded.
- An extraordinary incident report is then submitted to The FA for investigation.

The sanction for an offence of on-field discriminatory abuse for a participant (for example, a player towards another player) ranges between **6 and 12 matches suspension** and mandatory education, plus a possible fine.

A sanction in excess of 12 matches may be imposed where aggravating factors of significant number or weight are present.

In certain circumstances a match-based suspension is not appropriate, and a time-based suspension will be imposed instead.

Second or further offences will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

### **WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN I REPORT DISCRIMINATION?**

If you see or hear discrimination on the pitch, at the training ground or in the stands, please contact us to report it:

Email The FA: [Integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:Integrity@TheFA.com)

Or you can contact Kick It Out: [info@kickitout.org](mailto:info@kickitout.org)

You can also download Kick It Out's app to help you report Misconduct.

### **WHAT IF I RECEIVE DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?**

If you see a post on social media that you believe is discriminatory, you can report it to the site or platform where it was posted. All platforms have designated teams who review reports and make decisions on removing posts. It is also advised that you should report it to your club and/or league as well.



# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF A COACH OR PARENT TOWARDS ME?

Football is a fantastic game, played every week by millions of young people up and down the country. This is made possible by the thousands of dedicated coaches and club staff who provide incredible support to help our youngsters enjoy a wonderful experience.

The FA wants to make sure that every measure is taken, and every bit of support is given, so children and young people have the best possible start in football – in whatever role they choose to take.

We want you to feel confident in football and to know that you will have fun and be safe. However, if standards ever fall short; with poor practice or unacceptable behaviour, speak to someone you trust or your Club's designated Safeguarding Officer.

## WHEN SHOULD I REPORT A CONCERN?

- You may feel that a coach has unrealistic expectations during training or a match, or there is unduly aggressive conduct from a parent or spectator or within the team.
- Perhaps you think you are being asked to play in unacceptable conditions.
- Maybe you have safety concerns about a lack of supervision.
- Or you may be aware of inappropriate use of social media by coaches towards you.
- If you are upset, hurt or scared by the way that someone behaves with you, please let someone you trust know.

Speak to your Club's designated safeguarding officer who will be able to help you. They are trained to report concerns to the County FA, The FA or agencies such as the police or Children's Social care.

You can also contact The FA directly at [safeguarding.children@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding.children@TheFA.com).



# DISCLAIMER

This guide is only intended as a summary of the key rules and regulations for youth players of Clubs in the Premier League, EFL, National League, WSL, WSL2, National League (North and South), the Isthmian League, the Northern Premier League and the Southern League. For further details and a complete understanding, Participants should always refer to the applicable rules and regulations as set out in full in the latest version of The FA's Handbook (accessible here [www.TheFA.com/handbook](http://www.TheFA.com/handbook)) and/or contact the relevant department of The FA for further information.

In the event of any inconsistency between this guide and The FA's Rules and Regulations, the latter shall take precedence.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS WEBSITE**

For further information on any of these areas, please visit: [www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance](http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance).

## **PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS ASSOCIATION**

Should you wish to discuss any of these issues with the PFA, you can contact them on:

Email: [info@thepfa.co.uk](mailto:info@thepfa.co.uk)

Telephone: **0161 236 0575**



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