



## Southport Athletic JFC



### Complaints and Discipline Policy and Procedure

**This policy and procedure is designed to help and encourage all members of Southport Athletic Junior Football Club (the “Club”) to achieve and maintain standards of behaviour as expected under the Club’s rules, policies and/or codes of conduct.**

The emphasis of this Complaints and Discipline Policy and Procedure is, in the first instance, on the improvement of the member’s behaviour by working in partnership with them, and where relevant their parent/guardian, rather than just on imposing sanctions. The Club will however, impose sanctions in the most serious cases or where improvement in the member’s behaviour has not been forthcoming.

The Club’s aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all members and no disciplinary action will be taken against a member until a full investigation as to the circumstances of the incident or matter has been conducted by the Club.

In the event that any member feels that he or she has suffered treatment that is not in accordance with the rules or spirit of the game, or believes that Club Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken, or they have an issue that cannot be resolved within their team, they should follow the procedures below.

1. They should report the matter to the Football Club Secretary and Chairperson of the Football Management Committee in writing. The report should include, where appropriate:

- a. Details of what, when, and where the incident took place.
- b. Names of any witnesses.
- c. Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way.
- d. Details of any former complaints made about the incident; date, when and to whom made.
- e. A preference for a solution to the incident.

2. Where, following investigation, a member is deemed by a majority of the Club’s management committee to have breached a Club rule, policy or code of conduct or has otherwise acted in a way which a majority of the management committee believes is in contrast to the spirit of this document and/or the Club’s rules, the management committee shall be at liberty to constitute a disciplinary committee (the “Disciplinary Committee”) to determine the facts relating to the matter and take such measures as the Disciplinary Committee sees fit.



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## Southport Athletic JFC



### Complaints and Discipline Policy and Procedure

3. The Disciplinary Committee will consist of up to four members of the Club's management committee plus (if relevant) the Club Welfare Officer, so long as none of them are the subject of the disciplinary action. The chosen chair of the Disciplinary Committee for the investigation shall have the casting vote if necessary.

4. Either the Club's management committee or the member who is the subject of the hearing may request for an independent member to join the Disciplinary Committee. The independent member will be selected on the basis of mutual agreement and shall for the avoidance of doubt not be someone who has served with the subject of the hearing on any board or committee and shall ideally not be a member of the Club itself.

5. All members of the Disciplinary Committee shall treat its proceedings as confidential, unless the subject of the hearing waives that right directly or violates the confidentiality through making public comment about its proceedings.

6. The Disciplinary Committee shall meet as soon as is practicable (where possible within seven days) after the Club's management committee meeting which constituted the Disciplinary Committee. The Club Secretary shall notify the member concerned of the time, date and venue of the meeting in writing and invite them to attend or submit their version of events or mitigating circumstances. The member will be required to confirm attendance no later than 48 hours prior to the date of the meeting.

7. If the member is aged under 18, the member will be required to attend with their parent/guardian who may make a representation on their behalf. If the member is aged 18 or over, they may be accompanied by an independent representative who may make a representation on their behalf.



**RESPECT**



## Southport Athletic JFC



### Complaints and Discipline Policy and Procedure

8. The Disciplinary Committee shall act honestly and equitably in assessing the facts of the disciplinary case before it and may impose such sanction as it sees fit, including for example (this list is not exhaustive):

8.1 suspension to allow more facts to be gathered, after which time a further meeting of the Disciplinary Committee shall be held.

8.2 verbal warning.

8.3 written warning.

8.4 education.

8.5 mentoring.

8.6 exclusion from a specified number of matches.

8.7 exclusion from a specified number of training sessions.

8.8 removal from the team for the remainder of the current season.

8.9 refusal to register with a team for the next season.

8.10 expulsion from the Club. If appropriate, the Disciplinary Committee may choose to impose no sanction.

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9. The Disciplinary Committee will not ordinarily expel a member from the Club for a first breach of a code of conduct, except in cases where there has been gross misconduct. Instead, but without prejudice to the Club's obligation to adhere to any disciplinary guidance or rules issued by any league or football authority to which it is affiliated, the Disciplinary Committee will seek to apply a sanction of expulsion only as a last resort for serious breaches or where other lighter measures aimed at improving behaviour have not been effective.

10. The Disciplinary Committee will normally regard the following (which is not an exhaustive list) as gross misconduct:

10.1 Fighting.

10.2 assault on another person.

10.3 deliberate damage to Club property.

10.4 bringing the Club into disrepute by actions or Words.

10.5 serious negligence or disregard of a Club rule, policy or code of conduct that causes, or could have caused, unacceptable loss, damage or injury.

10.6 serious act of insubordination, including the failure to follow or observe reasonable instructions of a team coach/manager or other Club official.





## Southport Athletic JFC



### Complaints and Discipline Policy and Procedure

11. If the member concerned fails to either attend or submit their version of events or mitigating circumstances as envisaged above, the Disciplinary Committee can proceed and make such inferences as it sees fit from such non-attendance or non-submission and the Disciplinary Committee meeting may proceed in the member's absence.

12. The member subject to the disciplinary hearing may appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Committee within seven days of being notified of the decision. The appeal must be made to the Club Secretary in writing and must identify the specific decision being appealed and set out the grounds of appeal and the reasons why it would be substantially unfair not to alter the decision. If these requirements are met, the Club Secretary will arrange for an independent appeal panel to be appointed which will exclude anyone who sat on the initial Disciplinary Committee and, since this appeal panel will be independent of the Club, any decisions made by it will be binding on all parties with no right of further appeal.

13. The appeal will take place as soon as possible after the member concerned has requested it, and no later than 28 days following the date of receipt of the request for an appeal hearing.

14. The Club Secretary will communicate the final decision to the member only after the conclusion of the appeal, or when the date for the lodging of an appeal has passed without such appeal being lodged. No member of the Disciplinary Committee shall make any comment about the proceedings publicly.

15. No member expelled from membership shall be readmitted except by a special resolution of the Club in general meeting.



**RESPECT**



## Southport Athletic JFC



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### **Specific Playing Issues**

The following apply specifically to incidents occurring as part of a football match where a Caution or Dismissal is issued.

1. Reporting Yellow and Red Cards: It is the team manager's duty to report all yellow and red cards to the club secretary within 5 days of the event. This may be by phone, letter or email. The report should include the match date, venue, opposition, name of player, type of card and offence, name of referee and whether the referee was qualified.
2. Payment of Fines: If a player, or the club, is fined by the league or county association for a Yellow or Red card, the player will be expected to pay the fine personally and shall not be eligible to play for the club until this has been accepted.
3. Red Cards: All players will receive a 3 match suspension for the first sending off in a season. The suspension will start immediately. A disciplinary hearing will not be held unless the player wishes to appeal (see below) or the Management Committee feel it is necessary. The club suspension will apply whether or not the referee submits an official card to the relevant League or County association. The team manager will be responsible for notifying the player that they will not be eligible to play for three matches.
4. Second Sending Off: For a 2nd sending off (in the same season) a minimum 5 match ban will be imposed and the player will not be eligible to play for the club again until they have appeared before the Disciplinary Committee.
5. League/County Suspension: If a League or County FA impose a suspension on a player, it will run concurrently with the Club's suspension (i.e. not in addition).
6. The Football Management Committee has the right to increase these punishments as it sees fit and players should note that any violent misconduct or actions likely to bring the club into disrepute would not be treated lightly.
7. Appeals: Any player who intends to appeal against a caution or sending off must notify the club secretary in writing within 5 days of the incident to avoid the above sanctions being taken. Where an official referee card has been submitted, the appeal will be held by the relevant League or County Association. The Club will support any verdict from these groups. Where a card has not been submitted, a Disciplinary Committee will hear the appeal. The player will be allowed to continue to play during the appeal process.
8. Club Fines: The Football Management Committee reserves the right to require players to pay any fines imposed on the Club by any League or County Association arising out of any disciplinary offence.



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