

The FA Football  
Development Programme  
Charter Standard Clubs  
Good Practice Guide

# 1. Code of Good Practice for Charter Standard Clubs

This booklet has been developed to support clubs who wish to develop good practice in their organisation and operations and achieve Charter Standard status. The booklet complements the Club Development Manual and Charter Standard Application Form, which contain details on the criteria to be met for Charter Standard status to be achieved and so must be read in conjunction with those documents.

This booklet includes:

- Standard Club Rules / Constitution
- Codes of Conduct
- Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policies for Clubs
- Goalpost Safety Guidelines
- Club Complaints Procedure

This booklet is available on The FA website, [www.the-fa.org](http://www.the-fa.org), so clubs who wish to adopt these good practices may download the information and complete as appropriate.

## 2. Standard Club Rules / Constitution

A large number of the County Associations have more than a thousand clubs in their area, and, naturally, a big percentage of these are junior clubs. Many of them begin in the humblest possible way, but it is essential for them to realise that it is necessary to conform to certain regulations. In effect, the club must be properly constituted.

### The First Steps

- (i) Granted this natural eagerness to form a club and to play matches the next step is to persuade some keen and responsible person – perhaps a teacher, a parent, or some ex-player assist them to conform to FA regulations.
- (ii) Club rules must be drawn up, affiliation to the County Association must be arranged, and membership must be organised, however nominal a subscription.
- (iii) No County wants to reject or over-rule initial keenness; in fact information to help embryo clubs is sent out regularly.

Some years ago The Football Association, in response to many requests, drew up a list of suggested rules for newly-formed clubs. These rules, now updated, are printed below for the benefit of secretaries and organisers:

### Suggestions for Club Rules:

1. **Name**  
The club shall be called \_\_\_\_\_  
F.C. (the Club)
2. **Objects**  
The objects of the Club shall be to arrange association football matches and social activities for its members.
3. **Status of Rules**  
These rules (the Club Rules) form a binding agreement between each member of the Club.
4. **Rules and Regulations**
  - (a) The Club shall have the status of an Affiliated Member Club of The Football Association by virtue of its affiliation to/membership of The Football Association. The Rules and Regulations of The Football Association Limited and parent County

Association and any League or Competition to which the Club is affiliated for the time being shall be deemed to be incorporated into the Club Rules.

- (b) No alteration to the Club Rules shall be effective without prior written approval by the parent Association.
  - (c) The Club will also abide by The Football Association's Child Protection Policies and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Policy.
5. **Club Membership**
- (a) The members of the Club from time to time shall be those persons listed in the register of members (the Membership Register) which shall be maintained by the Club Secretary.
  - (b) Any person who wishes to be a member must apply on the Membership Application Form and deliver it to the Club. Election to membership shall be at the sole discretion of the Club Committee. Membership shall become effective

upon an applicant's name being entered in the Membership Register.

(c) In the event of a member's resignation or expulsion, his or her name shall be removed from the Membership Register.

(d) The Football Association and parent County Association shall be given access to the Membership Register on demand.

#### 6. Annual Membership Fee

(a) An annual fee payable by each member shall be determined from time to time by the Club Committee. Any fee shall be payable on a successful application for membership and annually by each member. Fees shall not be repayable.

(b) The Club Committee shall have the authority to levy further subscriptions from the members as are reasonably necessary to fulfil the objects of the Club.

#### 7. Resignation and Expulsion

(a) A member shall cease to be a member of the Club if, and from the date on which, he/she gives notice to the Club Committee of their resignation. A member whose annual membership fee or further subscription is more than 2 months in arrears shall be deemed to have resigned.

(b) The Club Committee shall have the power to expel a member when, in their opinion, it would not be in the interests of the Club for them to remain a member. There shall be no appeal procedures.

(c) A member who resigns or is expelled shall not be entitled to claim any, or a share of any, of the Club Property.

#### 8. Club Committee

(a) The Club Committee shall consist of the following Club Officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and Minutes Secretary. Plus up to 5 other members, elected at an Annual General Meeting.

(b) Each Club Officer and Club Committee Member shall hold office from the date of appointment until the next Annual General Meeting unless otherwise resolved at a Special General Meeting. One person may hold no more than two positions of Club Officer at any time. The Club Committee shall be responsible for the management of all the affairs of the Club.

Decisions of the Club Committee shall be made by a simple majority of those attending the Club Committee meeting. The Chairperson of the Club Committee meeting shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie. Meetings of the Club Committee shall be chaired by the.....

or in their absence the..... . The quorum for the transaction of business of the Club Committee shall be three.

(c) Decisions of the Club Committee of meetings shall be entered into the Minute Book of the Club to be maintained by the Club Secretary.

- (d) Any member of the Club Committee may call a meeting of the Club Committee by giving not less than 7 days' notice to all members of the Club Committee. The Club Committee shall hold not less than four meetings a year.
- (e) An outgoing member of the Club Committee may be re-elected. Any vacancy on the Club Committee which arises between Annual General Meetings shall be filled by a member proposed by one and seconded by another of the remaining Club Committee members and approved by a simple majority of the remaining Club Committee members.
- (f) Save as provided for in the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association and the County Association to which the Club is affiliated, the Club Committee shall have the power to decide all questions and disputes arising in respect of any issue concerning the Club Rules.

**9. Annual and Special General Meeting**

- (a) An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held in each year to:
  - (i) receive a report of the activities of the Club over the previous year
  - (ii) receive a report of the Club's finances over the previous year
  - (iii) elect the members of the Club Committee
  - (iv) consider any other business.
- (b) Nominations for election of members as Club Officers or as members of the Club Committee shall be made in writing by the proposer and seconder, both of whom must be existing members of the Club, to the Club Secretary not less than 21 days before the AGM. Notice of any resolution to be proposed at the AGM shall be given in writing to the Club Secretary not less than 21 days before the Meeting.
- (c) A Special General Meeting (SGM) may be called at any time by the Committee and shall be called within 21 days of the receipt by the Club Secretary of a

requisition in writing signed by not less than five members stating the purposes for which the Meeting is required and the resolutions proposed. Business at an SGM may be any business that may be transacted at an AGM.

- (d) The Secretary shall send to each member at their last known address written notice of the date of a General Meeting together with the resolutions to be proposed at least 14 days before the Meeting.
- (e) The quorum for a General Meeting shall be.....
- (f) The....., or in their absence a member selected by the Club Committee, shall take the chair. Each member present shall have one vote and resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority. In the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson of the Meeting shall have a casting vote.
- (g) The Club Secretary, or in their absence a member of the Club Committee, shall enter Minutes of General Meetings into the Minute Book of the Club.

## 10. Club Teams

At its first meeting following each AGM the Club Committee shall appoint a Club member to be responsible for each of the Club's football teams. The appointed members shall be responsible for managing the affairs of the team. The appointed members shall present to the Club Committee at its last meeting prior to an AGM a written report of the activities of the team.

## 11. Club Finances

(a) A bank account shall be opened and maintained in the name of the Club (the Club Account). Designated account signatories shall be the Club Chairperson, the Club Secretary and the Treasurer. No sum shall be drawn from the Club Account except by cheque signed by two of the three designated signatories. All monies payable to the Club shall be received by the Treasurer and deposited in the Club Account.

(b) The income and assets of the Club (the Club Property) shall be applied only in furtherance of the objects of the Club.

(c) The Club Committee shall have power to authorise the payment of remuneration and expenses to any member of the Club and to any other person or persons for services rendered to the Club.

(d) The Club shall prepare an annual Financial Statement in such form as shall be published by The Football Association from time to time.

(e) The Club Property, other than the Club Account, shall be vested in not less than two and no more than four custodians, one of whom shall be the Treasurer (the Custodians), who shall deal with the Club Property as directed by decisions of the Club Committee and entry in the Minute Book shall be conclusive evidence of such a decision.

(f) The Custodians shall be appointed by the Club in a General Meeting and shall hold office until death or resignation unless removed by a resolution passed at a General Meeting.

(g) On their removal or resignation a Custodian shall execute a Conveyance in such form as is published by The Football Association from time to time to a newly-elected Custodian or the existing Custodians as directed by the Club Committee. On the death of a Custodian, any Club Property vested in them shall vest automatically in the surviving Custodians. If there is only one surviving Custodian, a Special General Meeting shall be convened as soon as possible to appoint another Custodian.

(h) The Custodians shall be entitled to an indemnity out of the Club Property for all expenses and other liabilities reasonably incurred by them in carrying out their duties.

## 12. Dissolution

- (a) A resolution to dissolve the Club shall only be proposed at a General Meeting and shall be carried by a majority of at least three-quarters of the members present.
- (b) The dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the members of the Club Committee shall be responsible for the winding up of the assets and liabilities of the Club.
- (c) Any surplus assets remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Club shall be transferred to the parent Association who shall determine how the assets shall be utilised for the benefit of the game. Alternatively, such assets may be disposed of in such other manner as the members of the Club with the consent of the parent Association shall determine.

### 3. A Code of Conduct for Football

This code applies to all those involved in football under the auspices of The Football Association.

Football is the national game. All those involved with the game at every level and whether as a player, match official, coach, owner or administrator, have a responsibility, above and beyond compliance with the law, to act according to the highest standards of integrity, and to ensure that the reputation of the game is, and remains, high. This code applies to all those involved in football under the auspices of The Football Association.

#### Community

Football, at all levels, is a vital part of a community. Football will take into account community feeling when making decisions.

#### Equality

Football is opposed to discrimination of any form and will promote measures to prevent it, in whatever form, from being expressed.

#### Participants

Football recognises the sense of ownership felt by those who participate at all levels of the game. This includes those who play, those who coach or help in any way, and those who officiate, as well as administrators and supporters. Football is committed to appropriate consultation.

#### Young People

Football acknowledges the extent of its influence over young people and pledges to set a positive example.

#### Propriety

Football acknowledges that public confidence demands the highest standards of financial and administrative behaviour within the game, and will not tolerate corruption or improper practices.

#### Trust and Respect

Football will uphold a relationship of trust and respect between all involved in the game, whether they are individuals, clubs or other organisations.

#### Violence

Football rejects the use of violence of any nature by anyone involved in the game.

#### Fairness

Football is committed to fairness in its dealings with all involved in the game.

#### Integrity and Fair Play

Football is committed to the principle of playing to win consistent with Fair Play.

## 4. Code of Conduct for Coaches

Coaches have to be aware that almost all of their everyday decisions and choices of actions, as well as strategic targets, have ethical implications.

Coaches are key to the establishment of ethics in football. Their concept of ethics are their attitude directly effects the behaviour of players under their supervision. Coaches are, therefore, expected to pay particular care to the moral aspect of their conduct.

Coaches have to be aware that almost all of their everyday decisions and choices of actions, as well as strategic targets, have ethical implications.

It is natural that winning constitutes a basic concern for coaches. This code is not intended to conflict with that. However, the code calls for coaches to disassociate themselves from a "win-at-all-costs" attitude.

Increased responsibility is requested from coaches involved in coaching young people. The health, safety, welfare and moral education of young people are a first priority, before the achievement or the reputation of the club, school, coach or parent.

Set out below is The FA Coaches Association Code of Conduct (which reflects the standards expressed by the National Coaching Foundation and the National Association of Sports Coaches)

which forms the benchmark for all involved in coaching:

1. Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person and treat each equally within the context of the sport.
2. Coaches must place the well-being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance.
3. Coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by governing bodies.
4. Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect.
5. Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
6. Coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
7. Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.
8. Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the players (and, where appropriate, parent) exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach.
9. Coaches must co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, physiotherapists) in the best interests of the player.
10. Coaches must always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations or the use of prohibited substances or techniques.
11. Coaches must consistently display high standards or behaviour and appearance.
12. Not to use or tolerate inappropriate language.

## 5. Code of Conduct for Players

Fair Play and respect for all others in the game is fundamentally important.

Players are the most important people in the sport. Playing for the team, and for the team to win, is the most fundamental part of the game. But not winning at any cost – Fair Play and respect for all others in the game is fundamentally important.

This Code focuses on players involved in top-class football. Nevertheless, the key concepts in the Code are valid for players at all levels.

### Obligations towards the game

A player should:

1. Make every effort to develop their own sporting abilities, in terms of skill, technique, tactics and stamina.
2. Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during a game, even if his team is in a position where the desired result has already been achieved.
3. Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters.
4. Avoid all forms of gamesmanship, and time-wasting.
5. Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion on the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game.
6. Not use inappropriate language.

### Obligations towards one's own team

A player should:

1. Make every effort consistent with Fair Play and the Laws of the Game to help his own team win.
2. Resist any influence which might, or might be seen to, bring into question his commitment to the team winning.

### Respect for the Laws of the Game and competition rules

A player should:

1. Know and abide by the Laws, rules and spirit of the game, and the competition rules.
2. Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, equally.
3. Resist any temptation to take banned substances or use banned techniques.

### Respect towards Opponents

A player should:

1. Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result of the game.
2. Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play, and help injured opponents.

### Respect towards the Match Officials

A player should:

1. Accept the decision of the Match Official without protest.
2. Avoid words or actions which may mislead a Match Official.
3. Show due respect towards Match Officials.

### Respect towards Team Officials

A player should;

1. Abide by the instructions of their Coach and Team Officials, provided they do not contradict the spirit of this Code.
2. Show due respect towards the Team Officials of the opposition.

### Obligations towards the Supporters

A player should:

1. Show due respect to the interests of supporters.

## 6. Code of Conduct for Team Officials

Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters.

This Code applies to all team / club officials (although some items may not apply to all officials).

### Obligations towards the Game

The team official should:

1. Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters.
2. Promote and develop his own team having regard to the interest of the Players, Supporters and reputation of the national game.
3. Share knowledge and experience when invited to do so, taking into account the interest of the body that has requested this rather than personal interests.
4. Avoid all forms of gamesmanship.
5. Show due respect to Match Officials and others involved in the game.

6. Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion of the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game.

7. Not use or tolerate inappropriate language.

### Obligations towards the Team

The team official should:

1. Make every effort to develop the sporting, technical and tactical levels of the club/team, and to obtain the best results by the team, using all permitted means.
2. Give priority to the interests of the team over individual interests.
3. Resist all illegal or unsporting influences, including banned substances and techniques.
4. Promote ethical principles.
5. Show due respect to the interests of players, coaches and other officials, at their own club/team and others.

### Obligations towards the Supporters

The team official should:

1. Show due respect to the interests of supporters.

### Respect towards the Match Officials

A team official should:

1. Accept the decisions of the Match Official without protest.
2. Avoid words or actions which may mislead a Match Official.
3. Show due respect towards Match Officials.

## 7. Code of Conduct for Parents / Spectators

Ensure that parents/spectators within your club are always positive and encouraging towards all of the children not just their own.

Parents / Spectators have a great influence on children's enjoyment and success in football. All children play football because they first and foremost love the game – it's fun. It is important to remember that however good a child becomes at football within your club it is important to reinforce the message to parents / spectators that positive encouragement will contribute to:

- Children enjoying football.
- A sense of personal achievement.
- Self-esteem.
- Assist to improve the child's skills and techniques.

A parent's / spectator's expectations and attitudes have a significant bearing on a child's attitude towards:

- Other players.
- Officials.
- Managers.
- Spectators.

Ensure that parents / spectators within your club are always positive and encouraging towards all of the children not just their own.

Encourage parents / spectators to:

- Applaud the opposition as well as you own team.
- Avoid coaching the child during the game.
- Not to shout and scream.
- Respect the referee's decision.
- Give attention to each of the children involved in football not just the most talented.
- Give encouragement to everyone to participate in football.

Ensure that parents / Spectators within your club agree and adhere to your club's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

## 8. Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policies for Clubs

Our commitment is to eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or ability and to encourage equal opportunities.

As the governing body of the game, The Football Association is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the game at every level.

Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by, everyone equally. Our commitment is to eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or ability and to encourage equal opportunities.

The following policies should be at the heart of your club's activities.

### Anti Discrimination Policy For Clubs

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Football Club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Football belongs to and should be enjoyed by everyone, equally. Our commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

### Equality of opportunity at

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Football Club means that in all our activities we will not discriminate or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

This includes:

- The advertisement for volunteers.
- The selection of candidates for volunteers.
- Courses.
- External coaching and education activities and awards.
- Football development activities.
- Selection for teams.
- Appointments to honorary positions.

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Football Club will not tolerate sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal and will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.

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Football Club is committed to the development of the programme of ongoing training and awareness raising events and activities in order to promote the eradication of discrimination within its own organisation and in the wider context, within football as a whole.

# 9.

## Equal Opportunities Policy for Clubs

### 1. General

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Football Club is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members of whatever level or authority, to abide and adhere to this general principle and the requirements of the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

All members are expected to abide by the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1986 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Specifically discrimination is prohibited in:

- Treating any individual on grounds of gender, colour, marital status, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientated or disability less favourably than others.
- Expecting an individual solely on the grounds stated above to comply with requirement(s) for any reason whatsoever related to their membership, which are different to the requirements for others.

- Imposing on an individual requirements which are in effect more onerous on that individual than they are on others. For example this would include applying a condition (which is not warranted by the requirements of the position) which makes it more difficult for members of a particular race or sex to comply than others not of that race or sex.

- Victimisation of an individual.

- Harassment of an individual (which for the purposes of this policy and the actions and sanction applicable thereto is regarded as discrimination).

- Any other act or omission of an act, which has as its effect the disadvantaging of a member against another, or others, purely on the above grounds. Thus, in all the Club's recruitment, selection, promotion and training processes, as well as disciplinary matters etc. – in other words all instances where those in control of members are required to make judgements between them – it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.

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Football Club commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice cease forthwith, restitution of damage or loss (if necessary) and to the investigation of any member accused of discrimination.

Any member found guilty of discrimination will be instructed to desist forthwith. Since discrimination in its many forms is against the Football Club's policy, any members offending will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

The Football Club commits itself to the disabled person whenever possible and will treat such members, in aspects of their recruitment and membership, in exactly the same manner as other members, the difficulties of their disablement permitting assistance will be given, wherever possible to ensure that disabled members are helped in gaining access. Appropriate training will be made to such members who request it.

# 10.

## Goalpost Safety Play Your Part

Tragically during the past few years, nine children including Jack Sheerin, a seven year old from West Yorkshire, and Jonathan Smith, an eleven year old from Essex have been killed by falling goalposts.

Football should be fun, safe and enjoyable, whether you play in a park, at school or for a local club. That's why The FA is working with manufacturers and the British Standards Institution to set new standards in goalpost safety.

The four golden rules of the leaflet and campaign are - Check It, Secure It, Test It, Respect It, and The FA needs YOUR help.

FA National Goalkeeping Coach Ray Clemence launched The F.A.'s Goalpost Safety campaign to highlight the safety issues involved with using goalposts in grassroots football back in August 2000 at Watford FC, and is keen to raise awareness of the campaign once more.

Said Clemence:

"The issue of goalpost safety is one that I take very seriously. Under no circumstances should children use goalposts as gymnastic equipment, they are simply not designed for

that. If you want to become England's Number 1, you have to defend your goal, not attack it."

During the 2001/02 season, The Football Association carried out a programme of on site inspection and testing of goalpost sets at a number of sites across the country. Some of the findings are as follows:

- Of all goals tested, 41% of mini-soccer goals, 50% of 5-a-side goals and 22% of junior goals failed stability tests
- Ground conditions can affect the stability of goals therefore it is important to liaise with manufacturers on the appropriate ground fixings in relation to weather conditions
- Staff at every 2nd site were unaware of the safety campaign involving goalposts. Through extending this campaign to the third year - with 250,000 leaflets going out to Clubs, Schools, youth groups, referees, coaches and leisure facilities across the country from the beginning of November 2002 – The FA is committed to raising this awareness and aims to create a safer environment for all football.

Steve Parkin, Director of The FA National Game Division, investing £35million a year - £20million via The Football Foundation – to lead the development of, and investment in grassroots football said:

"The launch of the campaign in August 2000 was vital to The FA's commitment to making safety a top priority in football at all levels. By re-launching the campaign in season 2002/03, we wanted to stress to everyone involved in playing and organising football that they must play their part to ensure that such tragic accidents never happen again."

Under no circumstances should children use the goalposts as gymnastic equipment, and goalposts should not be used at all, unless they are in good condition, securely anchored to the ground, and are stable.

If you would like to receive copies of the leaflet for your organisation, contact your local County Football Association, or send an e-mail with your name, address and the quantity of leaflets you require, to: [Georgina.Hill@TheFA.com](mailto:Georgina.Hill@TheFA.com)

# 11.

## 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 should follow the procedures below.

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

Your 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;
- iii. Remove from membership;

any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct.

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