



## LIVERPOOL HOMELESS FOOTBALL CLUB

### 8 – Complaints, Discipline & Exclusion Policy

**Version:** 1.0 **Date Adopted:** 01.06.2026 **Review Date:** 01.06.2027

#### 1. Policy Statement

Liverpool Homeless Football Club (LHFC) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all participants, staff, and volunteers.

We recognise that many individuals engaging with LHFC may have experienced trauma, homelessness, mental health challenges, or social exclusion. Because of this, our approach to behaviour management is:

- **Fair and consistent**
- **Trauma-informed and supportive**
- **Focused on de-escalation and positive change**
- **Protective of all participants' safety and wellbeing**

However, LHFC also has a duty to maintain safe environments. Where behaviour places others at risk, action will be taken.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Participants and players
- Staff and volunteers
- Visiting teams and spectators
- Any individual involved in LHFC activities

It covers:

- Complaints
- Behavioural concerns
- Misconduct
- Exclusion or suspension from activities

#### 3. Key Principles

LHFC will:

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect
- Listen to concerns and complaints fairly
- Respond proportionately to behaviour concerns
- Prioritise safeguarding and safety at all times
- Take a **trauma-informed approach**, recognising underlying causes of behaviour
- Aim to support behaviour change rather than immediate exclusion where safe to do so

#### 4. Trauma-Informed Approach

LHFC understands that behaviour may be influenced by:

- Past trauma or abuse
- Mental health challenges
- Substance misuse
- Housing instability
- Emotional distress

Therefore, we will:

- Use de-escalation and calm communication
- Offer verbal warnings and support before sanctions where appropriate
- Provide opportunities for reflection and return
- Signpost to support services where relevant

## 5. Complaints Procedure

### 5.1 Making a Complaint

Complaints may be made by:

- Participants
- Staff or volunteers
- Visiting teams or members of the public

Complaints can be made:

- Verbally to a staff member
- In writing via email to [admin@liverpoolhomelessfootballclub.com](mailto:admin@liverpoolhomelessfootballclub.com) or addressed to Victoria Leyshon-Matthews, Liverpool Homeless Football Club, 1-27 Bridport Street, Liverpool, L3 5QE.

### 5.2 How Complaints Are Handled

LHFC will:

1. Acknowledge the complaint
2. Record it appropriately
3. Investigate fairly and proportionately
4. Speak to relevant individuals (if appropriate)
5. Provide a response or outcome

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the **Safeguarding Policy** will take priority.

## 6. Behaviour Management and Discipline

### 6.1 Expected Behaviour

All participants are expected to:

- Treat others with respect
- Follow staff instructions
- Avoid violence, aggression, or discrimination
- Respect the safety of others

### 6.2 Staged Response Approach

LHFC uses a **graduated response system**, not immediate exclusion (unless serious risk is present):

#### Step 1 – Verbal Warning

- Calm reminder of expected behaviour
- Opportunity to correct behaviour

#### Step 2 – Formal Warning

- Behaviour discussed with participant
- Explanation of impact

- Support offered to prevent recurrence
- This formal warning will be logged on an LHFC session document.

### **Step 3 – Temporary Time-Out / Session Suspension**

- Participant may be asked to leave session temporarily
- Cooling-off period may be given
- This time – out/ suspension will be logged on an LHFC session document.

### **Step 4 – Review Meeting**

- Discussion with LHFC session lead member.
- Consideration of underlying issues
- Agreement on next steps or support plan
- This review meeting will be logged on an LHFC session document and brought to the attention of the LHFC Management Team for support. Where deemed appropriate a member of the Management Team may attend/lead the Review Meeting.

### **Step 5 – Suspension or Exclusion (Last Resort)**

Used only where:

- Safety is at risk
- Serious violence or abuse occurs
- Repeated harmful behaviour continues
- Safeguarding concerns require removal
- All exclusions will require approval from 2 member of the Management Team (CEO/ Team & Operations Manager/ Business Development Manage).

## **7. Immediate Exclusion (Serious Incidents)**

Immediate action may be taken without prior steps if behaviour involves:

- Violence or serious aggression
- Threats to safety
- Sexual misconduct or exploitation
- Discrimination or hate speech
- Criminal activity
- Risk to vulnerable adults

In such cases, LHFC may:

- Remove the individual immediately
- Contact emergency services if required
- Report to safeguarding authorities or police where appropriate
- CEO needs to be alerted immediately If not present and escalation to the Trustees/Board Members on the CEO's advice.

## **8. Exclusion Process**

Where exclusion is being considered, LHFC will:

- Review the incident fairly
- Consider context, vulnerability, and mitigating factors
- Consult relevant staff or safeguarding leads
- Decide on proportionate action

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action
- Written warning
- Temporary suspension
- Conditional return (behaviour agreement)
- Permanent exclusion

## **9. Supportive Re-Engagement**

Where appropriate, LHFC will support individuals to return by:

- Setting clear expectations for behaviour
- Offering a return-to-play agreement
- Signposting to support services
- Encouraging gradual reintegration

We aim to **support positive change wherever possible**.

## 10. Appeals

Individuals may appeal decisions by:

- Submitting a written request to LHFC leadership
- Providing relevant information or context

Appeals will be reviewed fairly and independently where possible.

## 11. Safeguarding Considerations

Where behaviour raises safeguarding concerns:

- The **LHFC Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy** will apply
- Concerns may be referred to external agencies
- Safety will always override participation rights

## 12. Record Keeping

LHFC will maintain records of:

- Complaints
- Behaviour incidents
- Warnings and outcomes
- Exclusion decisions

Records will be stored securely in line with GDPR.

## 13. Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated following serious incidents or changes in guidance
- Approved by LHFC trustees

## 14. Key Principles Summary

LHFC believes:

- People deserve second chances wherever safe to do so
- Behaviour should be understood, not just punished
- Safety of all participants comes first
- Support and accountability must work together

## 15. Key Contacts

- Safeguarding Lead: Team & Operations Manager - 07456583035
- Emergency Services: 999