



CHESTER FOOTBALL CLUB AND CHESTER FC COMMUNITY TRUST

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Our commitment

Chester Football Club and Chester FC Community Trust have values based on mutual respect and encouragement to bring out the best in everyone. We aim to promote positive standards of behaviour which are easily understood and require all players, parents/carers and club officials to sign up to these behaviours.

Our Club and Trust officials have a critical role in establishing high standards of coaching, learning and conduct. Positive behaviour and self-control are key to creating a happy and effective club environment. Poor behaviour cannot be tolerated because it prevents individual and collective learning, enjoyment, team development and morale. The support of parents and carers is essential in managing and maintaining acceptable behaviour by the Club's and Trust's participants at every level.

Through our procedures, and on welcoming new members to our Club and The Trust, we will:

- Make clear what is considered acceptable practice;
- Communicate the required standards of behaviour; and
- Share the club's process for responding to behaviour that is considered unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of all football club officials to ensure that they read and understand this policy and put our procedures into practice. If there are any questions or queries, please contact the Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer or other Board member for guidance.

Parents of under-18 players will be provided with information about what we expect as a Club and as a Trust and our codes of conduct (all available on the website, along with the Safeguarding Children Policy). These also contain information on who they should contact should they have concerns.

Our principles

Anyone working with children may need to deal with a child's challenging behaviour. Our procedures aim to provide support and promote safer practice and are based on these six principles:

1. The welfare of the child is paramount.
2. Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
3. A child's specific needs should be discussed with their parent/carer and, where appropriate, the child himself/herself before activities start. Where appropriate, details of any plan or approach agreed between the coach, parents/carers, the child and the Club Welfare or Safeguarding Officer will be recorded and provided to all parties.
4. Every child should be supported to participate. Excluding a child from football activity as a result of their behaviour should only be used in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort,

e.g. where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, or parent/carer engagement has been exhausted.

5. Children should be encouraged to manage their own behaviour where possible.
6. Unacceptable behaviour from parents/carers should not be tolerated.

Our managing unacceptable behaviour procedures must be used alongside our Anti-Bullying procedures and Safeguarding Children Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all Chester FC and Chester FC Community Trust activities including training, matches, tours, travel, events, and online engagement, and to all staff, volunteers, players, parents/carers, and spectators.

Online and Digital Behaviour

This policy applies equally to behaviour in online environments, including social media, messaging platforms and digital communication linked to Club or Trust activities. Online misconduct will be managed in line with this policy, the Social Media Policy and the Club's Codes of Conduct.

Children with additional needs

Some children may exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of a medical or psychological condition. When children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with their parents/carers and, where appropriate, the child to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed.

Additional support and advice can be requested from the Club Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, who in turn may seek advice from our County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or external agencies. Where appropriate, individual behaviour or support plans may be agreed to help meet a child's specific needs. The Club and Trust will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to support participation, in line with equality legislation.

Planning and Preparation

When assessing the number of adults required to safely manage and support an activity, consideration should be given to the ability to respond effectively to any challenging behaviour whilst ensuring other players and club officials are safeguarded. As a club we will aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and, where necessary, external agencies to ensure, wherever possible, that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

By joining our club, club officials, members, players and parents/carers of under-18 players agree to adhere to our Codes of Conduct. A range of actions can be used to respond to unacceptable behaviour which we have outlined later in this document.

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

The type of behaviour and age of the child will determine the actions used, but we encourage the following to be considered:

- Continuing to praise appropriate behaviour of those positively completing the task/activity;
- Offering extra responsibility to a child to help refocus their energy – e.g. leading a part of the activity;

- Increasing the of coaches/staff/volunteers involved in overseeing the task/activity;
- Reasoning with the child, including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- De-escalating the situation, for example by talking to the child and distracting them from challenging behaviour;
- Using a verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Implementing a time out from the current activity;
- Implementing a temporary exclusion from the next task/activity;
- Not selecting the child to play any part in the next match, alongside explaining to the child why they have not been selected;
- Not selecting the child to play any part in the next 2/3 matches, alongside explaining to the child why they will not be taking part;
- Requiring completion of another task or activity to make amends;#
- Using individual agreements with the child and their parents/carers, for the child's future or continued participation;
- As a last resort, if a child continues to present a high level or risk or danger to themselves, or others, considering suspension or barring the child from the team and/or club activities;
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies (e.g. the child's school, Children's Social Care);
- In some circumstances, referring the matter to the County FA.

Recording, Reporting and Escalation

- All incidents of challenging or unacceptable behaviour, including any use of physical intervention, must be recorded using the Club/Trust incident reporting process and shared with the Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Where behaviour gives rise to safeguarding concerns, or suggests that a child may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures must take precedence over this policy. In such circumstances, the Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer will determine whether the matter should be referred to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or statutory agencies.
- If the Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, concerns should be reported to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All records will be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

Graduated Response to Unacceptable Behaviour

The Club and Trust aim to respond to unacceptable behaviour in a fair, consistent and proportionate manner. Where appropriate, responses will normally follow a staged approach:

- **Stage 1:** Verbal reminder of expectations and support to refocus behaviour.
- **Stage 2:** Time out from activity and involvement of parent/carers.
- **Stage 3:** Written behaviour agreement and/or temporary exclusion from activities.
- **Stage 4:** Suspension from Club/Trust activities and/or referral to the County FA.

The stage applied will depend on the severity and frequency of the behaviour. Parents/carers will be informed of significant incidents and outcomes. Children and parents/carers will be given the opportunity to share their views before longer-term sanctions are applied.

Misconduct During Matches

Misconduct during matches may result in County FA disciplinary action. If this occurs, the Board of the Club/Trust will be informed and contact with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer will be made regarding support at disciplinary hearings to ensure the welfare of the child in line with The FA's Personal Hearings Guidance – see FA Guidance Notes 7.3: 'Personal Hearings Guidance for Under 18s.'

If parents/carers or club officials encourage and/or pressurise children to behave unacceptably during matches, the Club will take the appropriate actions to deal with the adults and, where appropriate, the children concerned.

The following should ***never*** be used to manage a child's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such;
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child;
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities;
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Managing Adult and Spectator Behaviour

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Parents/carers and spectators are expected to uphold the Club's Codes of Conduct at all times.

Where adults behave unacceptably, the Club may take one or more of the following actions:

- Verbal warning and reminder of expectations;
- Request to leave the venue;
- Written warning;
- Temporary or permanent suspension from attending Club/Trust activities;
- Referral to the County FA where appropriate.

Adult behaviour that places a child at risk or undermines their welfare will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention should be avoided unless necessary to prevent (i) a child injuring themselves or others, (ii) causing serious damage to property or (iii) when working with children with an impairment that necessitates such intervention. It is important the Club/Trust officials understand this to protect the child, their own position and the reputation of our two organisations. Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision making and not a reaction.

The decision to restrain a child should be firmly based on the safety of the child and must never be made as a punishment or to get children to comply with instructions.

If physical intervention *is* necessary:

- Ensure it is aimed at achieving an outcome in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern;
- Consider your own safety and that of the child or children;
- Give verbal instructions first;

- Use the minimum reasonable force, for the shortest time possible, to resolve the incident;
- Do not strike a child, pin a child down, act with unnecessary force, or retaliate;
- Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body, head and neck;
- Do not cover a child's mouth;
- Stay in control of your actions; and
- Consider swapping Club Officials during the intervention to reduce the tension and stress.

Any physical intervention should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the Club Official involved. This must be passed to the Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and the parent/carer informed.

Responding to High Risk Behaviours

Where children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention, this must be discussed with parents/carers and, where necessary, the Club or Trust will seek advice from, or work in partnership with, external agencies (e.g. Children's Social Care) to ensure that the child or young person can be supported to participate safely. This may include asking for the provision of a suitable trained support worker/volunteer or accessing staff/volunteer training in physical intervention or parent/carer support.

Rights and Responsibilities

Issues of behaviour and management of unacceptable behaviour will be discussed with Club Officials, parents, carers and children in the context of rights and responsibilities so that all parties understand what is expected of them and others. This will be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away, when going on tour, or at other intervals as deemed appropriate. Every Under 18 player should have a copy of The FA's Guidance 'Know Your Rights in Football'.

Codes of Conduct

Chester FC and Chester FC Community Trust have Codes of Conduct for (i) Adults, (ii) Young Players, (iii) Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials and (iv) Spectators and Parents/Carers. These are readily available on the Chester FC website or from the Safeguarding Officer (contact details below). However, we also recognise that when children are consulted as a group and specifically asked to draw up rules for their team, they generate very sensible ideas and tend to take greater ownership of those rules as opposed to those provided by the Club. We therefore encourage our coaches to discuss with their Under 18 players how they wish to make use of our Code of Conduct and collectively agree on their team's behaviours.

Recognising Positive Behaviour – Giving Praise

- Chester Football Club and Chester FC Community Trust fully recognise the importance of praise to reinforce positive behaviours and encourage the use of any one, or combination of, the following actions:
 - A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
 - A word of praise in front of the group;
 - Verbal acknowledgement from the Club's Senior Coach or Programme Lead;

- A reward system – Player of the Week/Month/Season;
- Special mention at Club/Football Programme end of season awards;
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege e.g. choice of playing position that week/being captain/choosing the practice content;
- A mention to parents – either written or verbal communication; and/or
- An invitation to train with another age group (appropriate to skill/physical abilities and with the consent of the parent/carer).

Useful contact details:

Club Welfare Officer/Safeguarding Officer: Jane Phillipson

Tel: 01244 371376 (office hours, Monday to Friday)

Email: jane.phillipson@chesterfc.com

Assistant Welfare Officer (Community Trust): Sue Pearson

Tel: 07308 477055

Email: community@chesterfc.com

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