



# Birkenhead United AFC Code of Conduct

Birkenhead United AFC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all members, participants, and visitors. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from everyone involved with the club, including players, coaches, managers, referees, parents, spectators, committee members, and staff. All persons agree to abide by this Code and acknowledge that breaches may result in disciplinary action under the Birkenhead United AFC Constitution, Regulations, and Policies.

The following Code of Conduct applies to all Birkenhead United AFC members and persons participating in Birkenhead United AFC activities.

## General Principles

- Treat all persons with respect, dignity, and fairness, regardless of age, gender, ability, cultural background, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Promote a culture of safety, inclusion, and enjoyment for all.
- Uphold the reputation and values of Birkenhead United AFC at all times.

## 1. Players

As a player, I will:

- Play to win, but always play fair and within the rules.
- Never argue with or verbally abuse an official, teammate, opponent, or spectator.
- Accept defeat with dignity and respect.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of others.
- Be fair, compassionate, and honest.
- Refrain from any form of physical, verbal, or online abuse.
- Refrain from using obscene or offensive language.
- Refrain from any form of harassment or discrimination.
- Promote the interests and positive image of football and the club.
- Provide a safe environment for football to be played.
- Show concern and caution towards others who may be injured.
- Be a positive role model for others, particularly juniors.
- Pay my subs on time and in full by the date set by the football committee, understanding that failure to do so may mean I cannot take the field.
- Use social media and digital communication responsibly, refraining from posting or sharing inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory content about the club, teammates, officials, or opponents.

## 2. Teams

As a team, we will:

- Refrain from bringing drugs or alcohol to any fixture or training session, home or away.
- Refrain from drinking in the changing rooms, as this is against the terms of the club's liquor license and may result in significant fines or loss of license.
- Only consume alcohol on club premises if it has been purchased from the Birkenhead United AFC bar, and always in accordance with club and legal requirements.
- Organise and run at least one club event each year.
- Be positive role models for others, particularly juniors.
- Be advocates for Birkenhead United AFC, whether home or away, on the field or off it.
- Take pride in our appearance by wearing the correct club uniform and sponsors as appropriate.
- Support diversity and inclusion within our team and the wider club community.



### 3. Team Managers

As a team manager, I will:

- Be responsible for the overall welfare and well-being of team members.
- Maintain a 'duty of care' towards team members and be accountable for the management of the team.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all players, particularly minors and vulnerable persons, and report any concerns to the appropriate club officials.
- Communicate with opposing team managers to ensure the fulfillment of scheduled fixtures.
- Communicate regularly with the football committee and managers from other Birkenhead teams, for the sharing of players, resources, and ideas.
- Attend and actively participate in all scheduled football committee meetings.
- Complete and return match scorecards to Birkenhead clubrooms within 24 hours of a fixture being played.
- Be responsible for the return of all team kit, balls, bibs, cones, and other training equipment at the end of each season.

### 4. Coaches

As a coach, I will:

- Respect the talent, developmental stage, and goals of each player to help them reach their full potential.
- Provide all players with equal attention and opportunities.
- Be fair, considerate, and honest with players and parents.
- Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle and good life choices.
- Demonstrate professionalism by displaying high standards in language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation.
- Make training sessions enjoyable and appropriate to each player's talent and stage of development.
- Discuss player development regularly with other coaches and the Head of Football.
- Actively seek out coach development and safeguarding training opportunities.
- Display control, courtesy, respect, honesty, dignity, and professionalism to all involved in the sport.
- Be a positive role model for the sport and players in a way that projects a positive image.
- Comply with the club's safeguarding policies and complete required training.

### 5. Parents/Guardians/Spectators

As a parent/guardian/spectator, I will:

- Be positive and encouraging to my child and others during the game.
- Treat players from both teams with the same respect.
- Use correct and appropriate language at all times.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of fellow parents, spectators, team managers, coaches, and officials.
- Understand that final team decisions and disputes are to be resolved by the team manager.
- Praise good football and sportsmanship for both teams.
- Remember that children learn best by example.
- Understand that mistakes will be made, and that learning comes from making them.
- Never punish or belittle a child for losing or making mistakes.
- Focus on performance rather than results.
- Be a positive role model for all young players having fun and aspiring to improve.
- Allow coaches to coach and refrain from giving conflicting instructions to players during games.



## 6. Referees

As a referee, I will:

- Officiate matches fairly and safely, ensuring both spectator enjoyment and player safety.
- Know the laws of the game and their interpretations thoroughly.
- Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- Treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, ability, age, cultural background, or religion.
- Conduct myself in a way that is ethically and morally beyond reproach.
- Support fellow officials.
- Grant players and coaches dignity and respect.
- Maintain physical fitness for optimum performance.
- Maintain strict impartiality.
- Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
- Report any abuse or inappropriate behaviour to the club or relevant authorities.

## 7. Football Committee

As the football committee, we will:

- Act as the conduit between team managers and club management to ensure good lines of communication at all times.
- Act as the conduit between team managers and the regional administrative body for efficient and effective communication.
- Create and promote development pathways for players, coaches, and referees from within the club.
- Bring together team managers for regular meetings to help them fulfill their duties and resolve any issues that may arise before, during, or after the season.
- Ensure each team is kitted out with appropriate playing strips and playing equipment in the build up to the season.
- Uphold and promote the club's values of inclusion, safety, and respect in all decision-making.

## 8. The Club

As a club, we will:

- Offer quality football programmes, coaching, and playing opportunities for people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities.
- Listen to the needs of our members and our community.
- Promote a culture of attractive football that is good to play and good to watch.
- Develop our people, programmes, and facilities.
- Not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any kind, and is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all.

## 9. Social Media and Digital Communication

All members are expected to use social media and digital communication responsibly and must not bring the club or its members into disrepute. Inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory content about the club, its members, officials, or opponents will not be tolerated.

## 10. Safeguarding

All adults working with children or vulnerable persons must comply with the club's safeguarding policies and complete the required training. Any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or vulnerable person must be reported to the appropriate club officials immediately.



## 11. Reporting and Breaches

Any serious breaches of the Birkenhead United AFC Code of Conduct, or persistent violations, may result in the suspension or termination of club membership. This is in addition to sanctions imposed by the sport's governing body, which may include game suspensions, good behaviour bonds, loss of competition points, and/or league expulsion.

Breaches can be reported confidentially to the club committee. The club will ensure that all reports are taken seriously and investigated promptly, and that those who report concerns in good faith are protected from retaliation.

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