



VECTIS YOUTH FC DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Vectis Youth FC has a disciplinary policy and procedure to ensure that all Members (including players, parents, managers and assistants, coaches and committee officers) are treated in a fair and equitable manner in relation to unsatisfactory standards of performance, conduct and for breach of any of the terms and conditions of the club. It also aims to ensure that, where practical, matters are dealt with quickly and members are given every opportunity to improve. In many cases it may not be necessary to resort to the formal disciplinary procedure – support, guidance and training may be a more satisfactory method of resolving problems than a disciplinary interview.

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1.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE PROCEDURE

- 1.1 No disciplinary action will be taken against a Club Member until the case has been fully investigated and the facts established having taken into account the statements from any available witnesses and the Club Member themselves, except in cases of gross misconduct.
- 1.2 At every stage in the disciplinary procedure, the Club Member will be advised of the nature of the complaint against them and will be given the opportunity to state their case before any decision is made, except in cases of gross misconduct. Before any disciplinary action is taken the Club Member will be invited to a meeting and be advised of:
- the nature of the complaint against them
 - the required level of conduct or performance
 - Where young players are involved, it may be advisable that a parent / guardian is present at such meetings involving those under the age of 16/18.
 - The interview may be adjourned at any point. If appropriate the Member will also be advised:
 - how long they have to reach the required level of conduct or performance
 - how Vectis Youth FC will assist them to correct their behaviour.
 - what will happen if the required standard is not achieved i.e. further disciplinary action or even dismissal.
- 1.3 The following points form part of the procedure:
- When determining the disciplinary action to be taken, the club Central Committee will consider what is reasonable in all the circumstances: the Club Members record, the penalty applied in similar circumstances and any mitigating circumstances.
 - The Club Member will have the right to be accompanied by a representative / friend of their choice at every stage of the disciplinary procedure. Where the member is a 'junior' this person should be their parent / guardian. The Club Member must be advised of this right in advance of the meeting.
 - The accompanying person has the right to speak at the disciplinary hearing but not to answer questions on behalf of the Club Member.
- 1.4 If the Club Member is unable to attend a disciplinary hearing due to sickness or injury or other legitimate reason, the meeting will normally be postponed but in cases of long term absence alternative arrangements may need to be made.
- A Club Member will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.
 - The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the Club Member's alleged conduct or performance warrants such action.
 - No Club Member will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct or seriously unacceptable performance during a probationary period.
 - The decision taken at the disciplinary meeting will be confirmed to the Club Member in writing.
 - Warnings will be regarded as expired, or 'spent', i.e. no longer part of the same/ continuous disciplinary process, after the specified period
 - Vectis Youth FC reserves the right to suspend a Club Member from any club involvement.
 - Suspension during investigation is not a disciplinary sanction but may be used in circumstances where management believes it is in the interest of the Vectis Youth FC or the Club Member. This means that the Club Member will be advised not to attend the club facilities, including training, games and club events. The Club Member will be provided with a letter of confirmation advising them that they are not to attend or visit Club premises or make contact with other Club Members (except their designated representative/friend) until the investigation is completed. Club Members may be asked to sign their name to acknowledge receipt of a formal warning. If this request is refused a witness may be asked to verify that the warning has been given. Failure to acknowledge receipt does not, however, invalidate the warning.



2.0 STAGES WITHIN THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

2.1 The stages within the disciplinary procedure are as follows:

- Before an individual receives any formal warnings he/she will already have been made aware of the standards required through the club's relevant Code of Conduct, and in the case of managers, assistant managers, coaches, and officials, also through the responsibilities, Guidance and Constitution.
- Where appropriate, advice and/or training will be given. However, where the matter is or has become more serious the following procedure will be used. Vectis Youth FC may take any of the following measures, as it considers appropriate.
- However, in some cases, it may not be appropriate to work through Stage 1 to 4. The Central Committee will decide the most appropriate disciplinary sanction taking into account the seriousness of the offence, the circumstances and the available evidence. Any sanctions to be applied will be confirmed in writing and the Club Member will be advised of the reasons for the warning, the disciplinary action taken and their right of appeal.

2.2 Stage 1 Verbal Warning - Valid For A Maximum Of 6 Months

2.3 If the conduct or performance of a Club Member does not meet acceptable standards, or an infringement by the Club Member of rules is of a minor nature, the Club Member will normally be given a verbal warning. A record of the verbal warning will be sent to the Club Member and a copy kept by the appropriate club Official (e.g. Child Welfare Officer), but it will be spent after a specified period, which may be up to 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance

2.4 Examples of conduct and performance that may warrant a verbal warning are:

- disreputable conduct
- unsatisfactory performance
- unacceptable actions, appearance or personal presentation.
- Failure to adhere to the club respect policies.

NB. This list is not exhaustive

2.5 Stage 2 Written Warning — Valid For A Maximum Of 12 Months

2.6 In the case of serious or repeated failure to maintain the required standards a written warning may be given. It will state the improvements necessary to meet the required standards and the nature or likely disciplinary action to be taken if such standards are not achieved. A copy of the written warning will be kept in the Club Member's personal file, but will be spent after the specified period, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

2.7 Examples of conduct or performance which may warrant a first written warning are:

- failure to improve after a verbal warning
- a more serious breach of Vectis Youth FC procedures, codes of conduct, responsibilities and constitution
- unauthorised actions

NB. This list is not exhaustive

2.8 Stage 3 Final Written Warning - Valid For 12 Months

2.9 If there is still failure to improve such that conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory after a (stage 2) written warning, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant a written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal at this stage, a final written warning will normally be given to the Club Member. A copy of the final written warning will be kept by the club, but will be spent after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.



2.10 In addition to the warning and as an alternative to dismissal, consideration may be given to imposing a penalty of a disciplinary suspension for up to a maximum of two weeks, which may be applied retrospectively where appropriate; alternatively, Vectis Youth FC may consider other appropriate sanctions.

2.11 Examples of the conduct and performance that may warrant a final written warning are: e.g.

- repetition of an offence for which a written warning has already been given.
- damage to Vectis Youth FC premises or property caused by Club Members.
- negligence or reckless behaviour.
- breach of safety rules.
- failure to improve performance or attendance to required standards after previous warnings.

NB. This list is not exhaustive

2.12 Stage 4 Dismissal

2.13 If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and the Club Member still fails to reach the prescribed standards, dismissal will normally result. The Central Committee, led by Senior Officers may make the decision to dismiss a club member.

2.14 A disciplinary meeting must be held to consider all the circumstances before dismissal is effected and the standards of procedure outlined above must be followed.

2.15 The Club Member should be provided, as soon as reasonably practical, with written confirmation of dismissal, the date on which involvement terminates, and confirmation of the right of appeal.



3.0 GROSS MISCONDUCT

3.1 Certain types of misconduct are regarded as so serious as to warrant summary dismissal, regardless of previous record or service. Summary dismissal means dismissal without notice.

3.2 The following are examples of offences, which may be classified as gross misconduct:

- Dishonesty, whether with Vectis Youth FC or not, including the theft or attempted theft of cash, products or services from the club, its sponsors or other Club Members
- Serious breach of Vectis Youth FC Policies, Procedures, Codes of Conduct, Responsibilities or Constitution
- Actions or performance which leads to Vectis Youth FC loss of trust and confidence in the Club Member's ability to do their job or which endanger Vectis Youth FC's reputation with its associates or the public, including, but not limited to, conviction of a criminal offence subject to a review of the circumstances of each case
- Unauthorised use of, or wilful or reckless damage to, Vectis Youth FC's premises or property.
- Unauthorised possession of Vectis Youth FC's property or the property of a fellow Club Member
- Fraud or deliberate falsification of records
- Serious negligence or reckless behaviour
- Serious breach of health and/or safety regulations
- Harassment or discrimination (e.g. on grounds of sex, race, disability or sectarianism, but also including 'bullying')
- Any act of physical violence, or threatening behaviour, during the course of duties or connected with the Vectis Youth FC in any way
- Serious acts of insubordination
- Breach of confidentiality
- Serious or unacceptable incapability through alcohol or use of illegal substances
- Use of offensive or abusive language
- Breach of security
- Prolonged or unauthorised absence
- Horseplay or practical joking, which results in injury or exposes other Club Members to risk
- Where membership of a professional body is an essential qualification, failure to maintain membership after reminders or being struck off for professional misconduct.



4.0 DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES — SUMMARY

4.1 This is a summary of how Vectis Youth FC aims to solve any dispute. The full constitution and relevant Policies and Procedural documents together with accepted practice within the club should be considered as the main points of reference.

4.2 The Procedures deal with both disciplinary (and dismissal) procedures and grievance procedures. It is essential that the constitution and other relevant documents are read and understood.

4.3 To summarise:

4.4 Disciplinary And Dismissal Cases

4.5 Steps one, two and three of the procedure apply to all levels of the Vectis Youth FC's disciplinary procedure, including all types of dismissal.

- **Step One** - a member of the club's Central Committee must send the Club Member basic details of the complaint made against them **IN WRITING**. The exact reason disciplinary action is being taken, or considered, must be specified.
- **Step Two** - the disciplinary meeting. Following the meeting, a member of the Central Committee must inform the Club Member of the decision **IN WRITING**, including informing the Club Member of their right to appeal.
- **Step Three** - the Club Member has the right to appeal and must inform Vectis Youth FC Central Committee if they wish to do so. The request for an appeal must be submitted in writing.

4.6 A further meeting must be held with the Club Member, conducted by a minimum of two members of the Central Committee.

4.7 The decision must be communicated to the Club Member **IN WRITING**.



5.0 GRIEVANCES

5.1 Vectis Youth FC aims to resolve an individual's grievance informally in the first instance, and always fairly, promptly and at the earliest possible stage whilst maintaining constructive working relationships. Vectis Youth FC always aims to prevent grievances or disputes arising by encouraging a relationship between Club Committee, Managers and Club Members that allows the full discussion of any problem the moment it arises.

5.2 Where a formal procedure is required, the following steps will be taken:

- **Step One** - Club Member should set out their grievance **IN WRITING** to the Vectis Youth FC Central Committee.
- **Step Two** - The Club Member will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter, accompanied by a colleague or friend, if the Club Member wishes. Following the meeting, the Club Member should be informed of the decision **IN WRITING**, and the letter should also inform them of the right of appeal.
- **Step Three** - appeal. Club Members must submit their appeal in writing. A further meeting must be held with the Club Member, conducted by a Central Committee Officer Where possible, this will be an officer who has not been involved in the earlier stages of this procedure. The decision must be communicated to the Club Member **IN WRITING**.



6.0 FAILURE TO COMPLY

- 6.1 Failure of Vectis Youth FC to comply fully with the disciplinary and dismissal procedures could render a termination of membership automatically unfair. If the Club Member wins a claim before a Hampshire Football Association Committee and Vectis Youth FC has not complied with any of its obligations under the procedures, this may result in the decision of Vectis Youth FC being over-turned.



7.0 OFFENCES DURING OR OUTSIDE VECTIS YOUTH FC WHICH MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION

- 7.1 Vectis Youth FC reserves the right to suspend any Club Member, pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings, or may take action before a hearing takes place, depending on the circumstances of the matter. If a Club Member's arrest results in a prolonged absence from contact (e.g. where the Club Member is remanded in custody) Vectis Youth FC may treat this as gross misconduct.



8.0 APPEAL

8.1 Any Club Member who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision must notify the Central Committee in writing that they wish to appeal within seven calendar days of being notified in writing of the decision. This notice must include the basis of appeal, which would normally be on one or more of the following grounds:

- the penalty applied is too harsh,
- there is new evidence to be considered,
- the procedure has been carried out unfairly.
- **The following actions should be followed by Vectis Youth FC Central Committee:**
- A member of management who has not previously been involved in the matter will hear the appeal
- A Club Member has the right to appeal against any level of disciplinary action taken
- The appeal will be held as soon as is practicable
- The appeal will be treated as an unprejudiced hearing, with the aim of investigating inconsistencies in all parties' views and giving fair consideration to all available facts
- Once all of the evidence has been presented, the hearing will be concluded and the Club Member will be informed of the decision of the appeal in writing as soon as possible and where practicable no more than seven working days from the date of appeal
- There is no further right of appeal.

8.2 Conducting an appeal hearing

- There is a one stage appeal after any disciplinary meeting
- A request for an appeal should be made in writing by the individual within 7 calendar days of the decision / letter being received. It should highlight the grounds for the appeal explaining why they believe the decision should be reviewed
- The appeal needs to be held as soon as possible after the original decision

The attendees should be:

- Vectis Youth FC Central Committee Members
- Additional attendees may be invited, at the discretion of the Central Committee e.g. HFA Officers
- If the appeal concerns a player, a representative should be their parent / guardian. Other members are advised to bring a relevant representative for support
- The meeting should be held in a room without disturbance
- It is led by Vectis Youth FC Central Committee
- Introductions should be made
- Full notes/minutes are to be taken
- Confirm reason for the meeting, original issue and outcome (it should be highlighted that the next decision may either reduce or increase the action (It is recommended that this fact be brought to anyone considering making an appeal prior to them requesting an appeal.)
- The individual should highlight the grounds for the appeal explaining why the decision should be reviewed
- After open discussions, the meeting should be adjourned
- A final decision should be made
- The meeting should be reconvened
- The outcome of the meeting should be confirmed outlining reasons.