



COFFS CITY UNITED FC

INTERNAL BEHAVIOUR & SUSPENSION POLICY

1. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear, consistent disciplinary framework **for behaviour occurring in club-run environments** (training, club facilities, online platforms, and spectator conduct).
 - Support match officials by recognising their authority and NCF's disciplinary processes for **sanctioned competition matches**.
 - Help prevent repeated case-by-case debates and establish a predictable system for how CCUFC will respond to poor behaviour outside the match environment.
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2. Scope of Club Authority

CCUFC disciplinary authority **only applies to behaviours occurring outside the formal jurisdiction of match officials and NCF**, including:

Club-controlled environments

- Training sessions
- Pre-season internal games
- Club events and functions
- Meetings, change rooms, car parks
- Club social media channels or team chats
- Behaviour toward referees *outside* match jurisdiction (e.g., in carpark, after match)

Spectator Behaviour

Spectators are **not governed by yellow/red cards**, so club policy governs their conduct unless NCF determines a formal breach.

Junior environment protection

The club holds full authority to act where behaviour:

- Undermines volunteer safety,
 - Sets poor behavioural standards for youth, or
 - Threatens club culture.
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3. What the Club DOES NOT Handle (NCF / Match Official Authority)



During sanctioned matches

All incidents occurring:

- From arrival at field → departure from playing enclosure, AND
- Relating to match play, referee interactions, or technical areas

are governed by:

- ✓ Match Officials (yellow/red cards)
- ✓ NCF Disciplinary Regulations & Judiciary Sanctions
- ✓ FA Code of Conduct & Ethics

NCF handles according to:

- Law 12 enforcement
- Mandatory sanctions (R1–R9 tables)
- Code of Conduct & Ethics breaches (e.g., discrimination, violence)
- Spectator incidents that constitute formal complaints via NCF incident reports

CCUFC cannot override, replace or reduce NCF sanctions.

The club may, however, **add internal sanctions** *after* NCF has ruled, IF the behaviour affects club culture (e.g., abusive behaviour witnessed by juniors).

4. Behaviour Expectations in CCUFC Settings

Expectations are drawn from:

- FA Spectator Code of Behaviour (2019)
- FA Code of Conduct & Ethics (2021)

All participants must:

- Treat others with respect
- Avoid abusive, intimidating or threatening behaviour
- Refrain from obscene or discriminatory language
- Never engage in violence
- Uphold the reputation of the club and football
- Follow coach and club official instructions

Spectators must:

- Respect players, officials, referees, and volunteers
- Never enter the field of play
- Never use abusive or obscene language
- Not engage in arguments or confrontations



5. Internal Club Incident Categories

The club uses **three response tiers** for non-match incidents:

TIER 1 – Low-Level Club Behaviour Issues

Examples:

- Minor swearing at training
- Poor attitude or repeated lateness
- Spectator frustration comments not directed at individuals
- Mild sideline negativity

Club Responses:

- Verbal warning
 - Written warning
 - Parent meeting (juniors)
 - Reminder of Code of Conduct
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TIER 2 – Medium-Level Behaviour

Examples:

- Abusive language directed at another player/coach at training
- Escalating spectator behaviour (aggressive tone, repeated warnings)
- Online conflict within team chats
- Ignoring coach/manager instructions
- Disrespect toward volunteers

Club Responses:

- 1–2 training suspensions
 - 1-match *internal* suspension (club decision)
 - Removal from leadership role
 - Spectator sideline ban (1–4 weeks)
 - Behaviour agreement (player/parent)
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TIER 3 – High-Level Behaviour (Club Serious Misconduct)

Examples:



- Physical altercation during training or at club facilities
- Threats, intimidation or harassment
- Discriminatory remarks
- Spectator confronting referee in carpark or club area (NCF handles match zone; club handles outside)
- Social media abuse targeting players, coaches, referees, club
- Safeguarding concerns involving minors

Club Responses:

- Suspension from all club activities (2–10 weeks depending on severity)
- Season-long ban from club premises (spectators)
- Deregistration recommendation
- Mandatory education meeting
- Escalation to NCF if regulations apply

6. Reporting Process (Club-Controlled Environments Only)

Who may report?

- Coaches
- Managers
- Volunteers
- Players
- Parents
- Committee members

How to report

Using the CCUFC Incident Report Form.

Timeframe

Preferred within **48 hours**.

7. Club Investigation Process

1. **Receive report** → classify as Tier 1–3.
2. **Check jurisdiction**
 - Match-day? → NCF authority.



- Training/spectator/club event/online? → Club authority.
 - 3. **Collect evidence** (statements, messages, video if available).
 - 4. **Right to be Heard** — member may respond in writing or meeting.
 - 5. **Determine outcome** based on:
 - Club matrix
 - Aggravating/mitigating factors
 - Impact on club culture
 - 6. **Issue written outcome**
 - 7. **Monitor compliance**
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8. Aggravating / Mitigating Factors

Aggravating

- Occurred in front of children
- Abuse of volunteers
- Discrimination
- Previous similar behaviour
- Intentional escalation

Mitigating

- Immediate apology
 - No prior issues
 - Miscommunication
 - Emotional context (grief, stress etc.)
 - Provocation
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9. Appeals (Internal Club Sanctions Only)

Members may appeal *non-match* sanctions within **5 days** of receiving outcomes.

Appeal Panel:

- President (or delegate)
- 1 Committee member uninvolved in case



- 1 independent club member (optional)
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10. Club–NCF Interaction

NCF has exclusive authority over:

- All match-day cautions and expulsions
- Any behaviour within referee jurisdiction
- Formal send-off reports
- Any breach related to match officials (per NCF regs. 18.4–18.5)
- Violent conduct, discriminatory language, or serious misconduct that occurs as part of a match

The club must refer incidents to NCF when:

- A referee lodges a report
- Behaviour breaches NCF Disciplinary Regulations
- Any discrimination, violence, or referee abuse is involved
- Conduct occurs in match jurisdiction

The club may apply *additional* internal sanctions when:

- The behaviour impacts club culture, volunteers, or juniors
 - The individual represents CCUFC in a leadership capacity
 - The incident did not violate match rules but is incompatible with club values
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11. Summary: What the Club Handles vs. What NCF Handles

Incident Type	CCUFC Authority?	NCF Authority?
Training behaviour	YES	NO
Spectator behaviour (unless formal complaint)	YES	Sometimes
Social media conflict	YES	Rare



Incident Type	CCUFC Authority?	NCF Authority?
Player dissent during match	NO	YES (Referee + NCF)
Red-card offences	NO	YES (mandatory sanctions)
Referee abuse during match	NO	YES (R8/R9 offences)
Referee abuse after match in carpark	YES (club) + mandatory NCF report	YES
Violent conduct at training	YES	Possible NCF referral
Club events behaviour	YES	NO

12. Final Notes for Implementation

This revised structure ensures:

- ✓ **Match officials remain the sole authority** on match-day behaviour.
- ✓ **NCF handles all formal disciplinary matters**, as required in its regulations.
- ✓ The club focuses on **culture-building and safety** in training and spectator environments.
- ✓ The club now has a clear, predictable path for internal suspensions.
- ✓ Parents and spectators are governed by a **consistent, enforceable code**.

Action Plan

1. Make **safe** → separate, calm, basic details.
2. Jurisdiction **check** → Match/NCF or Club?
3. Incident **form submitted** (within 48 hrs).
4. Case **Lead appointed**.
5. **Evidence gathered** (5–7 days).
6. **Right of reply** offered.
7. **Classify Tier 1–3**.



8. **Decide sanction** using matrix + factors.
9. **Record decision** (summary on file).
10. **Communicate outcome** in writing (include appeal info).
11. **Monitor compliance** during suspension/ban.
12. **Appeals handled** (separate panel).
13. **Close case & reset** once complete.

1. Incident Occurs

Who acts? Coach / Manager / Committee member / Referee / Volunteer

1. **Make it safe first**

- Separate people if needed.
- Remove any person who is aggressive or abusive from the area.
- If kids are present, move them away from the conflict.

2. **Capture basic details (while fresh)**

- Date, time, field/venue.
- Teams and age group.
- Who was involved (player, parent, coach, spectator, referee).
- Short dot-point description of what happened.

If the situation is volatile: end the interaction and say,
“The club will follow this up formally. Please leave the area now.”

2. Jurisdiction Check – Club or NCF?

Who acts? Director of Football (or President) + one Committee member

Within **24 hours**, decide:

1. **Did this happen under the referee’s control in a sanctioned match?**

👉 **YES** →

- This is **NCF / Match Official jurisdiction**.
- Ensure the referee submits the report (if appropriate).
- Club records the incident, **does not overturn or re-referee**.
- Club may *later* consider **additional internal response** if it affects club culture (e.g. leadership roles, internal bans).

👉 **NO** →



- Training, spectator, carpark, canteen, club event, group chat, social media, etc.
 - This is a **CCUFC internal matter** → proceed to Step 3.
2. **Does it obviously meet NCF thresholds anyway (violence, discrimination, referee abuse, serious threats)?**
- If **yes**, the club **both**:
 - Treats it as an internal matter **and**
 - **Notifies NCF** with a brief report.
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3. Log the Incident Formally

Who acts? Person raising concern, with support of their coach/manager if needed

1. **Complete the CCUFC Incident Report Form**
 - Within **48 hours** where possible.
2. **Send to** club disciplinary email / Secretary / Director of Football.

No formal incident form = no formal action, unless the matter is critical (safety, child protection).

4. Appoint a Case Lead

Who acts? President (or delegate)

1. Appoint a **Case Lead**:
 - Usually Director of Football, Vice-President or another neutral committee member.
 2. For serious matters (Tier 3, safeguarding, threats), form a **small panel**:
 - Case Lead + 1–2 committee members.
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5. Gather Evidence

Who acts? Case Lead

Within **5–7 days** of receiving the form:

1. **Collect information**
 - Original incident form.
 - Any referee or coach reports.
 - Written statements from key witnesses.
 - Screenshots (messages, social media).
 - Video, if available.
2. **Keep it written and factual**



- Time-stamped notes.
- Avoid opinion – focus on what was seen/heard.

3. Decide if interim action is needed

- For serious, ongoing risk (threats, violence, safeguarding):
 - Impose a **temporary stand-down** from training / games / attendance until outcome is decided.
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6. Right of Reply (Natural Justice)

Who acts? Case Lead

1. Send the person involved a brief written summary, e.g.:

“We have received a report about an incident on [date] at [location].

The key concerns are: [dot points].

You are invited to respond in writing or request a meeting before a decision is made.”

2. Give them a **reasonable time** to respond (e.g. 3–5 days).
 3. Record their response (email or written notes from meeting).
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7. Classify the Incident (Tier 1–3)

Who acts? Case Lead + one other committee member

Using your internal policy:

- **Tier 1 – Low Level**
 - **Tier 2 – Medium Level**
 - **Tier 3 – High Level**
 - If unsure between two tiers → err **up** a tier and then moderate the sanction with mitigating factors.
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8. Decide on the Sanction

Who acts? Case Lead + Disciplinary Panel / Committee delegate

Use:

- The **Tier of the incident**
- **Aggravating factors** (repetition, juniors present, abuse of volunteers, discrimination, alcohol, lack of remorse)
- **Mitigating factors** (apology, no prior issues, provocation, cooperation)

Suggested baseline:

- **Tier 1**



- Verbal and/or written warning
- Parent meeting (for juniors)
- Note on file
- **Tier 2**
 - 1–2 training suspensions
 - 1 internal match suspension (player/coach)
 - 1–4-week sideline ban (spectator)
 - Behaviour agreement with clear “next step”
- **Tier 3**
 - 2–10-week suspension from all club activities
 - Season ban for spectators in serious cases
 - Removal from leadership or coaching roles
 - Deregistration recommendation in extreme cases
 - Mandatory NCF report if not already done

For anything involving referees, discrimination, or serious violence, you **should also** notify NCF.

9. Confirm and Record the Decision

Who acts? Case Lead

1. Write up a short **Decision Summary** including:
 - Incident reference (date, team, people involved).
 - Key facts found.
 - Tier classification.
 - Sanction(s) applied and duration.
 - Any conditions (e.g. apology, behaviour meeting).
 - Appeal rights and timeline.
2. Store it securely:
 - Club disciplinary folder (digital).
 - Restricted access to President + specified committee members.

10. Communicate the Outcome

Who acts? President or Case Lead

1. Notify the person **in writing** (email is fine):



- Outcome and reasons.
 - Start and end dates of suspension/ban.
 - What they **can** and **cannot** do during that time (e.g. “may train but cannot play”, “cannot attend fields at all”).
 - Appeal process and deadline.
2. Notify **relevant coaches/managers**:
- Only the information they need to manage teams (e.g. “X is unavailable to play until [date] due to club suspension”).
3. If necessary, notify:
- Canteen/ground controllers if spectator bans are in place.
 - NCF if the matter is reportable.
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11. Implement and Monitor

Who acts? Coaches, Managers, Ground Officials

1. Ensure team lists and training rolls reflect suspended persons.
 2. Ground officials know who is banned and for how long.
 3. Case Lead checks in:
 - Is the sanction being followed?
 - Any further incidents?
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12. Appeals

Who acts? Appeals Panel

1. If an appeal is lodged (within your set window, e.g. 5 days):
 - Set up an **Appeals Panel** different to the original Case Lead (e.g. President + 2 committee members).
2. Appeals Panel reviews:
 - Original decision summary.
 - All evidence.
 - Appellant’s grounds for appeal (process error, new evidence, disproportionate sanction).
3. Panel may:
 - Uphold the original decision.
 - Adjust the sanction.



- Overturn the decision (rare).
 - 4. Communicate appeal outcome in writing.
 - Decision is final at club level.
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13. Close the Case

Who acts? Case Lead

When sanction ends:

1. Note on file that:
 - Suspension/ban completed.
 - Any conditions met (e.g. apology delivered).
2. Inform coaches that player/parent/coach is fully reinstated.
3. Optionally, brief conversation with the person returning:
 - “Clean slate” message.
 - Expectations clearly restated.