

VERWOOD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Code of Conduct: Managers, Coaches & Club Officials

Standards of behaviour expected of all coaching and club staff

Version	Version 3.0 – April 2026
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Review due	Annually, or following any significant incident or change in FA guidance
Policy owner	Club Welfare Officer / Club Secretary (as applicable)

1. PURPOSE

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and responsibility expected from all managers, coaches and club officials representing Verwood Town Football Club. The aim is to ensure that all individuals working with or representing the club uphold the highest standards of conduct, integrity, safeguarding and respect, while operating in full compliance with the rules governing football.

2. SCOPE — WHO THIS APPLIES TO

This Code applies to all individuals acting in an official capacity for Verwood Town Football Club, including:

- Team managers
- Coaches and assistant coaches
- Club committee members
- Team officials
- Volunteers acting in an official role, including parent referees and assistant referees
- FA-qualified coaches linked to Verwood Town FC

This Code applies during: league and cup fixtures, friendly matches and tournaments, training sessions, club events, private or invitational matches organised by club representatives, and any football activity where an individual is representing or could reasonably be associated to Verwood Town Football Club.

This Code applies whenever a manager, coach or club official is acting in an official capacity, participating in football activity involving Verwood Town players or teams, representing the club, organising club football activity, or wearing club kit or otherwise reasonably identifiable as representing the club.

The Code may also apply to behaviour outside formal club activities where such behaviour could reasonably be considered to bring Verwood Town Football Club, its volunteers, players or governing bodies into disrepute.

3. COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Managers, coaches and club officials must comply fully with all rules governing football activity. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Laws of the Game
- Rules and regulations of the competitions in which the club participates, including SCORY where applicable
- The FA Handbook and FA Regulations
- FA Safeguarding and Welfare Policies
- The FA Mini Soccer Handbook and related youth football guidance
- Rules issued by Dorset County Football Association
- Any applicable disciplinary, safeguarding or operational guidance issued by the club or governing bodies

Important: *These rules must be followed at all times, regardless of whether the football activity is an official league fixture, friendly match, training activity or privately organised game. Ignorance of rules or guidance will not be accepted as justification for any breach.*

4. AUTHORITY OF THE CLUB

Managers, coaches and club officials must follow any direction, guidance or interpretation of rules issued by Verwood Town Football Club. Where advice or clarification is sought from the club committee or a designated club official, the advice given must be followed. The club's interpretation of any rule, regulation or policy will be considered authoritative for all club activity.

Where rules, policies or external guidance present ambiguity, the decision of Verwood Town Football Club shall be final in determining how those rules apply within the club environment. Failure to follow club direction constitutes a breach of this Code of Conduct.

5. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Managers, coaches and club officials must at all times:

- Act with integrity, honesty and professionalism
- Show respect to all involved — players, match officials, opposition and spectators
- Adhere to the Laws of the Game
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour — no swearing, no smoking at matches or training
- Always respect the decisions of match officials and never engage in public criticism
- Never enter the field of play without the referee's permission
- Never engage in or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Promote a safe, positive and inclusive football environment
- Uphold the reputation of Verwood Town Football Club and lead by example
- Avoid conduct that could bring the club, league or game into disrepute

6. SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

The welfare of players is paramount — it must always be placed above the result of any match or competition.

Managers and coaches must:

- Follow all FA safeguarding guidance, policies and procedures
- Support the role of the Club Welfare Officer
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately through the appropriate channels (see the club's Safeguarding Policy)
- Ensure all football activity is conducted safely and appropriately for the age and ability of players
- Place the wellbeing, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything else, including the result
- Explain clearly what you expect of players and what they can expect from you
- Ensure the parents and carers of players under 18 understand these expectations
- Refrain from and refuse to tolerate any form of bullying
- Develop mutual trust and respect with every player to build their self-esteem

7. APPROPRIATE CONDUCT WITH PLAYERS

Important: *This section reflects FA guidance on Appropriate Behaviours & Position of Trust (FA document 1.7).*

- **One-to-one situations:** avoid being alone with a child in a closed or unobservable space. Coaching and conversations with players must take place within sight of others. See also the club's Lone Working & One-to-One Contact Protocol.
- **Physical contact:** any physical contact during coaching must be appropriate, child-led and take place in an open, observable setting. Never touch a player in a way that could be misinterpreted.
- **Online communication:** do not send private (one-to-one) messages to under-18 players. Use group chats with at least two adults present at all times. See the club's Social Media Policy.
- **Changing rooms:** adults must not enter a changing room occupied by players without another adult present. Knock and announce before entering.

8. COACHING STANDARDS

All coaches operating within Verwood Town Football Club must:

- Hold the appropriate FA coaching qualifications where required for their role
- Maintain valid safeguarding and DBS requirements where applicable
- Deliver coaching in accordance with FA guidance and best practice
- Promote development, participation and enjoyment of football
- Respect age-appropriate rules such as those within Mini Soccer and youth football formats
- Ensure all activities are appropriate for players' ability, age and maturity

Coaches must not organise or participate in any football activity that knowingly breaches or attempts to circumvent FA guidance, competition rules, club guidance or safeguarding policies.

9. RESPECT FOR CLUB VOLUNTEERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Verwood Town Football Club is run and supported by volunteers who give their time, experience and effort to ensure the successful operation of the club. All committee members and club volunteers undertake their roles without remuneration and contribute significant time for the benefit of players, teams and the wider football community.

All managers, coaches and officials are therefore expected to:

- Treat committee members and club volunteers with respect and professionalism at all times
- Recognise the authority and responsibility of the club committee in managing the operation and governance of the club
- Engage constructively and respectfully when seeking guidance, raising concerns or discussing club matters
- Avoid behaviour that undermines, disrespects or places unreasonable demands on volunteers carrying out their duties

Constructive feedback and open communication are welcomed and encouraged — they must always be conducted in a respectful and appropriate manner. Any behaviour that intimidates, harasses or undermines club volunteers may be considered a breach of this Code of Conduct.

10. BREACHES OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Any breach of this Code may result in action by Verwood Town Football Club. This may include:

- A verbal or written warning
- Temporary suspension from duties
- Removal from a coaching or managerial role
- Referral to Dorset County FA or relevant competition organisers

Serious breaches may also result in disciplinary action by the governing football authorities. All breaches will be handled in accordance with the club's Disciplinary & Complaints Policy.

11. ACCEPTANCE

All managers, coaches and club officials must confirm that they have read, understood and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct before taking up their role. A signed copy must be returned to the Club Secretary.

Acceptance of this Code of Conduct	
Full name	
Role / team	
Signature	
Date	

Key Contacts	
Club Welfare Officer	Clare Nixon – welfare@vtyfc.co.uk / 07758 246452
Club Chairperson	youth_chairman@vtyfc.co.uk
Club Secretary	youth_secretary@vtyfc.co.uk
Dorset FA Safeguarding	safeguarding@dorsetfa.com / 01202 688270