



VERWOOD TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

Equality Policy and Guidance

1. Introduction

1.1. The Verwood Town Football Club is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to enjoy Youth Football.

1.2. Overview of the Football Association's approach to Equality:

The FA is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout football at every level. Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by, anyone who wants to participate in it. The FA's commitment is to eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability.

1.3. The FA is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members to abide and adhere to this policy and the requirements of the following (but not limited to) equalities legislation – Equality Act 2006, Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as well as various amendments to these acts.

1.4. The FA commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims, when it is brought to their attention, of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice stop and sanctions imposed as appropriate.

2. Every Child Matters

2.1. The VTFC Equality Policy supports our club view that 'Every Child matters'. We aim to provide, wherever possible, opportunities for children and adults of all abilities to be involved with the Club and youth football.

2.2. The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone involved in, or who approaches, the Club is treated fairly and with respect and that VTFC is equally accessible to them all. It is the accountability of the elected Officers of VTFC to set and implement the standards and values of this policy and ensure they are applied throughout the Club at all levels.

2.3. It is the responsibility of the Officials, Coaches, Volunteers, Players, Members and Supporters of the club to adhere to those standards. Our club's commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability and to encourage equal opportunities.

2.4. VTFC will ensure that it treats people fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunities for all members of the community to take part in, and enjoy, its activities. We aim to provide all players with the opportunity of enjoying the game (through training or matches) at the level they are most comfortable or suited to.

2.5. We will also allow and encourage talented individuals access to football at a higher level if they (with the support of their parent or guardian) so wish.

3. Zero Tolerance on Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and Victimisation

3.1. VTFC will not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of an individual, which for the purposes of this policy and the actions and sanction applicable is regarded as discrimination. This includes sexually or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal.

- 3.2. The Club is committed to taking positive action where inequalities exist, and to the development of a programme of ongoing training and awareness-raising events and activities in order to promote the eradication of discrimination and promote equality in football

VTFC is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all Officials, Coaches, Volunteers, Players, Members and Supporters and requires all Officials, Coaches, Volunteers, Players, Members and Supporters to abide and adhere to these policies and the requirements of the relevant equalities legislation including any amendments to these acts and any new legislation.
(including but not limited to):

- a) Race Relations Act 1976
- b) Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- c) Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- 3.3. The Club will work to ensure that any behaviour in contravention of the above acts and legislation is met with appropriate action in whatever context that it occurs.

4. Reporting concerns and the club disciplinary procedure

- 4.1. The Club commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims that are brought to its attention, of discrimination on the above grounds, and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice stop and sanctions imposed as appropriate.

- 4.2. If any Official, Coach, Volunteer, Player, Member or Supporter feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way or that the Club Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken, then they should follow the procedures below:

- a) If the discrimination involves or is directed towards a child or young person, then the matter must be reported directly to the Club Welfare Officer and dealt with via the Club's Welfare Policy (see separate policy).
 - i. Anyone can report any child welfare issues observed to any member of the committee, but are highly recommended to contact our Child Welfare Officer on - **Child_Welfare@VTFC.co.uk** or call The NSPCC 24-hour helpline on **0808 800 5000** – or if it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the police or children's social care in your area or The FA via **safeguarding@thefa.com**
- b) If the discrimination is not directed towards a child or young person then the matter must be reported to the Club Secretary or another member of the Club Committee and addressed via the club Anti-Bullying or Disciplinary Policy (see separate policies) as applicable.
- c) The report should include
 - i. Details of what, when and where the occurrence took place
 - ii. Any witness statements and names
 - iii. Names of any others that have been treated in the same way
 - iv. Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made, a preference for a solution to the incident
- d) Thereafter the process set out in the anti-bullying or disciplinary policy shall be applied.