



## NEXT LEVEL FOOTBALL CLUB

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

**Effective Date:** June 2025

**Approved By:** Aaron Minott (Director)

#### 1. Introduction

Next Level Football Club is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where all children and young people can participate in football free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Next Level FC. This policy sets out the Club's approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying behaviour in line with The FA Safeguarding Children Policy and the Club's values of **Respect, Unity, Discipline, and Development.**

#### 2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional behaviour that causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another person. Bullying can be carried out by individuals or groups and may occur on or off the pitch.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- **Verbal bullying:** name-calling, insults, teasing, threats
- **Physical bullying:** pushing, hitting, kicking, or damaging belongings
- **Emotional bullying:** exclusion, intimidation, humiliation, manipulation
- **Cyberbullying:** abusive messages, images, videos, or comments online or via social media
- **Discriminatory bullying:** behaviour linked to race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or background

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### **3. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all individuals involved with Next Level FC, including:

- Players
- Parents and carers
- Coaches, managers, and volunteers
- Club officials and spectators

The policy applies during:

- Training sessions
- Matches and fixtures
- Tournaments, tours, and residential trips
- Travel to and from football activities
- Online or social media activity connected to the Club

### **4. Preventing Bullying**

Next Level FC is committed to preventing bullying by:

- Promoting positive behaviour and mutual respect
- Educating players about appropriate conduct and teamwork
- Ensuring coaches model respectful behaviour at all times
- Encouraging open communication and reporting of concerns
- Taking all reports of bullying seriously

### **5. Reporting Bullying**

Anyone who experiences, witnesses, or becomes aware of bullying is encouraged to report it as soon as possible.

Reports can be made to:

- A coach or team manager
- The Club Welfare Officer
- A trusted adult or Club official

All reports will be treated sensitively and confidentially, and no individual will be victimised for raising a concern in good faith.

### **6. Responding to Bullying**

All bullying concerns will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

The Club will:

- Listen carefully to all parties involved
- Assess the nature and seriousness of the behaviour

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- Take immediate steps to protect the child or young person affected
- Work with parents/carers where appropriate
- Follow FA safeguarding procedures where required

Serious or persistent bullying may be escalated to the League, County FA, or external agencies.

## **7. Disciplinary Action**

Bullying behaviour will be treated as a breach of the Club's Codes of Conduct and may result in one or more of the following actions:

- Verbal warning
- Formal apology
- Written warning
- Temporary removal from training or matches
- Suspension from Club activities
- Membership review or removal from the Club
- Referral to the League or County FA

The level of action will depend on the severity and frequency of the behaviour.

## **8. Safeguarding & Welfare Support**

The welfare of children and young people is the Club's priority. Support will be offered to any player affected by bullying, and steps will be taken to ensure they feel safe and supported.

All safeguarding-related bullying concerns will be managed in line with the Club's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with updates from The FA or League regulations. Any changes will be communicated to members through the Club's official channels.

## **10. Acknowledgement**

By registering with Next Level Football Club, all players, parents, staff, and volunteers agree to comply with this Anti-Bullying Policy and understand that breaches may result in disciplinary action.

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