

Cheshire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

# Policy on Standards of Personal Behaviour in YFC



*This Behaviour Policy is applicable to all members and non members attending a dance and/or event organised by the Cheshire YFC movement and/or affiliated clubs. The organisers of the dance and/or event have the authority to exercise this Behaviour Policy if and when required.*

With a growing number of examples of detrimental behaviour by members and non-members of YFC, which are damaging the fundamental image of the movement, it is incumbent on Cheshire YFC to set standards for the guidance of its own County and Clubs which will guide them in dealing with persistent troublemakers.

It must however be emphasised that judgement can only be made at the coalface and so this policy is to

support local action, not to dictate.

YFC prides itself on giving young people the opportunity to learn and develop as good citizens and responsible members of the community. YFC should be an enjoyable experience and promoting positive behaviour is essential to the smooth running of any activity. This provides a foundation for the running of our clubs, reduces the likelihood of negative behaviour occurring, and ensures that activities are fun, engaging and safe for everyone. Members of YFC have an important role in supporting one another to manage their own behaviours and to make positive choices. This policy is designed to inform our members what is expected of them as a member of YFC and also to support the event organisers in addressing behaviour issues. This policy is to be applicable at all Club and County events whether it is a club meeting, travel, social event or competition and all members and their guests are expected to abide by the policy. The term 'the Federation' is inclusive of all parts of YFC from Club to Federation

In the majority of cases, members are mindful of the need for acceptable standards of behaviour and promoting a positive public image for themselves, their club and county, and YFC as a whole at all times.

The following are examples of where disciplinary action is warranted:

- Physical violence against another individual.
- Goading or provocation which may lead to inappropriate behaviour, such as fighting.
- Condoning physical violence by not revealing prior knowledge or not taking action to prevent physical violence.
- Intimidation of other members or members of the public.
- Vandalism to any property or equipment.
- Inappropriate behaviour in and around motor vehicles, on both public roads and private land.
- Abusive language (to members of the public, including parents/supporters of other teams and YFC members).
- Drug and / or Alcohol Abuse – Please see separate Policy.
- Theft - of articles belonging to YFC members or members of the public or equipment belonging to guests/entertainers or articles of equipment belonging to a venue.
- Offensive behaviour.
- Indecent Exposure
- Any behaviour, which has or possibly will bring the Federation into disrepute.
- Any behaviour, which has or possibly will jeopardise the Federation booking future venues, sports facilities and services.
- Offences that are against the law.

\*Note - All guidance contained in the document applies to member's behaviour both in the real world and digital one. Comments and images posted on social network sites and similar channels are public and can carry repercussions for your YFC membership, your personal future, result in you becoming liable for prosecution and damage the reputation of your YFC and Young Farmers as a whole.

### **Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour**

All incidents of inappropriate behaviour should be addressed using the procedure outlined below which demonstrates the procedure for working through a behaviour issue.

### **Procedure for addressing behaviour incidents**

Action 1 - identify a panel – The Federation has a pool of people from which to select a panel to cover cases of conflict of interest and availability. This can consist of any elected official. It is important that panel members fully understand the importance of confidentiality of information. Panel members should declare any conflicts of interest upon discovering the names of those members involved in an incident.

All members of the YFC must respect that the panel is established to deal with difficult and emotional decisions, members who attempt to interfere with panel members will be subject to disciplinary measures.

It is strongly recommend that county staff members are not panel members as it is important that they remain impartial and retain strong relationships with all clubs and members. Members of staff would be expected to administer and coordinate the procedures on behalf of the Federation.

Action 2 – Unacceptable Behaviour Incident - In the unfortunate event of a YFC member(s) behaving inappropriately, it will be the responsibility of the County Top Table to ascertain, the nature of and details relating to the incident. This should be recorded in writing at the earliest opportunity. Dependent on the nature of the incident external services such as the police may be involved in the incident. Dependent on the severity of the incident and the risk the member poses to others they may require suspension until the panel invite them to a disciplinary meeting.

During this suspension time they should be allocated a point of contact within the organisation who they can contact to receive updates on the situation. A letter should be sent to them informing them of the allegation and their suspension until a meeting is held to discuss the issue. This meeting should be arranged within 14 days of the incident.

Action 3 – Information gathering- an account of the event may need to be sought from other members who witnessed the incident detailing the things they saw and heard. These statements should then be circulated to the panel; this will allow the panel members to have a full picture of the incident before the meeting and will speed up proceedings. Evidence gathered as part of the case should be kept confidential and shared only within the panel to support the decision making process. This can include CCTV, pictures or social media screenshots.

Action 4 – Meeting - Before proceeding any further, it is essential that the person or persons involved in the incident are given the opportunity to explain his / her or their version of events to the panel. The YFC Member has a right to be accompanied by another YFC Member or if under 18 years of age, by parent, guardian or carer. Details of this person should be conveyed to the County Federation no less than two working days before the meeting. The companion may address the meeting to put and sum up the YFC Members' case, respond on behalf of the YFC Member to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the YFC Member during the hearing. The companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the YFC Members behalf or address the meeting if the YFC Member does not wish it. During this meeting it is not appropriate to name the witnesses that provided information but you should share the information obtained. It is acceptable to share evidence gathered with the 'accused' in order to demonstrate that the panel have evidence to make an informed decision.

Again the notes of this meeting should be recorded.

The panel should be aware that on occasion they may receive malicious reports that could influence their decision and they should not be afraid to challenge the validity of evidence presented to them. Where a report or statement is found to be malicious disciplinary action will be taken against the person.

Action 5 – Consideration of Information - Following the contributions of those involved the panel should consider this information and the information gathered in the witness statements in order to make a decision on membership sanctions with in 7 days. Each behaviour incident should be judged in its own right and although members may have a record of previous misbehaviours this should be addressed once the initial incident is addressed. Any previous behaviour incidents may or may not impact the sanctions applied to a member.

During this process you may find that elements of the incident fall into the category of safeguarding, anti bullying or were due in part to the consumption of alcohol or drugs – where this is the case you should refer to the relevant policy for information and guidance.

Action 6 – Inform the member - It is imperative that any sanctions or bans imposed are conveyed to the individual (and parents if under 18) within 7 days in writing and are recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made.

Action 7 – Right to Appeal – To be included in the correspondence informing the member of the result of the disciplinary the member should always be given the right to appeal. The appeals process can be found later in this policy. Appeal made against a panel decision will be heard from another group of the pool of names.

## Membership Sanctions and bans

When deciding upon a course of action the panel should examine all evidence available to them at the time of the meeting.

Type of behaviour	Refuse to admit or exclude	Letter to be sent to club etc	Ban
Verbal abuse first time	Discretionary	No	No
Verbal abuse persistent	Discretionary	Yes - Discretionary	Discretionary
Verbal abuse of bar staff	Discretionary	Not unless persistent	Not unless persistent
Threat, attempt, goading, be physically violent	Mandatory	Mandatory	Discretionary
Condoning physical violence by not revealing prior knowledge or not taking action to prevent physical violence.	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Intimidation of other members or members of the public	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Damage to property	Mandatory	Mandatory	Discretionary
Damage to fire/safety property	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Illegal substances	Mandatory	Await police/court action	Mandatory if found guilty in court
Theft	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Drink driving	Mandatory	await Police/Court action	Mandatory if convicted
Drink driving on private land	Mandatory	Mandatory	Ban
Inappropriate behaviour in around vehicles	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Offensive behaviour	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Offences that are against the law	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Vomiting that requires cleaning when attending or travelling to/from a YFC event	Discretionary	Discretionary	£50.00 fine
Bullying of a YFC member by another member or members	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary

A life ban should be avoided as YFC is an organisation for the development of young people and in being so everybody deserves the right to a second chance once any existing bans have been served. \*Where the situation is of a serious safeguarding nature a life ban may be legally imposed by the Police or the Disclosure and Barring Service in order to protect other members of YFC and reduce risks to the organisation.

Following the decision to apply a membership sanction the member should be made fully aware of the

situation and the events he or she may or may not attend. If the member is banned from all YFC activities for a period of time the member should have their card removed and this should be held at with the County Coordinators for the duration of the ban. The members' details should be held by the Federation so that event organisers are aware of members that are not permitted to attend events.

If a banned member attempts to attend events they are not permitted to attend during in the course of their ban this should be addressed with them and their case reviewed by the panel. Persistent attempts to break the terms of their membership ban may lead to a more severe punishment being applied to the member.

### **Right to Appeal**

All members have the right to appeal to membership sanctions applied to them, they should do this within 14 days of receiving the letter informing them of the decision. Non-members do not have a right to appeal.

The Appeal procedure is conducted in the following way following receipt of the appeal letter.

Step 1 – Appoint an independent panel of three or five people to conduct the appeal.

Step 2 – Members of the panel are given the appeal letter and any supporting evidence to consider eg witness statements, meeting minutes, photographic evidence and recommendations from external organisations such as the police.

Step 3 – Review of the information contained in the appeal - After the reading the information the panel will have the opportunity to request any additional information from the both parties involved.

Step 4 – Arrange an Appeal Hearing – Federation will set a date and invite the member making an appeal to present information to the panel for consideration; it is also an opportunity for the panel to ask any questions they may have about the incident or the decisions made. This meeting will usually take place at a neutral venue and timings will be arranged so that both parties will not meet on the day. The member appealing will be permitted to bring a supporting person that may also speak on their behalf. The county federation will be permitted up to three people to represent the views of the county. No new documentation can be brought to this meeting for consideration by them.

Step 5 – This usually takes place on the day of the hearing following contributions from both parties whilst the panel are together. The panel reach an agreed decision and course of action for both parties. The appeal will go 'in favour' of one of the parties and this will be communicated to both at the earliest opportunity. Along with the appeal decision the panel may decide to make summarising statements and recommendations going forward there may be action points for all parties involved in order to avoid a situation occurring in the future and to develop our procedures around dealing with situations and appeals.

Step 6 – The decision of the appeals panel will be FINAL and cannot be questioned by either party.

Promoting consistency across all sections of YFC can be difficult. Each incident should be judged on its own individual factors including the nature of the incident, where it took place, the consequences of actions, the victims, any damage caused and the impact on the club and county federation. In order to ensure that all YFC members follow the same standards of behaviour for our organisation our clubs must work together to ensure that similar offences result in similar consequences.

The Federation should share information on behaviour issues and banned members that may attempt to join neighbouring counties at their earliest convenience.

## **Storage of Behaviour records**

It is vital that records of behaviour incidents are filed confidentially by the club or county in the way that safeguarding incidents are. When a report is made to a club or county they should document the situation, date/time and the actions completed on addressing the situation, this record should not be closed until the situation is resolved. This file should include a record of all conversations had with those involved, copies of any witness statements and any letters sent out. We recommend that all club issues addressed are recorded and a copy is sent to the County Coordinators to ensure that secondary records are held to avoid this information being lost during changes in club leadership. The county should also keep their own records of incidents.

## **Working as a team**

Although unfortunate, we do expect that when young people are on their journey to adulthood they will occasionally make unsuitable choices that may result in them being subject to the procedures outlined in this policy. As a youth organisation we are here to support rather than criminalise young people and where appropriate to do so we would recommend that the county and its members look at alternative ways in which inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.