

Aquinas FC - Code of Conduct for Parents and Players

Introduction

At Aquinas Football Club, we are committed to creating a safe, enjoyable, and respectful environment for all participants. This Code of Conduct outlines the responsibilities and expectations for parents and players to ensure that everyone involved in the club experiences a positive and supportive atmosphere. By adhering to these principles, we help to foster the values of respect, sportsmanship, and inclusivity, which are central to the Irish Football Association (IFA) guidelines.

General Principles

Both parents and players are expected to:

- **Promote Respect:** Show respect for coaches, match officials, fellow players, and opponents at all times.
- **Uphold Sportsmanship:** Participate in football with fairness, integrity, and a positive attitude.
- **Support Inclusion:** Contribute to a welcoming and inclusive environment, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, or background.
- **Encourage Learning:** Prioritize development, learning, and enjoyment over winning at all costs.

Responsibilities of Players

As a player at Aquinas Football Club, you are expected to:

- **Respect Your Coaches:** Listen to and follow the instructions given by your coach, recognizing their role in helping you improve as a player.
- **Respect Officials:** Accept decisions made by referees and match officials without arguing, challenging, or showing dissent. Treat them with courtesy at all times.
- **Respect Your Teammates and Opponents:** Encourage your teammates, even when mistakes are made, and show respect for your opponents by playing fairly and with good sportsmanship.
- **Be Committed:** Attend training sessions and matches regularly, and give your best effort in both practice and games. Inform your coach if you are unable to attend a session or match.
- **Follow the Rules:** Play within the rules of the game, avoiding foul play or unsporting behavior such as diving, time-wasting, or aggression.
- **Take Care of Equipment:** Treat all club equipment and facilities with care, and respect the property of others.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

As a parent or guardian at Aquinas Football Club, you are expected to:

- **Encourage Positive Behavior:** Support your child by encouraging positive attitudes towards teammates, opponents, and match officials. Help them focus on effort and improvement, rather than just winning.
- **Respect the Coaches' Role:** Allow the coaches to manage the team and avoid interfering with their instructions during training or matches. If you have questions or concerns, address them privately with the coach at an appropriate time.
- **Show Respect for Officials:** Accept decisions made by referees and match officials, and refrain from questioning their calls. Displaying good behavior from the sidelines sets a positive example for your child.
- **Be a Supportive Spectator:** Cheer for all players, not just your child. Avoid coaching from the sidelines and refrain from using inappropriate or abusive language during matches and training.
- **Promote Fair Play:** Teach your child the importance of fair play, respect for others, and playing by the rules of the game.
- **Encourage Participation:** Support your child's involvement in football for enjoyment and personal development, rather than for your own ambitions.

Expectations for Match Days

On match days, players and parents must:

- **Arrive on Time:** Ensure players arrive on time for both home and away games. Inform the coach if you are unable to attend or are running late.
- **Respect the Opposition:** Treat the opposing team, their coaches, and their supporters with respect, avoiding any hostility or negative comments.
- **Respect Facilities:** Use the facilities responsibly, ensuring that changing rooms, pitches, and other areas are left in a clean and tidy state.
- **Promote Positivity:** Maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of defeat, and refrain from placing undue pressure on players to win.
- **Avoid Confrontation:** Refrain from entering the field of play unless instructed by the coach or referee and avoid confrontations with opposing teams or their supporters.

Dealing with Concerns

If a parent or player has any concerns, they should:

- **Approach the Coach:** If the concern is football-related, speak to the coach calmly and respectfully, either before or after training or a match.
- **Contact Club Officials:** For more serious issues, contact a member of the club's committee or the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- **Follow the Club's Complaints Procedure:** Ensure any complaints are made through the appropriate channels, and avoid airing grievances publicly, such as on social media.

Safeguarding and Well-being

Aquinas Football Club is committed to the safeguarding of all its members, particularly children and young people. As part of this commitment, parents and players must:

- **Report Concerns:** If you have concerns about a player's welfare or believe that a child is being mistreated, report it to the club's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately.

- **Promote a Safe Environment:** Encourage players to communicate openly with coaches or parents about any concerns they may have regarding their treatment or the behavior of others.
- **Follow Safeguarding Policies:** Abide by the club's safeguarding and child protection policies, ensuring that the welfare of children is the primary concern in all circumstances.

Consequences for Breaches of the Code

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously. Consequences may include:

- **Verbal or Written Warnings:** A warning may be issued for a first-time or minor breach of the Code.
- **Suspension:** Repeated or serious breaches may result in suspension from participation in training, matches, or other club activities.
- **Expulsion:** In extreme cases, the club reserves the right to expel a player or parent from the club, following a fair and thorough investigation.

Parents or players who engage in serious misconduct, including verbal or physical abuse, may also face sanctions from the Irish Football Association (IFA).

Acknowledgment of the Code of Conduct

By signing this Code of Conduct, parents and players acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the guidelines set out in this document. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in disciplinary action from the club.

This Code of Conduct ensures that Aquinas Football Club remains a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment for everyone involved, while adhering to the IFA's commitment to fairness, inclusion, and positive development in football.