



# HAPPY VALLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

### Introduction

Happy Valley Football Club (the Club herein) prides itself as a good-natured, supportive, welcoming and wholesome place in which to play sport and any conduct which may be deemed discriminatory in anyway is considered unacceptable in the eyes of the Club.

The Club does not advocate, support or practice discrimination based on race, religion, age, national origin, language, sex, sexual orientation, or mental or physical handicap or any other personal attribute protected by law, except where affirmative action may be required to redress individual or social handicaps. HVFC will make all reasonable accommodations to allow people who experience difficulties in their dealings with the organisation to benefit equally from its work.

'Discriminatory behaviour' refers to conduct that threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, colour, deformities, descent or national or ethnic origin.

'Racist behaviour' is defined as a comment(s) or action(s) that objectively implies that a person's race has distinctive characteristics and the comment(s) is uttered in a manner which may cause offence to the person(s) at whom it is directed.

It is the duty of the Club to take strong remedial action against any members or supporters who are involved in any behaviour which may be construed as discriminatory. Discrimination has no place within sport or Happy Valley Football Club.

In the event that any umpire, member, player or associated person hears or sees what they interpret to be a racist or other discriminatory remark or action and wishes to lodge a complaint to the Club, they may do so by following the complaint process. Complaints will be handled as per the Complaint Handling Process found within this policy.

### Complaints

HVFC takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. The Club will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of any complaint and have the opportunity to respond
- irrelevant matters will not be considered.
- decisions will be unbiased and fair.
- any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.



# HAPPY VALLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

More serious complaints may be escalated to the Member Protection Officer (MPO) of the Southern Football League. If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our club will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority and our state/national body.

To make a complaint to the Club, please contact a member of the Executive to request a record of complaint form.

### Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our club, the person receiving the complaint (e.g., President, Secretary or any Executive person) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem.
- ask what the complainant would like to happen.
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem.
- take notes.
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Club will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation)
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour)
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state and/or national body or from an external agency (e.g. Office for Recreation and Sport or Play By The Rules.)
- referring the complaint to the Southern Football League; and/or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or antidiscrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to the Southern Football League and an inquiry is conducted, the club will:

- co-operate fully
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on the Southern Football League recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an antidiscrimination commission or other external agency



# HAPPY VALLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

### Disciplinary Measures

The Club will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached a policy or by-law or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed must:

- Be fair and reasonable
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach
- Be determined by the Constitution, Bylaws and the rules of the game
- Be agreed upon by all members of the Executive Committee

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- verbal and/or written apology
- counselling to address behaviour
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our club
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently;
- a fine; or any other form of discipline that our club considers reasonable and appropriate.

Members who are found to have breached a Club policy or by-law will be notified of the suspected breach by the Executive Committee and given an opportunity to provide evidence to prove otherwise. Where the Executive are not satisfied that the evidence given nullifies the suspected breach, they will collectively decide on an appropriate disciplinary measure.

### Appeals

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions or disciplinary measures imposed by the Executive. This appeal is made to the Management Committee. The Management Committee will meet and vote to either uphold the decision of the Executive or decide on an alternative disciplinary measure. Where a decision cannot be unanimously agreed upon, it will be referred to the Southern Football League.

Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision maker/Club.

Where the breach of policy results in reporting to the police or relevant authorities, no appeal will be allowed.

**Reviewed October 2023**

**Next Review October 2025**