

Responding To A Respect Breach

Here is some **guidance from the League that we hope you will find useful in deciding your action and in compiling the reply** we need from you. A lot of clubs appear to have grasped what is required and understand the ethos of what the league are trying to achieve. This brief outline is designed to help clubs, **if you need any further help please contact us for a fuller explanation and further guidance.**

Firstly, do not confuse Respect Programme with Misconduct although the line between both is often thin and of course there is a crossover. This process is designed as a means of dealing with issues that do not quite reach the misconduct threshold. **Misconduct is exclusively dealt with by the FA.**

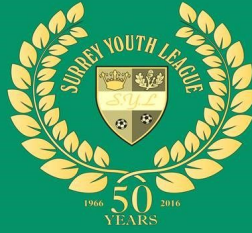
The Respect programme is designed as a tool to reduce poor behaviour at our matches and as such **the league adopts a zero tolerance approach to help reinforce the league and a club's own Respect Codes of Conduct.** These are led by the league rules and FA Charter Standard Programme. Clubs have a responsibility to commit to and follow these as well as a duty of care to provide a safe and fun environment for all the leagues participants. Respect Breaches concern the behaviour of the Adults at the game, not the players.

Part of that commitment is that the management committee of clubs, normally Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Club Welfare Officer maintain the high standards expected by the Codes of Conduct and review any issues they have at the club with a positive willingness to change. **In this league we will notify the Club Secretary when we feel there has been behaviour that falls short of those standards** and we do this by way of a "Respect Breach Notification" which is sent by email. **Please make your Club's response to the breach with a Reply All on this original email.**

Most Respect issues that we refer to a Club are reported by the Referee, some from Respect Marshals and others from clubs themselves. Most concern coaches and spectators overtly criticising the match official's decisions or not showing respect to them or to their opponent's coaches, officials, supporters, players, etc. All of these are breaches of the clubs code of conduct and are not acceptable in youth football.

The League will inform the Club of any previous issues that have been considered so that the Club can take these into account and in particular consider the effectiveness of previous measures. We do consider the bigger picture of both Respect and Misconduct issues.

Club management committees must take time to address issues where they occur and do everything they can to ensure no repeat if they want the team to continue to participate in this league. **This should not be delegated** to the team manager and **should involve the Respect Marshall** present at the game to help understand why they were unable to mitigate the incident before it became an issue with the Referee. It may be they do not fully understand their role or responsibilities.



It is worth noting that we do tend to look at the team as a collective when addressing such matters **The Club should inform all adults concerned with the team (Managers, Coaches and Spectators/Parents) of the breach and the remedial action intended.**

Respect breaches reported by the referee are regarded by this league as a matter of fact in the same way the FA treat Red & Yellow card reports from referees. This is an important factor when club management committees are dealing with such matters. Obviously you must investigate as a club and take accounts from everyone and get a balanced view of the issues however **it's important you make that principle clear to everyone from the outset.** Sending back a club response of rebuttals and blaming other people for the issue isn't a positive way forward. Whilst the league expect there is usually at least two sides to every story what are looking for essentially is that the club will review the issues and put appropriate and effective steps in place to reduce the risk of any repeat.

The principle is that the club self police by investigating the matter and then coming up with the appropriate measures for those responsible. This will of course depend on the circumstances and any previous incidents. **There are a range of measures the club can take** including words of advice, written warnings, holding a meeting with all concerned with the team to remind of and reinforce the Codes of Conduct, possibly re-signing them, educational workshops such as the "Ref your having a laugh" workshop and the online respect course, club imposed suspensions and ultimately removal from post. Note that **these are Club decisions, it is not something the League can impose.**

The league will ask for a response from the club explaining the actions that have been completed, usually within 10 days, but in some more serious cases this may be shorter. If you need more time please email us.

As a league we need to access your response and take a view on its likely effectiveness. As the league have a duty of care to all our participants to ensure a safe and fun environment for all participants, **if we feel that the club has not effectively dealt with the issue we as a league then have to risk assess whether we can offer fixtures to that team in the circumstances.** In such cases we may recommend further measures to reduce that risk.

In most cases we find that clubs that take ownership of the issues and deal with them at Committee level have no repeat. The league have this process to help raise the standards of behaviour in the league and make it a fun and safe place for children and young people to play football. We will help you with this any way we can.