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Official League Sponsor

Season 2022/23

League Website: www.nibfanational.co.uk

NIBFA NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Est. 2008

AFFILIATED TO
NORTHERN IRELAND BOYS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
www.nibfa.org

SECTION 1 - CONSTITUTION

1. **NAME** – This Association of clubs shall be called the **SUBWAY NIBFA National Youth League** (hereinafter called The League) and The League and its members shall be affiliated to the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association which will confer Associate Membership of the Irish Football Association.

2. **OBJECT** – The object of the League shall be to legislate for, foster, develop, and provide a fit for purpose governance structure to service and improve the game of association football among all classes of Youth Football Clubs.

3. **LEAGUE COMMITTEE** – The management of The League shall be vested in a Committee, consisting of the following office bearers, a Chairperson, a Deputy Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer and elected and/or co-opted representatives from Clubs in the League (except where a Club is represented by an office bearer) plus additional membership duly elected or co-opted up to a maximum of nine (9) persons including office bearers.

   The committee members and office bearers shall be elected bi-annually. All retiring office bearers shall be eligible for re-election. 50% of members plus 1 of the Committee shall form a quorum. In the event of a vacancy occurring during the season or should a committee member miss 4 consecutive meetings they will be required to stand down and the League Committee shall have the power to fill such vacancy. No Club shall have more than one member on the League Committee.

4. **MEMBERSHIP** –

   (A) Teams will be invited into membership of a league upon consideration of their application and available places. All such teams are expected to meet the terms of membership set out below.

   (B) All teams must affiliate to the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association.

   (C) All Teams must insure their members through the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association scheme with Sportsguard

   (D) All Clubs in membership must be controlled and managed by a committee approved by the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association/IFA Safeguarding. This committee must be not less than Three (3) in numbers and should encourage a development strategy so that at least one member of each participating team shall be in possession of a current Irish Football Association Coaching Certificate. The relevant minimum certificate recommended being as follows:

For Clubs up to and including Under 12 level	IFA Level 1 Coaching Award or equivalent
For Clubs up to and including Under 17 level	UEFA C Diploma
For Clubs at Under 18 level	UEFA B Diploma

   (E) It shall be mandatory for at least one coach from each participating team to hold a current First Aid Certificate or Sports Injuries Certificate. These conditions as to certification/coaching qualifications should be achieved within one year of the Club's initial acceptance into membership of the league.

   (F) Club official shall mean any person aged **16** years or over who, whether registered with a member Club or not, acts on behalf of a member Club by being in the dressing room, entering the field of play on behalf of a member Club, in the absence of an official referee acts as a match referee or as a referee's assistant on behalf of a member Club, being in a member club's technical area or assisting in the running of the member Club. A Club official may only be a member of one Club.

Clubs shall ensure their officials are subject to the satisfactory outcome of checks by Access (NI) and adherence to the terms of the NIBFA/Irish F.A. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures.

Managers, Coaching or Administrative staff who move to a new club at any time must have their Access (NI) checks updated before they are eligible to take up a relevant position within the new club. All changes of Club officials, Safeguarding or Disciplinary Officer's shall be notified to the League in writing or email within two working days of such change.

See appendices 1 & 2 for Irish FA Safeguarding Policy and vetting checks procedures. Failure to comply with these conditions may see an official and or club having their membership revoked.

(G) Any Club wishing to alter its name must first obtain the prior written consent of NIBFA.

(H) Clubs who do not comply with the above criteria will not be eligible for membership. Clubs in membership who fail to comply with the criteria during the term of its membership will be reported to the NIBFA and may have their membership suspended until they fulfil their obligations.

(I) Clubs who accept an offer of a place for any team in the league in any season who subsequently withdraw or fail to complete a season in the league, at the discretion of the league may not be permitted to reapply for a place for that team in the league in any following season.

5. **(A) <u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</u>** – The Annual General Meeting of the League shall be held each year, not later than 14 days after the First Tuesday in June except in exceptional circumstances where the committee need an extension to the date to complete work that is relevant to the overall administration of the league. Clubs and teams in default of their financial obligations to the league of more than 30 days will not be entitled to a vote.

(B) <u>EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING</u> –

(1) An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the members in accordance with clause (5B - 2)

(2) The league shall convene an EGM upon a receipt of a requisition, signed by a registered official of a least 25% of all Clubs in membership, within 28 days of receipt of such a requisition.

(3) The requisition shall state the business to be considered and shall be accompanied by a deposit in the sum of £500.

(4) The member Clubs signing the requisition may forfeit their deposit and or may be liable for the reasonable expenses of the EGM should the requisition be deemed frivolous.

(5) The League may call an EGM by a simple majority vote of the league committee and shall convene an EGM within 28 days of such a vote.

6. **<u>GENERAL MEETINGS</u>** – Meetings of The League Committee shall be held at a venue and date notified by The League Secretary. The League will hold a minimum of four general meetings of member Clubs including the Annual General Meeting in each season. Each club shall be entitled to send a representative to all General Meetings, club representatives in attendance will have one vote. All motions shall be carried by a simple majority vote of those present at the meeting and entitled to vote. Clubs and teams in default of their financial obligations to the league of more than 30 days will not be entitled to a vote.

All Clubs must send a representative to notified league meetings, failure to do so will result in a fine of £25 for non-appearance at any notified meeting. Failure to attend on more than two occasions may result in a Club being suspended. All league officials as a matter of good practice may be subject to the satisfactory outcome of Criminal Record Checks by Access (NI) and adherence to the terms of the NIBFA/Irish F.A. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy & Procedures – See appendices 1 & 2

7. **LIFE MEMBERSHIP** – Past Chairpersons, on retiring from office shall be granted life membership of The League. In addition, the office bearers may recommend at the A.G.M. that life membership be granted to any person whom it is considered has rendered valuable service to The League or in the cause of youth football. Persons granted membership in such fashion will not be eligible to sit on committees.

8. **DELEGATES TO THE NIBFA** – The membership are entitled to send delegates, one per affiliated team in membership of the NIBFA to the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary Meeting.

9. **CHAIR** – The appointed Chairperson of The League shall preside over all meetings; in the event of his/her absence the chair shall be taken by either the Vice Chairperson or an agreed office bearer of The League. The Chair shall have both a deliberative and casting vote at all meetings, and his/her rule shall be final.

10. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** - Any member of the Committee who has a vested interest in any discussion or decision under consideration MUST declare such interest. A member with such interest shall be required to retire from the meeting during the discussion or consideration or while a decision is being taken in respect of any case involving his/her Club or Officials or players connected with his/her Club.

11. **FINANCE** – The Treasurer shall be responsible for all money transactions and at the Annual General Meeting submit a detailed statement of accounts. The Audited accounts of the league will be available for inspection upon completion. The Bank account will be in the name of the LEAGUE, the signatories being a minimum of three nominated officials. Two signatures are required for all financial transactions.

12. **DISSOLUTION** –

    If upon the winding up or dissolution of the League there remains after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property or assets whatsoever, the same shall not be paid or distributed among the members of the league but shall be: -

    (i) applied directly to and for the objects of NIBFA by expending the whole or part of such property or assets in whole or in part in furthering the objects of NIBFA, or

    (ii) by transferring the same in whole or in part to another body having objects like the objects of NIBFA as determined by the membership of the league in general meeting.

13. **ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION AND RULES** – No alteration shall be made to the Constitution or Rules of The League except at the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose. On a date to be notified annually, notice must be given to the League Secretary (in writing) of any proposed alteration/s to the Constitution or Rules, a copy of which shall be made available to Clubs seven days before the Annual or Extraordinary Meetings for the consideration thereof.
    No alteration shall be made to the Constitution or Rules unless carried by a simple majority of those present at the meeting and entitled to vote.

    Any proposed alteration of the Constitution or Rules shall, before coming into force, be subject to compliance with the Constitution of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association and if ratified be included in the overarching generic league rules as defined by NIBFA.

14. **INTERPRETATION** - The League committee shall be the final authority on the interpretation of the Constitution and Rules. Decisions by The League on questions of interpretation and on matters affecting The League not provided for by the Constitution or Rules shall be final and binding on all members.

SECTION 2 - LEAGUE RULES

1. REGISTRATION OF CLUBS

All Clubs/Teams must submit details of their management teams in full as per application, any changes to the original details supplied must be notified to the league in writing or by email within two working days of such change.

2. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION/DEPOSIT/PAYMENTS

(a) The annual subscription of each club shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting.

(b) In addition, each club shall deposit a sum of money which will be liable to forfeiture at the end of the season if a Club has failed to complete its League Fixtures or wish to leave the league in season without good reason or has debts outstanding to the league.

(c) The deposit is recoverable by Clubs who wish to leave the league and who have fulfilled all their league fixtures and have no outstanding debts to the league.

(d) The annual subscription and the deposit (where not already held by the league) must be paid on application for membership. No refund will be paid to any team who subsequently withdraws from the league after accepting a place offered.

(e) Any club in default of their obligations for pitch costs for more than 30 days after being issued with a league invoice for same will be suspended from playing further games in all NIBFA competitions until that account is settled. The club will also forfeit any fixtures scheduled between Day 30 and settlement of the account. The club will also be responsible for all costs associated with suspended/forfeited games.

(f) Any club in default of their financial obligations will not be permitted by NIBFA to join another league until all its debts have been paid.

3. LEAGUE FORMAT

(a) The league committee will determine the format of the league on an annual basis.
Promotion and Relegation (if applicable) shall apply between the divisions of the League. As a minimum the bottom two clubs in Division A of a League shall be relegated to Section B and the relegated number replaced by clubs from Division B. However, in the case of any team with a secured place in any "A" division subsequently withdrawing from the league that team will take the place of the previously relegated second last team in the division. A second withdrawal from a secured place in any division will then be replaced by the third placed team from a "B" Division being promoted. The outcome of any other scenario within divisions will be determined by the league committee whose decision will be final. Depending on the numbers of applicants in any season the bottom 3 teams in selected B leagues may not have their place in the league renewed but may face exclusion or a play-off against a new applicant. This process will apply throughout the divisions where leagues have more than two divisions in any age group with the bottom tier facing the play off scenario as outlined for B leagues previously.

(b) The league reserves the right to appoint the venue for all fixtures.

(c) The team listed first will be designated the home team.

(d) Three points will be awarded for a win and one for a draw.

(e) In the case of an equal number of points being accrued the head-to-head results between the teams will be a deciding factor in all league competitions if still tied a playoff will be arranged.

(f) Goal difference will not apply to league positions.

(g) Play offs will only take place, where necessary, for league winners, runners up, divisional split or relegation.

(h) Failure to participate in a play-off will incur forfeiture of the match, loss of deposit and a possible point's penalty for the next season.

(i) Teams failing to complete a league season will have all previous and remaining results recorded as a 1-0 win to their opposition.

4. **AGE QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS**

(a) All competitions will be open to players who meet the qualifying dates as stated on the league application form. Teams wishing to play female players (will be granted a concession of playing a female player in an age group 1 year below her date of birth across all age groups). The league concerned will then issue an ID Card as players with a one-year concession cannot be selected via Comet on match day.

Also, and in exceptional circumstances ***consideration*** will be given to applications from young players with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities to gain concession to participate in an age group of one year below their current age band. The procedure is as follows.

(b) The player assisted by his/her parent/guardian seeks membership of an NIBFA affiliated member club.

(c) The parent or guardian, with support from the club should then apply to NIBFA c/o National Football Stadium, Windsor Park, Belfast BT12 6LU, for a dispensation for the player to participate at a younger age group. This application must be supported with a letter from a relevant professional confirming clear and concise medical details and why they cannot play at their own age group e.g., Physiotherapist, School Teacher, Doctor etc.

(d) The matter will then be considered by a panel consisting of members from Disability Sport NI, The IFA Disability Manager and a member of NIBFA. On reaching a decision the applicant, their club and league will receive a copy of the decision from NIBFA which will be final and binding on all parties.

(e) If permission is granted, the club should then register the player. The registration form must be accompanied by a copy of the permission letter/email from NIBFA and a passport size photograph. The league concerned will then issue an ID Card as players with a one-year concession cannot be selected via Comet on match day.

(f) If the player moves to another league a copy of the letter of permission must be sent to the secretary of that league.

(g) A club will only be allowed to make one such application per age group in any season.

(h) If the player moves clubs in season a new application must be submitted following the process outlined in Rules 5 (a) & 5 (b)

(i) Any dispensation will be monitored throughout the season and may be rescinded

Any dispensation granted must be renewed annually

5. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

(A) Player registrations **on COMET** can commence for all Male & Female actively registered players from 1st June in any season. If not registered to their existing Clubs by 30th June (5pm) in any season those players will be deemed free agents and free to sign for any club from 1st July. Only players registered as confirmed to a club on COMET will be deemed registered. No protest regarding approaches from another club will be considered against an unconfirmed or unregistered player.

(B) Player registrations for all winter Leagues close on 31st October (5pm) and reopen from 1st January until 31st January (5pm) in any winter season for transfer or the addition of registrations.

There is two recognised Summer Leagues affiliated to NIBFA and their registration periods will be 1st March to 31st December (5pm) in any season. There will be an in season transfer window 1st June to 30th June (5pm)

Registrations for any player born outside Northern Ireland MUST adhere to the conditions laid down by FIFA and the Protection of Minors. The matrix for the information to be provided is attached as Appendix 4 to this document.

The registration period for players born outside Northern Ireland and other local and previously unregistered players will end on 31st March (5pm) in any season and for Summer Leagues 31st October (5pm)

Noncompliance with the FIFA regulations and or falsification of birth records is a serious offence and will incur a penalty fine of up to £500 with an additional potentially unlimited fine from FIFA.

(C) Players may be registered to any team in the League if not already recorded on the IFA Central Database (Comet). It is the sole responsibility for each Team/Club to ensure that players are free to register. Letters from Parent/Guardians regarding a players' status will not be accepted.

Please note that any player needing to wear glasses will be required to use the appropriate prescription approved safety glasses.

(D) Teams will be limited to registering a maximum of twenty (20) players to any age group in any season but in addition may call on players at any time from an age group below for purposes of player development. To facilitate this development opportunity any such player should be restricted to playing for those age groups either immediately 1 year or 2 years above the age group for which he or she qualifies. For the sake of clarity under 12 players will also be permitted to play at U13 & U14, an U13 player will also be permitted to play at U14 & U15 etc. In all cases it is the responsibility of coaches and parents to assess the player is physically capable of meeting the demands of an older age group. (Teams entering NIBFA Competitions should note the exclusion conditions that apply to playing 9 a side and 11 a side football in those competitions)

In respect of players moving between leagues the following conditions will apply and all teams should note that the use of registered players to any team within a club is limited to a maximum of 20.

1. Players who play one game in any competition within a league must not play in the Cup Competitions of any other league
2. In Winter Leagues (August to May) Players who feature on the **Match Day** line up in the Northern Ireland Football League Academy League or National League competitions on 4 occasions cannot play in any other league affiliated to NIBFA
3. A maximum of 2 players not affected by the conditions above may be made available for selection by any club in any league excluding cup/plate/shield or other named knock out competition and overall must not exceed the maximum of 20 players for any team.
4. Any team who has not recorded their match day team on Comet will be assumed to have played all registered players in that match.
5. Any match abandoned or forfeited will also be counted as a match played regardless of any subsequent disciplinary decisions.

(E) Players registering in the League for the first time must generate a COMET registration form when entering the players details. This form should then be scanned and uploaded as a document on the players active registration. When submitting the registration on COMET, clubs should upload a copy of one of the following under documents on the players active registration tab:

- A current valid Passport - A Citizen Card - Or an Original Birth Certificate

(F) The club must also upload a headshot photograph of the player to accompany their registration on COMET taken after 31st May in the current season (good quality).

A re-registration period from 1st to 30th June is available for all clubs to re-register their players who are a confirmed status on COMET. Clubs must receive consent from the players parents before doing so or the registration may be deemed invalid and removed from COMET.

(G) Match day team sheets generated by Comet MUST include the players photograph or in exceptional circumstances a laminated ID card for each player as per Rule 4a and 4e. Teams who fail to have all their player photographs visible on matchday will forfeit the result of the relevant match with all resultant expenses charged. However, if the match is played no appeal or claim in respect of the result by any club will be considered.

(H) (1) Teams can transfer the registration of a maximum of TWO players to or from any other (NIBFA National) League or Non - (NIBFA National) League Team in any season.

(2) If a Team seeks to obtain the transfer of a registration of a player from another Team, they shall first contact the Team holding the players registration (the transferring club) and request the consent of the transferring club to the transfer. If a transfer on COMET is not confirmed by the releasing club within 7 days, the League can action the transfer for the player to move after the 7th day has passed Subject to the 2-player rule as per Rule H (1).

The league may permit a registered Goalkeeper to be replaced up to 31st March (5pm) in any season on production of certified medical evidence that the original registered goalkeeper is incapable of further participation for a prolonged period or the entire season. The replacement goalkeeper must not play in Cup/Plate/Shield or other named knock out competitions if they have already played for another club in that same competition.

If a player has not been released, they cannot take part in any club activities for another member Club. This includes training or friendly matches until the player registration is cancelled. If the transfer of a player is across different leagues an administration fee may apply payable to the new league registering the player. A league internal transfer may incur an administration fee.

(3) The consent referred to in clause in (5.H.2) shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any dispute in this regard must be referred to the league in writing, after investigation the league committee will make the final, binding decision on the matter.

(4) In the event of the transferring Club providing consent to the transfer of the registration of the player the transfer of registration must be completed on Comet.

(5) If a Club voluntarily chooses to release a player who is deemed surplus to requirements during the playing season, the club must contact the league to terminate the registration on Comet. Such player shall become a released player. Such registrations will be limited to the league's registration dates up and including 31st January in any season.

(6) In addition to the registration of a player by way of a transfer as outlined in clause (5.H.1), a Club shall be free to sign a "released Player" subject the conditions laid out in paragraph (5.B. & 5.D.).

(I) Players in the League will be permitted to register for their club if applicable to attain eligibility to play in the Northern Ireland Football League Youth League. Such players are only insured by the NIBFA insurance scheme when playing in matches organised under the jurisdiction of an NIBFA affiliated Youth Football League and competitions of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association.

(J) Club managers must submit their team line-up on COMET this can be done either the day prior to or on match day. This is the starting eleven players along with a maximum of five substitutes for an 11 a-side match and nine plus 5 substitutes for 9 a-side games. The Head Coach must have their selection made so the referee can identify players accordingly with regards to cautions and dismissals that may occur during a game. Player shirt numbers MUST match the COMET team selection.

(K) Any Team fielding an ineligible player will forfeit the match and be deducted a further 3 points and a monetary fine for each offence. Team officials will also be subject to relevant disciplinary procedures.

(L) Clubs infringing registration rules may be reported to the Irish Football Association.

(M) In all cases relating to the registration of players, Clubs are obliged to make initial personal contact with the Club of the player they wish to sign and not unsettle any player by use of peer pressure or any social media, including but not exclusive to, Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter, text, or email. Failure to comply with the conditions laid out in this rule will result in disciplinary action.

(N) Clubs must respect the position of other (NIBFA National) League and non - (NIBFA National) League teams and refrain from disrupting their season by unsettling players (this includes contacting a player directly via face-to-face meetings, phone calls, text messages and email/social networking websites) to sign players.

Any reported and subsequently proven instances that breach this process may result in the Club's ability to sign players being suspended and/or a league points deduction up to a maximum of 6 points.

OPEN TRIALS

Many clubs now use social media to advertise and bring players to their clubs, many of these highlight that players need to get permission from their current club. That is not the case, the rule states quite clearly that it must be a club-to-club agreement. The rule is to standardise open trials and or training and avoid conflict and animosity between teams.

As of the Second Monday in May annually, clubs will be free to arrange and players free to attend open trials and training without first seeking permission from their current club. Players will not be permitted to sign for any new club before 1st July but clubs wishing to reregister their existing players may do so before 30th June. Advertising of same must not commence before May Day Monday Bank Holiday in any season

Note this does not apply to players who are registered to play in a summer league, in those cases the form at Annexe 3 must be agreed and completed prior to any trial. Players registered in summer leagues will be free to attend open trials in January in any season.

Clubs who make trial arrangements before the above dates must submit a signed agreement approving participation for any player registered to another club in any league and submit copies of that agreement to the league/leagues of the clubs concerned. ***See Template agreement (appendix 3)***

6. **MONITORS**

The League may appoint monitors to attend games who will have authority to check the registrations of players and officials. The monitors may prepare reports on the conduct and behaviour of players, officials and supporters at any match that may be used as evidence in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

7. **FIXTURES**

(A) All matches shall be played according to the Laws of the Game as adopted by the Irish Football Association and updated 1st June 2021 but with the following qualifications.

Clubs will play two equal periods of not less than:
25 minutes duration for all 7/9 a-side games
30 minutes duration for U13s
35 minutes duration for U14s, U15s U16s &17s
35 minutes duration for U18
Match Ball - Up to and including U13 – Size 4
Under 14 to Under 18 inclusive – Size 5

Coaching/Management – **Approved ID Badges issued by league must be clearly displayed by all staff involved with Team affairs on match day.**

A Roped barrier must be erected for at least 25 metres each side of the halfway line at every match, the exception will be venues that are already fenced off. Only coaching staff with the approved ID badges displayed will be authorised to be pitch side of the roped barrier.

A technical area marked by cones should be set out no more than 5 Metres each side of the halfway line and a minimum of 1 meter back from the touchline. All coaching staff MUST remain within that area, except for player injuries or other unlikely events. Walking the touchline or encroaching onto the field of play will not be permitted. In instances where management are on the same side of the pitch that area should be a 10-metre space set out centrally in their half of the pitch.

(B) All league fixtures will be available on the League website: **www.nibfanational.co.uk**
These games shall be played on the date stipulated unless changed by prior agreement.
Changes (not cancellations) by a club to a fixture will require a minimum of 96 hours' notice and must be notified to and approved by the league in that time frame. Any change to the match arrangements to be notified by the league will be done no later than 24 hours before the scheduled kick off time subject to the condition that Leagues are liable to changes after this 24-hour period by facility providers. In such instances these changes will be notified to clubs at the earliest opportunity.

(C) If a Club wishes to be excused from playing a game on any date throughout the season, the requesting Club must notify the league by phone/text and confirm in writing/email not less than fourteen days before the date of the fixture for consideration and decision. No team shall be allowed more than two reliefs of fixtures in a season.

(D) In extraordinary circumstances, relief of fixture may be granted not less than five days before the date stipulated on application to the League. Any Club seeking relief of fixture less than five days before the date stipulated shall be responsible for any relevant match fees incurred by their opponents for the listed fixture on receipt of proof of such fees.

(E) Any Club that cancels a fixture within 24 hours of Kick-off time will forfeit the match and all associated fees unless such a cancellation is in relation to a death of a club official, player, or immediate family member of such official or player. All other forfeitures or non-fulfilment of fixtures will incur loss of deposit, and a possible additional points deduction in the current and/or following season.

(F) Forfeiting a game as per 7E will incur a fine of £200. A second forfeited game for any team in same season will incur another fine of £200 and expulsion from the league for a minimum of two years. The club's participation in the league with other teams over this period will be at the discretion of the league committee.

(G) All Teams will be expected to arrive for their match at least 30 minutes prior to kick-off to allow for proper match preparation. Kick-off must take place no later than 20 minutes after the appointed time. However, if the Teams agree to play the match, outside of these time limits the result of the match will stand as a valid result and the defaulting team will incur no penalty. Such situations must be verified by the match referee on the official match card or on the Comet report.

(H) In matches organised by the League, rolling substitutions will be permitted, in the following manner:

For all Teams participating in competitions of the League, any player who has been substituted, himself becomes a substitute and may replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of Association Football.

- Law 3—the Number of Players

- A match is played by two Teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either Team consists of fewer than seven players. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated; for all matches organised under the jurisdiction of the LEAGUE 5 (five) substitutes may be used.

- All Matches—in all matches, the names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the start of the match. Substitutes not so named may not take part in the match.

(I) Substitution Procedure — to replace a player by substitution, the following conditions must be observed:

- The referee is informed before any proposed substitution is made.
- A substitute only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left and after receiving a signal from the referee.
- A substitute only enters the field of play at the halfway line and during a stoppage in the match.
- A substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play. From that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player he has replaced is now a substitute.
- All substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not.

Changing the Goalkeeper — any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that:

- The referee is informed before the change is made.
- The change is made during a stoppage in the match.

Infringements/Sanctions — if a substitute enters the field of play without the referee's permission:

- Play is stopped.
- The substitute is cautioned, shown the yellow card, and required to leave the field of play.

- Play is restarted with an indirect free kick at the place the ball was located when play was stopped.

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission before the change is made:

- Play continues.
- The players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card when the ball is next out of play.

For any other infringements of this Law:

- The players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card.

Restart of Play — if play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:

- The match is restarted by an indirect free kick, to be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was located when play was stopped.

Players and Substitutes Sent Off — A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes. A named substitute, who has been sent off, either before the kick-off or after play has started, may not be replaced.

In all matches Clubs may play 5 substitutes from 5 named substitutes

(J) The Home or First Named Team Club must telephone the League/Fixtures Secretary the result of all League Matches scheduled immediately after the match or notify of any postponement immediately the information is known on any match day. Clubs failing to comply with this rule will be fined £5 per offence. All managers will be expected to text or use the SMS results service.

No club, player or registered club representative shall be permitted to take part or be involved in any other match or competition which is not authorised by the Northern Ireland Boys F.A.

(k) Clubs who wish to video games for their own performance analysis purposes should also request permission to do so from their opposition at least 24 hours before the game concerned. This is in relation to good safeguarding practice. In any event agreement must be sought prior to kick off. Any such video content must be released to the Disciplinary Committee should they request same.

8. VENUE & NOTIFICATION

In the event of the league appointing a match venue the notification of the venue will appear on the website fixture list. If a Club makes a venue booking, then the league and travelling Club MUST be notified as soon as possible before the scheduled date for the fixture to enable the website notices to be verified or updated.

Clubs who are not familiar with the location of any venue should contact the home or first named Team for directions and any other relevant details. The League will have the power to decide whether facilities are suitable for matches in the competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground. The League reserves the right to move any game to a neutral venue. Match kick-off times shall be determined by the league.

In all matches played under the jurisdiction of the league the accommodating authority or home team will try to ensure that suitable changing accommodation facilities are available for all teams. The home or first named Team will be responsible for the provision of at least two quality match footballs of appropriate size as described in Rule 7(a).

In a Cup fixture the home club secretary MUST inform the opposition within the specified time of venue and all other relevant details.

9. REFEREES

Appointed referees will be advised by the Referees' Co-ordinator of the necessary match details, location, and kick-off time either directly or via Comet. Where referees are appointed by the league no Club may object to any referee so appointed. Where a referee fails to attend the Teams will toss a coin for the appointment of an official. This applies to all League and cup competitions.

Referee's Fee:

(a) the referee's fee shall be decided by the Annual General Meeting and shall be shared equally by both Clubs. The fee shall be paid prior to kick off and it is the responsibility of each team to approach the referee. Failure to pay before kick-off will result in a fine of £15.

(b) In the case of non-fulfilment of any fixture, except under (c) below, the Home or First named Team shall pay the referee's fee, which shall be recoverable from the defaulting club should that not be the home or first named Team.

(c) Should a ground be considered unplayable, the referee shall after confirmation of the same with the local authority representative, grounds man or other club appointee responsible for grounds maintenance, receive half fee which shall be shared equally by each club.

10. **COLOURS**

(a) Each Team in the league shall register its colours on a kit approval form as provided by the league. Clubs must not use kit branded with any form of Alcohol, Tobacco, or gambling promotion logo.

(b) In the event of a clash of colours the visiting Team shall play in their registered colours and the Home or first named Team shall change unless mutually agreed.

11. **MATCH CARDS**

(a) **ONLY in exceptional circumstances and when used in the absence of team selection via Comet note an explanation will be required as to why the team sheet was not completed via Comet**, a match card must be submitted to the referee ahead of the game. The team manager or if absent his/her agent will be responsible for PRINTING CLEARLY the full name and Comet Number of the player against the shirt number to be worn, the shirt number MUST be noted on the match card if different to the standard 1-16 numbers shown. NO player can enter the field of play with an unnumbered shirt and no team will be permitted to use players with the same numbered shirt. If this occurs, the errors MUST be corrected, the match card noted and updated if any new shirt/s are provided. When making substitutions, players are not permitted to use the shirt of a substituted player when entering the field of play. Such players will be deemed ineligible

(b) For each match a Team may list up to Sixteen Players.

(c) Match Cards must be signed by an official of each Club. The date of the match and the match result must be noted on the match card.

All dismissals and cautions must be noted on the match card by the referee. In addition, all dismissals must be self-reported by the team official in charge within 24 hours of the match taking place by email to nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com . Include full details of the offence, name of player/official and if a player, the shirt number, details of the league, age group, competition and the teams playing. The information should also include the date, time, venue for ease of submission a pre headed document is available on all NIBFA Affiliated Leagues Websites.

(d) All match cards will be subject to scrutiny by League Officials.

(e) A Team official of the WINNING TEAM must forward the match card to the address notified on the card, or, in the event of a draw the HOME or FIRST NAMED TEAM has the responsibility. The match card must be forwarded to the league within 48 hours of the match it relates to (Sundays excluded).

(f) Proof of postage or delivery (signed receipt) of each match card must be retained for the duration of the season and produced on request.

(g) In the event of no proof of postage or signed delivery receipt and no receipt of match card, the league reserves the right to investigate the circumstances, suspend the result and or make points deduction. The league also reserves the right to determine the outcome of knock out competition fixtures.

(h) Failure of Clubs to comply with this rule will result in a fine of £3 for each error on the match card or non-receipt of the match card by the due date, to be imposed on a monthly basis. The League may impose additional fines for persistent offences.

12. **UNFINISHED GAMES**

(a) Results for matches that are abandoned because of inclement weather having played a minimum of 80% of the scheduled time of the match will stand.

(b) The status of matches that are abandoned because of inclement weather having played less than 80% of the scheduled time will be decided by The League referring to Law 5 of Laws of the Game as a guide.

(c) The status of all other matches that are abandoned or unfinished shall be determined as part of any disciplinary process with reference to Disciplinary Code Rule 23

13. **MATCH POSTPONEMENTS**

(a) Where venues have been appointed by the League in conjunction with a local authority it will be the final decision of the local authority as to the fitness of the ground for play.

(b) In cases where the Home Team has a registered venue not owned or controlled by local authority it will be the decision of the Home Team grounds man or other club appointee responsible for grounds maintenance in the first instance to decide on the fitness of the ground for play or failing such then the decision of the referee will be final. The league will have the right to appoint a venue in the event of a "Home" venue not being available up to 24 hours ahead of the scheduled match time.

(c) The home Club must immediately inform the league, Referee and Visiting Club if a postponement is necessary, in default of which the Home Club if an alternative venue cannot be arranged may at the discretion of the league be required to pay half of the referee's match fee and the travelling expenses, in whole or part of the Visiting Club.

(d) The reason for the non-fulfilment of any fixture shall be investigated by the League and if the reasons are deemed to be unsatisfactory, the defaulting club may forfeit the points and pay the referee's fee, in addition, a fine not exceeding £50 (Fifty Pounds) may be imposed, the whole or part of which may be awarded to the aggrieved club. All fines imposed under this rule must be paid as notified within 14 days from receipt of defaulting letter.

14. **MATCH PRIORITY**

Competitions of the NIBFA shall have precedence over all other League competitions and any postponed fixtures are to be rearranged subject to the 14-day notification rule of NIBFA to the league.

15. **REPRESENTATIVE GAMES**

(a) The League shall have the power to select player/s from any Team, to represent the league. Such representation shall be on a voluntary basis and no penalty for non-participation shall ensue.

(b) A team may apply for a postponement of a league fixture should two or more players including (a goalkeeper) be selected to play in a League, NIBFA or IFA representative game.

16. **LEAGUE TROPHIES**

Trophies for the League Championship shall be presented to the respective winners. In the League the maximum number of medals that will be issued to any team will be limited to 20 unless the actual number of players registered is less than twenty (20). In competitions other than the league championship a trophy and (20) medals will be awarded to the winners unless the actual number of players registered is less than twenty and (20) medals will be awarded to the runner up unless the actual number of players registered is less than twenty.

17. **CUP, PLATE & SUPPLEMENTARY COMPETITIONS**

(a) The League rules shall apply with the following additions and amendments.

(b) Competitions will be played on the "Cup-tie", Home and Away, sectional, or other principle as may be determined by the committee. When played on a "Cup-tie" principle, Clubs first drawn shall have the choice of ground or as determined by the League, except in final ties which will be played on grounds selected by the League Committee. In the event of the score being level in any cup-tie after the stipulated playing time has been completed, extra time will be played. Should the score remain level after the stipulated period of extra time is completed then the result of the tie will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the "Laws of the Game".

(c) Any Club refusing or failing to play the Club against which it is drawn within the time notified to it, and without enough reason for doing so, shall be liable for disqualification.

(d) Any Club intending to forfeit a game must give notice to the Secretary of the opposing Club and the Fixtures Secretary at least three days before the date of the tie. The defaulting Club may be liable for the expenses of the tie and be subject to further sanctions including expulsion from the League.

(e) The League Committee shall fix the venue for the final tie and shall have direct control of all arrangements, receipts and donations made from funds raised in connection therewith.

(f) No player shall play for more than one Club in a cup or plate competition during any one season and this rule shall also apply to any supplementary competition irrespective of any transfer made in season.

(g) In all cup-tie matches the duration of play is as defined in Rule 7 (a) for the age group concerned. In 9 aside competition no extra time will be played except for semi-final and final ties which will have 5 minutes way extra time in all other cases the duration of extra time shall be two periods of not less than 10 minutes.

In the event of a tie in a league format cup competition then the outcome will be determined by head to head results and if still equal a play-off will be arranged. In all League Cup, Plate/Shield or Supplementary competitions where a postponement occurs, the Team drawn at home initially will have the opportunity to arrange the game on one further occasion thereafter the away team will, in conjunction with the league, facilitate the tie. Each switch of responsibility will permit Teams two opportunities to host the game.

All cup-ties will be played to a finish at the first time of asking.

18 **BREACH OF LEAGUE RULES**

Any breach of League rules may render the player, official or Club liable to censure, fine or suspension or a combination of such penalties as the league deem fit to impose.

19. **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Please refer to appendices 1 & 2.

NIBFA and the league recommend that all clubs act to cease repetitive training techniques for heading a football for players aged 11 years and younger.

It is accepted that in a training/match situation heading a football is a potential consequence of any passage of play. This recommendation seeks to address concerns that repetitive heading practice may potentially have a long-term adverse effect on the brain.

20. **INTERPRETATION**

The League committee shall be the final authority of the interpretation of the Rules, decisions upon questions of interpretation and on matters affecting the league not provided for by the Rules shall be final and binding on all members.

SECTION 3 - DISCIPLINARY CODE

RULE 1: ADOPTION & ENFORCEMENT

1.1. The Irish Football Association (IFA) Disciplinary Committee (the Committee) approved this adaptation of the IFA Disciplinary Code, adjusted to recognise the role and governance of Youth Football. The approved adaptation was incorporated into the constitution and rules of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association (NIBFA) and its member leagues.

1.2. This code is effective from 1st August 2022 and applies to all football under the jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association

1.3 Save where expressly set out to the contrary, words and phrases as defined in the Rules of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association and the IFA Articles of Association shall have the same meaning in this code.

1.4 The following are subject to this code:

1. Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association, its member leagues and clubs
2. Officials
3. Players
4. Match officials – disciplinary matters will be referred to the IFA Disciplinary Committee
5. Anyone with an authorisation from the NIBFA and its member leagues, about a match, competition or other event organised by the NIBFA and its member leagues.

1.5 Each person or entity who is or is deemed subject to this code is required to cooperate with a League, NIBFA and or IFA investigation or disciplinary proceedings. Each club is further required to identify to the Association a Club Disciplinary Officer (who may hold another office within the Club, such as Club Secretary) responsible for investigating and taking appropriate action in relation to disciplinary matters and the conduct of its members. The Club Disciplinary Officer will be the principal point of contact between the Disciplinary Panel and the Club in respect of all disciplinary matters. The Club must inform the NIBFA upon affiliation of the name, telephone number and email address of the Club Disciplinary Officer at the commencement of the season. If NIBFA is not notified of a Disciplinary Officer, any communications will be sent via the Club Secretary. Notifications via the Comet system will be sent to the appointed Club Manager. It is the responsibility of the Club Manager to ensure that the Club Disciplinary Officer is made aware of any matters relating to discipline.

1.6 The overriding objective of the Code is to maintain and promote fair play, protect the health and welfare of Players (and others involved in the Game), ensure that acts of indiscipline (on and off the field of play) or breaches of this code are dealt with expeditiously and fairly and that the image and reputation of association football and the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association are not adversely affected.

1.7 Disciplinary hearings shall be conducted in a fair and just manner and in accordance with the fundamental principles of natural justice. Procedural and technical considerations shall take second place to the overriding objective of being just and fair to the parties. Proceedings, findings, or decisions of the Disciplinary Panel shall not be invalidated by reason of any procedural defect, irregularity, omission, or technicality unless such defect, irregularity, omission, or technicality raises a material doubt as to the reliability of the proceedings, findings or decisions.

1.8 In the event that a particular incident takes place for which there is no provision in this Code including (but not limited to) procedure, jurisdiction or sanction then the Disciplinary Panel may take such action that it considers appropriate in the circumstances in accordance with general principles of natural justice and fairness.

1.9 Without prejudice to the overriding objective set out in clause 1.6, the Committee shall have the power: -

1. to sanction serious disciplinary infringements which have escaped a match official's attention.

2. to extend the duration of a match suspension or any other penalty incurred automatically by an expulsion.

3. to impose sanctions including.
    - A fine
    - A suspension
    - An interim suspension
    - A transfer ban
    - Playing a match without spectators
    - Playing a match on neutral territory
    - Ban on playing in a particular stadium
    - Ban from dressing room and/or substitutes' bench.
    - Ban on taking part in any football related activity.
    - Annulment of the result of a match.
    - Expulsion from a competition.
    - Defeat by forfeit.
    - Deduction of points.
    - Demotion to a lower division where member leagues can facilitate this.
    - Ban on spectators attending a match.
    - Ban prohibiting someone from entering the confines of one or several stadiums ("Stadium Ban");
    - Replay of a match.
    - A reprimand being an official written pronouncement of disapproval sent to the perpetrator of an infringement of the Code.

1.10 The Disciplinary Panel may recognise the disciplinary sanctions of any other sporting body. Any person suspended or banned by any other sporting body may be suspended or banned concurrently by the Disciplinary Panel.

1.11 The Disciplinary Panel shall always strive to act consistently; however, they shall not have a doctrine of binding precedent, it is not formally bound by prior decisions of the Panel. Each case will be looked at and determined on its own merits.

1.12 If several offences are carried out by an individual simultaneously, the Panel shall base the fine on what it considers to be the most serious offence committed and depending on the circumstances, may increase the sanction by up to fifty per cent of the maximum sanction specified for that offence. The same applies if a person incurs several time sanctions of a similar nature (two or more match suspensions, two or more stadium bans etc) as the result of one or several offences.

1.13 Any clerical mistakes or accidental omissions in any written decision or correspondence on behalf of the Panel may be corrected by the Panel at any time.

RULE 2: DEFINITIONS

2.1. IFA: The Irish Football Association
NIBFA: Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association

2.2 Player: A person whose name appears on the match card for the relevant match. This includes a Player/Manager and any player who is also an official.

2.3 Official: A person, with the exception of Players (See Rule 2.2 of the Code) aged **16** years or over who, whether registered with a member Club or not, acts on behalf of a member Club or is in the dressing room or enters the field of play on behalf of a member Club or in the absence of an official referee acts as a match official or assistant or is in a member Club's technical area or assists in the running of the member Club.

2.4 Match Official: The referee, assistant referees, 4th Official or any other person appointed by NIBFA or a member League in connection the administration of a match.

2.5 Match Official's Report: A report made individually or collectively by match officials and agreed by them, supplied where practicable, to the Committee and through the referee.

2.6 Designated Holiday: A public holiday or bank holiday in Northern Ireland.

2.7 Disciplinary Officer: A person appointed by a club who shall be responsible for investigating and taking appropriate action in relation to disciplinary matters and the conduct of its members. It is the responsibility of the Club to ensure disciplinary matters are maintained in the event of the Club Disciplinary Officer's absence by ensuring another individual or individuals deal with any such matters during that period of absence.

2.8 Disciplinary Panel: The panel convened to deal with all football related disciplinary matters.

2.9 Disciplinary Panel Secretary: The official appointed by the Northern Ireland Boys Football Association to service the Disciplinary Committee.

2.10 Disciplinary Department: the members of the NIBFA authorised to deal with certain routine disciplinary matters.

2.11 Appeals Panel: The panel appointed to deal with all appeals.

2.12 Associate Members; Refers to associate members of the Irish Football Association including Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association their affiliated leagues and clubs

2.13 Comet System: means the football management system adopted by the IFA for the administration of football in Northern Ireland.

2.14 IFA, NIBFA or League Website/Facebook: means the official Website/Facebook of IFA, NIBFA or League

2.15 Disciplinary Challenge: means a Mistaken Identity Challenge or a General Disciplinary Challenge

RULE 3: GENDER & NUMBER

3.1. Terms within this Disciplinary Code referring to the players, officials or match officials are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa.

RULE 4: CULPABILITY

4.1. Unless otherwise specified, infringements are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed deliberately or negligently.

RULE 5: ACTS AMOUNTING TO ATTEMPT

5.1 Attempts: If, with intent to do an act in breach of this Code, a person or entity who is subject to the provisions of the code, does an act which is more than just preparing to commit a breach, he shall be found to have breached the relevant section of the Code.

5.2 A person or entity who is subject to the provisions of the code, may be in breach of the Code by attempting to commit a breach of the Code (as described at Rule 5.1) even if it would have been impossible to complete the act in breach of the Code.

5.3 A person or entity who is subject to the provisions of the code, found to have attempted to breach the code pursuant to Rule 5.1 will be liable to the same sanction as where the breach of the Code is completed. The Committee may, but is not bound to, reduce the sanction where an attempt is proved. It will determine the extent of the mitigation as it sees fit.

RULE 6: INVOLVEMENT/BREACH OF LEAGUE RULES

6.1 Any breach of these rules may render the player, official or Club liable to censure, fine or suspension, or a combination of such penalties as it is deemed fit to impose.

6.2 The League and or NIBFA reserves the right to carry out investigations, make appropriate enquiries and invite comments from players, officials, or clubs as it sees fit in relation to any disciplinary matter.

6.3 Players, Officials or Clubs will have the right to be heard before any decision is passed on a disciplinary matter other than those relating to cautions and dismissals, except in the case of alleged mistaken identity for a player who is cautioned or dismissed in a match.

RULE 7: FAILURE TO REPLY TO CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Any failure to reply, within the specified timescale, (without just or reasonable cause) to correspondence sent by the Committee, either by letter, email or via the Comet system in pursuance of its obligations under this Code, will render the person to whom such correspondence is sent to be in breach of this code and render such person liable to such penalties as the Committee shall deem fit to impose.

RULE 8: FINES

8.1 Clubs are liable for fines imposed on their players or officials. Subject to the Committee's discretion pursuant to the overriding objective, the fact that a person has left a club does not cancel out liability and therefore does not negate the responsibility of the club to pay a fine.

8.2 All fines, unless challenged or appealed against, must be paid within 14 days from the date of the letter or email imposing the fine unless a payment plan has been agreed with the club. Failure by a club to pay a fine within the specified timeframe may result in the club being fined an additional £25 and suspended from all affiliated football with immediate effect from the point of notification in the case of a Designated Holiday, the time limit for paying the fine will expire the following day.

8.3 Should a suspension be imposed on a club due to failure by that club to pay a fine, the suspension will remain in effect until the Monday following receipt of payment.

8.4 Disciplinary Reports must be submitted by Match Officials via the Comet System within 24 hours of the commencement of the match taking place. Where an appointed official fails to turn up disciplinary reports should be submitted ***by the agreed official in charge within 24 hours of the match taking place by email to nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com***

RULE 9: CAUTION & DISMISSAL FINES

9.1. Each disciplinary report, involving a caution shall incur a fine of £3 for each offence. A dismissal shall incur a fine of £3 for each offence.

9.2. Failure to self-report a dismissal (as per Rule 11.D Section 2 of These Rules) of a player or official to NIBFA within 24 hours of such dismissal will incur a fine of £5 for each offence.

All dismissals and cautions must be noted on the match card/Comet. In addition, all dismissals must be self-reported 24 hours of the match by, email to nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com and include full detail of the offence, name of player/official and if a player, the shirt number, details of the league, age group, competition and the teams playing. The information should also include the date, time, venue.

9.3. Clubs will be charged periodically throughout the playing season for their accrued cautions and dismissals and payment is due within 14 days of issuing the account.

9.4. No refunds of cautions and dismissal fines or part thereof shall be made except where a caution or dismissal has been proven to be wrongfully applied. In this regard the decision of the NIBFA is final.

RULE 10: WARNING

10.1 A warning is a reminder of the substance of a disciplinary rule allied with the threat of a sanction in the event of a further infringement.

RULE 11: REPRIMAND

11.1 A reprimand is a pronouncement of disapproval by the Committee. Where the Committee determines to issue a reprimand, it shall be communicated to the person or entity who has breached the Code in writing or, at the option of the Committee, by email.

RULE 12: RETURN OF AWARDS

12.1 When a person is required to return an award, the person shall return the benefits which that person has received as part of winning that award.

RULE 13: CAUTIONS FOR PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS

13.1 A caution is a warning from the referee to a player or official during a match to sanction minor infringements (See Law 12 of the Laws of the Game).

13.2 A player or official who receives 2 cautions during the same match will incur a dismissal and, consequently, an automatic suspension from the next match. The 2 cautions that incurred the dismissal will not be included in any total as outlined in clauses 13.3, 13.4 or 13.5 of this Code.

13.3 A player or official who accumulates (5) cautions in the same playing season will be suspended for 1 match i.e. the next match following the receipt of the 5th caution.

13.4 A player or official who accumulates (10) cautions in the same playing season will be suspended for 2 matches i.e. the next two matches following receipt of the (10th) caution.

13.5 For every further 5 cautions a player or official accumulates in the same playing season a 3-match suspension.

13.6 In the case of a player manager, all cautions received (either as a player or a manager) will accumulate.

13.7 A player who is cautioned after the final whistle and before he leaves the field of play will be dealt with as a field offence. (See Clause 13.1 of this Code)

13.8 An official who is cautioned after the final whistle and before he leaves the technical area, and its immediate surrounds will be dealt with as a field offence. (See Clause 13.1 of this Code)

13.9 In respect of an official, if an offence has occurred and the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach who is present in the technical area at the time will receive the caution as the person responsible for the other team officials.

13.10 Cautions received during one season are cancelled at the conclusion of that season and are not carried over to the next season.

13.11 If an abandoned match is to be replayed, any caution issued during that match shall be annulled. If the match is not to be replayed, the cautions received during the match shall stand.

13.12 Cautions issued in a match that is subsequently forfeited shall not be annulled.

RULE 14: DISMISSALS FOR PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS

14.1 A dismissal is the order given by the referee to someone to leave, at any time before, during or after the game, the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitute's bench as outlined in Law 5 of the Laws of the Game.

14.2 Dismissal takes the form of a red card for players and officials. The red card is regarded as direct if it sanctions serious unsporting behaviour as defined by Law 12 of the Laws of the Game. It is regarded as indirect if it is the result of an accumulation of two yellow cards.

14.3 An official who has been sent off may give instructions to the person replacing him on the substitutes' bench. The official shall, however, ensure that he does not disturb the spectators or disrupt the flow of play.

14.4 A player or official who is dismissed from the field of play will be **suspended automatically with immediate effect from the subsequent match.** The Committee may extend the duration of the suspension. The automatic match suspension and any additional match suspension must be served, even if the sending-off is imposed in a match that is later abandoned, annulled, forfeited and/or replayed.

14.4.1 An official who has been sent off cannot communicate with or contact any person involved in the match - in particular, players or technical staff - by any means whatsoever.

14.4.2 A player or official who has been sent off is not entitled to attend the post-match interview or any other media activity held at that venue.

Player sanctions

14.5 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for any offence (other than for receiving a 2nd caution) having previously received a caution in the same match will have the caution upheld.

14.6 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures will be suspended for an additional 1 match.

14.7 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for serious foul play or for violent conduct will be suspended for an additional 2 matches.

14.8 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for biting, head-butting or for spitting at an opponent or any other person other than a match official will be suspended for an additional 6 matches.

14.9 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for assaulting (e.g., elbowing, punching, kicking etc) a match official will be suspended for a minimum of 15 matches.

14.10 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings, including the technical area and the substitutes bench for spitting at a match official will be suspended for a minimum of 12 months.

14.11 A player who is dismissed from the field of play and its surroundings after the final whistle and before he leaves the field of play will be dealt with as a field offence. (See 14.1 of this Code).

Official sanctions

14.12 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for any offence (other than for receiving a 2nd caution) having previously received a caution in the same match will have the caution upheld.

14.13 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for delaying the restart of play by the opposing team (e.g., holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player etc) will be suspended for an additional 1 match.

14.14 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for deliberately leaving the technical area to show a) dissent towards or remonstrate with a match official, b) act in a provocative or inflammatory manner or c) enter the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner will be suspended for an additional 1 match.

14.15 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for deliberately throwing/ kicking an object onto the field of play will be suspended for an additional 2 matches.

14.16 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for entering the field of play to a) confront a match official (including at half time and full time), b) interfere with play, an opposing player or match official with be suspended for an additional 2 matches.

14.17 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, security or competition official etc) will be suspended for an additional 6 matches.

14.18 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for use of offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/ or gestures will be suspended for an additional 1 match.

14.19 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment will be suspended for an additional 1 match.

14.20 An official who is dismissed from the technical area and its immediate surrounds for violent conduct will be suspended for an additional 2 matches.

14.21 An official who is dismissed after the final whistle and before he leaves the technical area, and its immediate surrounds will be dealt with as a field offence. (See 14.1 of this Code)

RULE 15: SUSPENSION

15.1 All suspensions must be served with the team at which the player or official received the suspension and must be served consecutively with any other suspensions that may have been issued. Any automatic suspension pursuant to Rule 14 must be served prior to any other notified suspension.

15.1.1 On request, special dispensation may be given to a player or official if the club (of which his team forms a part) folds during the serving of his suspension or if the team he received his suspension with does not commence their competitive season until after the last day of August in any season.

15.1.2 Special dispensation may also be applied in the case of an official who is involved in a coaching capacity in both a men's and women's club and who concludes the season with an outstanding suspension.

15.1.3 Special dispensation may also be given in exceptional circumstances which shall be at the sole discretion of the Committee.

15.1.4 Should the Committee consider any application for dispensation to be of a frivolous nature and/or abuse of process merely to release a player or official from suspension to enable them to participate in a match, they shall have power to deal with the player and official and or club as it deems appropriate.

15.2 An automatic suspension resulting from an accumulation of cautions will apply only to league or cup matches in the specific competition in which the cautions were accumulated.

15.3 Suspensions resulting from dismissals will cover all domestic league and cup matches until such time as the team at which the player or official received the suspension has completed the required number of matches to enable the suspension to be served.

15.3.1 If a match is abandoned, cancelled, or forfeited (except for a violation of Rule 15.3.2), a suspension (or part thereof) is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended player belongs is not responsible for the circumstances that led to the abandonment, cancellation or forfeit of the match and this has been determined prior to the player or official's next match.

15.3.2 A match suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a match is retroactively forfeited because a player took part in a match despite being ineligible. This also applies to the match suspension imposed on the player who took part in the match despite being ineligible.

15.4 If a suspension is combined with a fine, the suspension may, at the discretion of the Committee, be prolonged until the fine has been paid in full.

15.5 Clubs are entirely and solely responsible for ensuring the eligibility of their players for any match in accordance with the applicable competition regulations. Clubs must keep themselves informed of any outstanding suspensions at the commencement of the season, of any new suspensions applicable during the season and are wholly responsible for ensuring that suspensions are properly served. Clubs must therefore maintain their own records. A club who fails to do so will not be able to argue in subsequent proceedings that it was unaware of the terms of a suspension.

15.6 Any period of suspension arising from the accumulation of cautions or additional suspensions in respect of a dismissal will commence from the date of communication from the Disciplinary Department/ Comet System.

15.7 Any period of suspension arising from the acceptance of a sanction offer made via Rule 17 Notice of Complaint to a player, official, match official, club or league will commence on the Monday following the date of the Notice of Compliant letter (such date will be confirmed in said letter) sent to the player, official, match official, club or league concerned in writing, by email or via the Comet system. If a Notice of Complaint sanction offer is not accepted, a Notice of Complaint Challenge may be submitted as outlined in Rule 32.2

15.8 Suspensions imposed by the Committee following a Disciplinary Hearing will be imposed from the Monday after the date of the Disciplinary Hearing. Suspensions imposed by the Committee in circumstances when no Disciplinary Hearing has taken place will be imposed from the Monday after the date on which the decision was made by the Committee. Details of the suspension will be communicated in writing, by email or via the Comet system.

15.9 **STANDARD SUSPENSION** A standard suspension is a ban on taking part in a match with a player or official not permitted to enter the dressing room area, the player's tunnel, the technical area, the substitute's bench, the area immediately surrounding the field of play or the playing surface at any match played under the jurisdiction of the Association during the period stipulated in Rule 15.9.1.The Committee will have the power to determine where those areas are. The player or official under a standard suspension is prohibited from contact with players and coaching/ technical staff (including via radio or other electronic communication) during the period stipulated in Rule 15.9.1.

15.9.1 The terms of the suspension (exclusion) detailed in Rule 15.9 above will apply from 75 minutes prior to the scheduled time of kick-off of a match and until 15 minutes following the referee having signalled the end of the match. For the avoidance of doubt, the suspension continues to apply during extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark when required in any match.

15.9.2 The player or official under a standard suspension is prohibited from contact with match officials before, during and post-match. The player or official under a standard suspension is prohibited from giving any media interviews before, during and post-match.

15.9.3 Where a stand exists within the ground and his security can be safeguarded, the suspended player or official is required to sit in the stand away from the field of play and technical area. Due to the nature of some grounds, the player or official under suspension may be able to sit in a stand or stand behind the pitch perimeter barrier but remain sufficiently close enough to the field of play and/or technical area to allow them to continue coaching, issue instructions to the coaching/technical staff or communicate/ engage with match officials. This will be considered a breach of the suspension and will result in a charge under Rule 22 being brought against the player or official who is under suspension.

15.10 **TOUCHLINE SUSPENSION** During a touchline suspension, an official is not permitted to enter the technical area, the substitute's bench, the area immediately surrounding the field of play or the playing surface at any match under the jurisdiction of the Association during the period stipulated in Rule 15.10.3. The Committee will have the power to determine where those areas are. A touchline suspension may only be imposed on individuals deemed as officials by the Committee.

15.10.1 The official under a touchline suspension is permitted to attend the team dressing room area pre-match, at half-time and post-match.

15.10.2 For the duration of the match, the official under suspension is prohibited from coaching or issuing instructions and is not permitted to communicate with the coaching/ technical staff (including via radio or other electronic communication).

15.10.3 The terms of the suspension (exclusion) detailed in Rule 15.10 above will apply from 75 minutes prior to the scheduled time of kick-off of a match and until 15 minutes following the referee having signalled the end of the match.

15.10.4 The official under a touchline suspension is prohibited from contact with match officials before, during and post-match. The official under a touchline suspension is prohibited from giving any media interviews before, during and post-match.

15.10.5 Where a stand exists within the ground and his security can be safeguarded, the suspended official is required to sit in the stand away from the field of play and technical area. Due to the nature of some grounds, the official under suspension may be able to sit in a stand or stand behind the pitch perimeter barrier but remain sufficiently close enough to the field of play and/or technical area to allow them to continue coaching, issue instructions to the coaching/technical staff or communicate/engage with match officials. This will be considered a breach of the suspension as per Rule 15.10.2 and will result in a charge under Rule 22 being brought against the official who is under suspension.

15.11 On request, an official who is suspended for a cup final in which his club are involved following his 1st or 2nd sanction in the current playing season may be permitted to lead his club onto the pitch prior to the match and to return to the pitch for the post-match presentation.

15.12 A player who is not eligible to participate in a particular match due to the competition rules may not use that match to serve the suspension or part thereof.

15.13 Any period of suspension or part thereof which remains outstanding at the end of the playing season must be served at the commencement of the next playing season.

15.14 **A player, official, match official, club or league serving a suspension (other than a suspension imposed because of an accumulation of cautions) is suspended from all affiliated football including NIBFA.**

15.15 All matters of alleged misconduct by Referees shall be referred to the Irish Football Association.

15.16 No sanction prescribed in this Code shall prevent the Committee from determining that a person may be banned from taking part in any kind of affiliated football-related activity, as determined by the Committee, where it is deemed reasonable and proportionate to do so.

RULE 16: INTERIM SUSPENSION & PARTIAL SUSPENSION

Interim

16.1 The Committee shall have the power by way of unanimous vote, to issue an Interim Suspension against any person against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made and is being investigated or against someone who has been convicted of a criminal offence. The imposition of an interim suspension order shall be notified to any such person in writing, signed by the Disciplinary Panel Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Disciplinary Department. Details of the suspension will be communicated in writing, by email or via the Comet system.

16.2 Following the imposition of a suspension, the person suspended shall have the right of appeal within 14 days of notification of the decision to the Panel at a hearing to be convened as soon as is reasonably practicable. The procedure for the disciplinary hearing shall be determined by the Chairman of the Panel.

16.3 The interim suspension shall automatically cease:

16.4 When the matter has been dealt with at a disciplinary hearing; or

16.5 When the allegation is withdrawn, and no further disciplinary action is taken; or

16.6 After 120 days from its issue, unless the Panel determines that it is in the interests of the NIBFA or the IFA that it should be extended for a further period or periods of not more than 120 days.

Partial

16.7 The Panel in imposing a match suspension, a ban on access to dressing rooms and/or the substitutes bench, a ban on taking part in any affiliated football-related activity, the obligation to play a match without spectators, the obligation to play a match on neutral ground, or a ban on playing in a certain stadium, may examine whether it is possible to suspend the implementation of the sanction partially. The imposition of a partial suspension order shall be notified to any such person in writing, signed by the Disciplinary Panel Chairman, Vice- Chairman or Disciplinary Department. Details of the suspension will be communicated in writing, by email or via Comet system.

16.8 Partial suspension is permissible only if the duration of the sanction does not exceed six matches or six months and if the relevant circumstances allow it, the previous record of the person sanctioned.

16.9 The Committee shall decide which part of the sanction may be suspended. In any case, half of the sanction is definite.

16.10 By suspending implementation of the sanction, the Panel, at their own discretion, subjects the person sanctioned to a probationary period of anything from six months to two years.

16.11 If the person benefiting from a suspended sanction commits another infringement during the probationary period, the suspension is automatically revoked, and the sanction applied; it is added to the sanction pronounced for the new infringement.

RULE 17: NOTICE OF COMPLAINT

17.1 The Committee may issue a Notice of Complaint to a player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of the Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association in respect of an alleged breach(es) of this Code. The Committee may also issue a Notice of Complaint to a player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA pursuant to Rule 17 of the Association or with any matter deemed to potentially be in breach of the spirit of this Code.

17.2 A Notice of Complaint may be accompanied by a sanction offer that would apply to the offence which is detailed in each Article. Any sanction offer will be determined by the Committee based on the facts and circumstances of the alleged breach(es) of this Code. Where the Committee is satisfied that the particular facts and circumstances of the alleged breach(es) of this Code necessitate a hearing, no sanction offer will be made in the Notice of Complaint letter.

17.3 A Notice of Complaint under this Rule should be issued within 28 days from the time the incident is reported to the Secretary of the Committee or as may be extended by the Committee in its absolute discretion. The Notice of Complaint will be accompanied by all relevant evidence, documents, and written submissions (including where appropriate the match official's report) that are available to the Association at the time that the Notice of Complaint is issued. In any event the player, official, match official, club and/ or league should be notified within 28 days of the incident being reported to the Secretary of the Committee of the nature of any incident under investigation.

17.4 Where a Notice of Complaint is issued, the player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA may accept or deny the alleged breach(es) of this Code set out within the Notice of Complaint.

17.5 Where a player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA accepts the alleged breach(es) of this Code set out within the Notice of Complaint and a sanction has been offered, the relevant party may accept the sanction. In those circumstances a hearing will not be required. Where the player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA rejects the sanction, they are required to make representations as to the sanction in writing or at an oral hearing at the discretion of the committee if it is deemed that written submissions would not suffice.

17.6 Where a player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA notifies the Committee that they deny the alleged breach(es) of this Code set out within Notice of Complaint, the relevant party is required to submit a Disciplinary Challenge as directed in Rule 32 of this Code.

17.7 In any circumstances where a sanction has been proposed by the Committee within the Notice of Complaint and within the relevant period the player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA notifies the Committee that they do not accept the sanction offer, the Committee shall not be bound by the proposed sanction. However, at the time the Notice of Complaint is issued, the Committee must have advised parties of all alleged breaches of this Code being brought against them.

17.8 At all times the Committee shall have the discretion to require the player, official, match official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA who the subject of a Notice of Complaint is to attend a hearing.

17.9 In determining the appropriate sanction in any case, including at a hearing, the Committee will consider the circumstances of the infringement, the conduct of the player, official, match official and/or club within the previous 3 seasons and any other matter which appears to the Committee to be relevant pursuant to the overriding objective.

17.10 For the purpose of determining the appropriate charge and sanction at the point of charge the facts contained in the Match Official's reports will be presumed to be accurate.

17.11 Infringements committed during a match may no longer be prosecuted after a lapse of two years. As a rule, other infringements may not be prosecuted after a lapse of ten years.

RULE 18: MISCONDUCT BY PLAYERS or OFFICIALS
(Outside Law 12 of the Laws of the Game)

18.1 Any player or official who is dismissed will automatically incur a suspension from the subsequent match even if imposed in a match that is later abandoned, annulled and/or forfeited. Any automatic suspension will be in addition to suspensions imposed under Rule 18.

18.2 Where a player or official is found to be guilty of any of the charges specified in clauses 18.3 to 18.9 (inclusive) it is recommended that such player or official will be sanctioned in the terms set out in Article 18.3 to Article 18.9 (inclusive) and where a player or official is found to be guilty of any of the charges specified in clauses 18.10 to 18.19 (inclusive) such player or official will be sanctioned in the terms set out in clauses 18.10 to 18.19 (inclusive).

18.3 A player who is reported for the 1st occasion for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 1 match standard suspension and a £25 fine imposed on the player's club.

18.4 A player who is reported for the 2nd occasion in the playing season for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 2 match standard suspension and a £50 fine imposed on the player's club.

18.5 A player who is reported for a 3rd or subsequent occasion in the playing season for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 4 match standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on the player's club.

18.6 If part of the report relates to cautions or dismissals of players or officials, that part will be dealt with in accordance with Rules 13 and 14 of this Disciplinary Code.

18.7 An official who is reported for the 1st occasion in the playing season for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 1 match touchline suspension and a £25 fine imposed on the official's club

18.8 An official who is reported for the 2nd occasion in the playing season for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 2 match touchline suspension and a £50 fine imposed on the official's club

18.9 An official who is reported for a 3rd or subsequent occasion in the playing season for misconduct will be sanctioned with a minimum 4 match standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on the official's club.

18.10 A player or official who is reported for unsporting conduct towards an opponent or any other person other than a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 1 match standard suspension and a £25 fine imposed on their club.

18.11 A player or official who is reported for deliberately receiving a yellow or red card (to be suspended for an upcoming match and to ultimately have a clean record) will be sanctioned with a minimum 1 match standard suspension and £25 imposed on their club.

18.12 A player or official who acts with obvious intent to cause a match official to make an incorrect decision or supporting his error of judgement and thereby causing him to make an incorrect decision will be sanctioned with a minimum 2 match standard suspension and £25 imposed on their club.

18.13 A player or official who is reported for assault (elbowing, punching, and kicking etc) or battery of an opponent or any other person other than a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 3 match standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on their club.

18.14 A player or official who is reported for biting, head-butting, or spitting at an opponent or any other person other than a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 6 match standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on their club.

18.15 A player or official who is reported for unsporting conduct towards a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 4 match standard suspension and a £50 fine imposed on their club.

18.16 A player or official who is reported for assaulting (elbowing, punching, kicking etc) a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 15 match standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on their club.

18.17 An official who is reported for biting, head-butting, or spitting at a match official will be sanctioned with a minimum 12-month standard suspension and a £100 fine imposed on their club.

18.18 The sanctions described in clauses18.13, 18.14 and 18.15 may also apply in cases of misconduct against officials of affiliated leagues and clubs'

18.19 A match official who is reported for assaulting any person shall have the matter referred to and dealt with by an IFA Disciplinary Committee

18.20 A match official who is reported for misconduct or reported for unsporting conduct towards a player, official or any other person shall have the matter referred to and dealt with by an IFA Disciplinary Committee

RULE 19: MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS/CONTENT

19.1 A reprimand, suspension or fine may be issued to players, officials, clubs, leagues or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA in the case of inappropriate comments or content in the media or social media.

19.2 A player, official, club, league or any other recognised football body or person under the jurisdiction of NIBFA must not make comments or post content in the media or social media which:

- Without any evidence imply bias, incompetence, or question integrity and/or bring the game into disrepute or which are abusive, offensive and/or insulting and such comments are considered to be football related; or

- Criticise the decision(s) and or performance(s) of any or all match officials in such a way as to imply bias, incompetence, or question integrity on the part of such match official(s); or

- Make remarks about such match official(s) which impinge on his/ their character.

19.2.1 A player, official or club must not make public comments relating to a match official who has been appointed to a match involving the player, official or club at any time prior to the relevant match. Breaches of Rule 19.2 (including 19.2.1) will be sanctioned as stipulated below:

Leagues, recognised football bodies or other persons under the jurisdiction of NIBFA	**Minimum 1 match standard suspension**	**Minimum £100**

19.3 Breaches of this code by Match Officials will be dealt with by the Irish Football Association

19.4 The Committee may issue a sanction in the case of repeat offences by players or officials.

RULE 20: INCITING HATRED AND VIOLENCE

20.1 A player or official who publicly incites others to hatred or violence will be sanctioned with a suspension for no less than six months and with a minimum fine of £100 Player & £200 Official which will be imposed on their club.

20.2 In serious cases, when the infringement is committed using the mass media (such as the press, radio or television) or if it takes place on a match day in or around a stadium, the minimum fine will be £250 which will be imposed on their club. A suspension for no less than six months will also be imposed.

RULE 21: PROVOKING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

21.1 A player or official who provokes the public during a match will be sanctioned with a minimum suspension of two matches and with a minimum fine of £100 Player & £200 Official which will be imposed on their club.

RULE 22: INELIGIBILITY THROUGH SUSPENSION

22.1 If any player participates in a match whilst being suspended or if any player breaches the terms of his suspension his club will be sanctioned with a minimum fine of £200 Additionally, the Club will forfeit the match

22.2 A match suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a match is retroactively forfeited because a player took part in a match despite being ineligible. This also applies to the match suspension imposed on the player who took part in the match despite being ineligible.

22.3 If any official who participates in a match whilst being suspended or if the official breaches the terms of his suspension his club will be sanctioned with a minimum fine of £250

22.4 The timeframe for payment of a fine may be extended if a club can produce to the Panel evidence of severe financial hardship. A payment plan may be agreed with the Panel as referred to at 8.2

RULE 23 ABANDONMENT

23.1 If a club is found to have caused the abandonment of a match it will be sanctioned with a minimum fine of £200. The competition organiser will decide on the outcome of the match following the outcome of any disciplinary inquiry into the abandonment.

RULE 24: BRAWL

24.1 A brawl is defined as three or more people who participate in serious Violent Conduct. Anyone who participates in a brawl will be sanctioned with a suspension of at least six matches.

24.2 Anyone who tried merely to prevent a fight, shield others, or separate those involved in a brawl is not subject to punishment.

RULE 25: UNIDENTIFIED AGRESSORS

25.1 If, in the case of violence by players, officials or supporters it is not possible to identify the perpetrator(s), The Panel may penalise the Club to which the aggressors are deemed to belong.

RULE 26: TEAM MISCONDUCT

26.1 Disciplinary measures may be imposed on clubs where a team fails to conduct itself properly. A fine may be imposed where several players or officials from the same team threaten or harass match officials or other persons. Further sanctions may be imposed in the case of serious offences

RULE 27: DISCRIMINATION

27.1 Anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, colour, language, religion, or origin shall be suspended for at least 10 matches. Furthermore, a fine shall be imposed. Where the perpetrator is a player a minimum fine of £100 will be imposed on their club. If the perpetrator(s) cannot be identified, the committee may sanction the club to which they are deemed to belong. Clubs may also be required to engage with appropriate training to address the matter at hand.

27.2 Anyone who offends the dignity of a person or group of persons through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning disability, gender or sexual orientation shall be suspended for a minimum of five matches. Furthermore, a fine shall be imposed. Where the perpetrator is a player a minimum fine of £100 will be imposed on their club. If the perpetrator(s) cannot be identified, the committee may sanction the club to which they are deemed to belong. Clubs may also be required to engage with appropriate training to address the matter at hand.

27.3 In determining whether the dignity of a person or group of persons has been offended, the Panel will be entitled to draw reasonable inferences, that is to say, there is no requirement to identify an individual who was offended at the time the comment was made or published. In finding a matter to be proved, it will open to the Panel to conclude that by their very nature, the comments made offend the dignity of a person or group of persons. If an individual is identified as a direct addressee of potential discriminatory behaviour, he or she may be invited by the panel to make an oral or written victim impact statement.

27.4 Where several persons (officials and/ or player) from the same Club or association simultaneously breach clauses 27.1 or 27.2 or there are other aggravating circumstances, the team concerned may be deducted three points for a first offence and six points for a second offence; a further offence may result in relegation to a lower division where a member league can accommodate this. In the case of matches in which no points are awarded, the team may be disqualified from the competition.

27.5 Where supporters of a team breach clause 27.1 or clause 27.2 at a match, a minimum fine of £200 shall be imposed on their club, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight unless the club proves to the Panel that exceptional circumstances exist in which case the fine may be reduced. In determining the appropriate sanction, the Panel will be entitled to consider actions taken by the club to prevent such behaviour occurring in addition to previous occurrences of such behaviour which have at any time come to the attention of the Panel. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall interfere with the Committee's power to impose any of the sanctions outlined in paragraph 1.9 of this Code.

27.6 The Panel will be guided by the terms of Rule 33 of this Code in determining whether supporters have acted in a manner in contravention of this Rule.

27.7 The offences and fines referred to in these clauses are not exhaustive and the Panel is empowered to levy additional sanctions after considering the seriousness of the offences. Without prejudice to the generality of this, these additional sanctions could include an order to play a match behind closed doors, playing a match with a limited number of spectators, the forfeit of a match, a point's deduction, or disqualification from the competition.

27.8 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a match is abandoned by the referee because of racist and/or discriminatory conduct, the match shall be declared forfeited.

27.9 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a match is abandoned by the referee because of racist and/or discriminatory conduct in line with UEFA's three step procedure, the match shall be declared forfeited.

RULE 28: THREATS

28.1 A player or official who intimidates a match official with serious threats will be sanctioned with a minimum suspension for a player 6 matches, an official 10 matches and with a minimum fine of £100 for a player and £150 for an official which will be imposed on their club.

RULE 29: COERCION or UNDUE INFLUENCE

29.1 A player or official who uses violence or threats to pressurise a match official into taking certain action or to hinder him in any other way from acting freely will be sanctioned with a minimum suspension for 4 matches and with a minimum fine of £100 for a player or £150 for an official which will be imposed on their club.

29.2 A player or official who unduly seeks to influence or pressurise a match official to review match footage before submitting a Disciplinary Challenge pursuant to Article 35 will be sanctioned with a minimum suspension of four matches and a minimum fine of £100 for a player or £150 for an official which will be imposed on their club.

RULE 30: FORGERY and FALSIFICATION

30.1 Anyone who, in football-related activities, forges a document, falsifies an authentic document, or uses a forged or falsified document may be sanctioned with a fine as determined by the Disciplinary Panel.

30.2 If the perpetrator is a player, that player in addition to any other sanction imposed by the Panel, may be suspended for at least six matches.

30.3 If the perpetrator is an official, a player's agent or an intermediary, that official, player's agent or intermediary may in addition to any other sanction imposed by the panel be subject to a ban on taking part in any football- related activity for a period of at least 12 months.

30.4 If the perpetrator is an association or a club, that association or club may in addition to any other sanction imposed by the Panel, be subject to an expulsion from a competition or a fine

30.5 A club may be held liable for an infringement as defined in at 30.1 committed by one of its officials and/or players. In such a case, an expulsion from a competition and/or a transfer ban may be pronounced in addition to a fine for the club concerned.

RULE 31: LIABILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT – (IFA Article 33)

31.1 The home club is liable for any improper conduct among spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight and depending on the circumstances, may be fined. Further sanctions outlined in Article 1.9 of this code may be imposed in the case of serious disturbances.

31.2 The visiting club is liable for improper conduct among its own group of spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight and depending on the circumstances, may be fined. Further sanctions outlined in Article 1.9 of this Code may be imposed. Spectators occupying the away sector of a ground are regarded as the visiting club's supporters, unless proven by the club to the contrary.

31.3 Improper conduct includes, but is not limited to, violence towards persons or objects, letting off incendiary devices or causing explosions, throwing missiles, the use of laser pens**,** displaying insulting slogans in any form, uttering insulting word(s) or sound(s), using offensive gestures, or invading the pitch.

31.4 The liability described in clauses 31.1 and 31.2 also includes matches played on neutral grounds, especially during the semi-final or final of a competition. Should a semi-final or final of a competition be played at the stadium of one of the competing clubs, the club playing at their own stadium will be considered the home club.31.5 The Panel may determine that repeated infringements of rules 31.1 and 31.2 will attract further sanctions.

RULE 32: DISCIPLINARY CHALLENGES – (IFA Article 35)

Mistaken Identity Challenge (Cautionable or Sending-Off Offences)

32.1.1 In the case of a player or official who has been cautioned or dismissed from the field of play in a match but claim that they were the victim of mistaken identity in relation to the imposition of such sanction, a player, official, or their club may submit a Mistaken Identity Challenge in accordance with the procedure set out below in paragraphs **Rules 32.1.2** and **32.1.3**.

32.1.2 Where a player, official or their club wishes to make a Mistaken Identity Challenge, they must notify the Association that they intend to make such a Challenge. **Notification** must be provided to the Disciplinary Department via email to nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com by **1pm of the next business day** after the date on which the error allegedly occurred.

32.1.3 The Mistaken Identity Challenge (which must be in the prescribed form **DCC2**) along with written submission(s) and supporting evidence must then be submitted via the Comet system by **1pm on the second business day** after the date on which the error allegedly occurred, together with the relevant fee as set out in **Rule 32.1.6.**

The time limits for notification of Mistaken Identity Challenge (**Rule 35.1.2**), Mistaken Identity Challenge along with written submission(s) and supporting evidence (**Rule 32.1.3**) and all other requirements are to be strictly applied. Only complete notifications/ written submissions and supporting evidence submitted before the relevant deadlines will be considered.

32.1.4 Where there are no or insufficient Business Days between two matches in the relevant competition(s) and it would not be possible for a Mistaken Identity Challenge to be determined before the suspension is to be served, the following will apply:

(i) Where there are no Business Days before the next match, notification must be provided to the Disciplinary Department via email to nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com at the latest by **1pm on** the day of the next match.

(ii) Where there is just one Business Day before the next match, notification as set out in **Rule 32.1.2** must be complied with.

In respect of the circumstances detailed in **Rules 32.1.4 (i)** and **32.1.4 (ii)**, a player or team official will be permitted to play and/or participate in the next match only if notification as set out in **Rules 32.1.4 (i)** or **32.1.4 (ii)** has been adhered to.

The procedure detailed in **Rule 32.1.3** must then be complied with on the second Business Day after the date on which the error allegedly occurred.

32.1.5 The player, official, or their club, must submit with their claim, the written particulars and evidence upon which their claim is founded. This evidence must include:

- a signed statement from the player or official originally reported by the Referee that they were not responsible for the offence reported and identifying specifically the name of the person responsible; and
- a written statement from the player or official who is responsible for the offence.
- Wherever possible, video footage of the incident should also be provided.

The Committee will determine the matter on written evidence and video footage if provided. Parties will not be present or represented in person. For the avoidance of doubt, none of the match officials nor the club or player are entitled to be present or represented in person.

In cases of Mistaken Identity pursuant to **Rule 32.1,** whilst the burden of proof is on the Association, the Committee will be entitled to assume that the relevant match official's identification was correct and best placed to act as they did until such time as evidence is produced by the person or club challenging the decision to displace that assumption.

If the Committee is satisfied that the Mistaken Identity Challenge has been proven, the record of the offence will be transferred to the appropriate offender who will be subject to the applicable disciplinary consequences.

32.1.6 Where a player, official, or their club wish to submit a Mistaken Identity Challenge a deposit of **£100** must be lodged with NIBFA with the **DCC2** form by **1pm on the second business day** after the date of the match on which the error allegedly occurred.

This sum will be returnable only where a Mistaken Identity Challenge is either successful or not heard. If a Mistaken Identity Challenge is accepted by the Committee and subsequently withdrawn, the deposit will not be returned.

32.1.7 The Committee reserves the right to retain the deposit where the club is found to have caused the mistaken identity.

32.1.8 The decision of the Committee is final and binding and there will be no right to an appeal in respect of a decision of the Committee to reject a Mistaken Identity Challenge.

32.1.9 Where a Mistaken Identity Challenge is rejected, the applicable disciplinary sanction is applied with immediate effect.

32.1.10 If the Committee's decision is to reject the Mistaken Identity Challenge, it will, in every case go on to consider whether the player's punishment should be increased.

32.1.11 Should the Committee consider any Mistaken Identity Notification/ Challenge to be of a frivolous nature and/or an abuse of process merely to release a player or official from suspension to enable them to participate in a match they shall have power to deal with the player and official and or club as it deems appropriate.

32.1.12 In addition, if a Mistaken Identity Challenge is unsuccessful, the player and his club may be held liable for all or part of the expenses of the procedure.

32.1.13 A record of the decision will be made and provided to the club of the relevant player or official as well as the match Referee.

32.1 Notice of Complaint Challenge

32.2.1 A player, official, match official or club may submit a Notice of Complaint Challenge on form **DCC1** in the case of any Notice of Complaint having been issued against him or it by the Committee pursuant to **Rule 17** of this Code.

32.2.2 The Notice of Complaint Challenge must be made in the prescribed form **DCC1** and submitted via the Comet system by **1pm** on the **fourth day** after the date the Notice of Complaint has been issued by the IFA Disciplinary Department/ Comet System to the person or club concerned together with the relevant fee as set out in **Rule 32.2.4**.

32.2.3 In the case where the deadline for submission of the Notice of Complaint Challenge expires on a Designated Holiday the time specified above will be extended to the day immediately following the said Designated Holiday.

32.2.4 A deposit of **£100** must be lodged with the NIBFA where the Notice of Complaint or sanction is challenged. This sum will be returnable only where the Notice of Complaint Challenge is either successful or not heard.

32.2.5 In lodging a Notice of Complaint Challenge, the player, official, match official or club must state fully in writing the grounds for the challenge and provide the Committee with copies of all evidence, documents, and written submissions which the player, official and or club intends to rely on along with the reply to the Notice of Complaint within the timeframe required. Additional evidence may also be considered by the Committee provided that such evidence is submitted as soon as reasonably practicable.

32.3 Provisions in relation to all Disciplinary Challenges

32.3.1 On receipt of a Disciplinary Challenge and providing that the player, official or club have received written notification from the Committee that the Disciplinary Challenge is in order, any sanction (including for the avoidance of doubt any automatic suspension) offered or issued will be suspended pending the determination of the Disciplinary Challenge.

32.3.2 When a player, official or match official facing a suspension participates or officiates at a match without such written notification from the Committee, the Committee will issue the appropriate charge against the player, official or match official concerned for participating or officiating in a match whilst being ineligible.

32.3.3 Disciplinary Challenges must meet the requirements of this Article to be considered by the Committee. The time limits and other requirements are to be strictly applied, and only complete notifications/ claims submitted before the relevant deadline will be considered.

32.3.4 No Disciplinary Challenges will be heard against cautions or dismissals except in the case of a Mistaken Identity Challenge (cautions and dismissals) or an Obvious Error Challenge (direct red cards only).

32.3.5 If the Disciplinary Challenge is unsuccessful, the player, match official, official and or his club may be held liable in all, or in part of the expenses of the Disciplinary Challenge procedure.

Should the Committee consider any Notification/ Disciplinary Challenge to be of a frivolous nature and/or an abuse of process merely to release a player or official or match official from suspension to enable them to participate or officiate in a match it shall have the power to deal with the player, the match official, the official and/or club as it deems appropriate.

32.3.6 In the case that a sanction has been issued, a Disciplinary Challenge may be withdrawn by a player, official, match official or club prior to any hearing provided the suspension timeframe (detailed in **Rule 15.7** of this Code) has not passed.

Should a player, official or a club wish to withdraw a Disciplinary Challenge they must notify the Disciplinary Department of such withdrawal in writing.

Upon receipt of such notification, the Disciplinary Challenge will be deemed to be abandoned and the sanction against which the player, official, match official or club had challenged will be imposed with immediate effect in the case of (i) Mistaken Identity or Where a (ii) Notice of Complaint Challenge is abandoned, the sanction offer will be imposed from the following Monday, subject to the overriding objective.

The player or official's club may be held liable in all or in part for the expenses of the Disciplinary Challenge procedure.

32.3.7 All Disciplinary Challenges must be submitted with the relevant disciplinary authority of the Divisional Associations which issued the sanction or charge in question.

32.3.8 The Committee reserves the right to deal with any issues that arise outside of the referee's attention.

RULE 33: HEARINGS – (IFA Article 36)

33.1.1 The Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to conduct a hearing in the following circumstances:

When a player, official, match official or club lodges a Disciplinary Challenge (ie. A Mistaken Identity Challenge or a General Disciplinary Challenge)

When the Panel otherwise deems appropriate to do so pursuant to the over-riding objective.

33.2 The Panel shall have the power to direct the attendance of any player, official, or representatives of any club to attend at a hearing convened pursuant to this Rule. The Panel shall notify any person directed to attend of the date, time, and place of the hearing if their attendance is required. It shall be the duty of the persons whose attendance is directed to inform the Panel immediately of any difficulty in attending a hearing. The Panel will be guided by the requirement to have the matters dealt with in accordance with the overriding objective. In the event of a person or club whose attendance has been directed does not attend, the Panel will be entitled to draw any inference it deems appropriate by their failure to attend when reasonable notice has been provided and/or to issue a charge against that person or club pursuant to Rule 33.11.

33.3 Should a referee fail to attend a hearing without just or reasonable cause, the Panel has the discretion to report the Individual to the referee's committee to take whatever action they feel appropriate in the circumstances.

33.4 The Panel shall have the power to direct that any person required to attend, produce documentation or items which in the opinion of the Panel would assist them in their determination of any issue at the hearing. In the case of a match official, it will be incumbent upon the match official to provide a full and comprehensive match report, in every case which requires a hearing, no later than seven days before the hearing.

The Panel will be entitled to draw any inference it deems appropriate by the failure of any person or club to produce any such documentation or item, or if the documentation or item is materially incomplete, when reasonable notice to produce the same has been provided, or when in the opinion of the Panel it would have been obvious to the relevant party that such material should have been produced to assist the Panel with its deliberations. Furthermore, the Panel may issue a charge against that person or club pursuant to Rule 32.2 (c) arising from a player, official, or club's failure to produce any documentation or item when reasonable notice to do so has been provided and in the case of a match official's failure to produce documentation to refer the matter on to the IFA Disciplinary Committee

33.5 It shall be the duty of anybody or anyone facing any complaint to notify the Panel no less than 48 hours before a hearing of the attendance of any person (including representatives) attending the hearing together with the details of any witness they may wish to call. A club is responsible for ensuring that its players or officials attend a hearing. Failure to notify the Disciplinary Panel will entitle the Panel to exclude any person from the hearing.

33.6 The Panel shall be entitled to deal with any hearing if a person or club, including those who are the subject of any charge fails to attend the hearing, if satisfied that it is pursuant to the overriding objective to do so.

33.7 In advance of the hearing, any person or club appearing before the Disciplinary Panel to answer any charge must be given copies of any documentation relevant to the facts of the charge which is already in the possession of the Panel and upon which the Panel may rely. Where documentation is received for the first time during any hearing, the Panel will determine, following enquiry of any person or club answering a charge, whether in the interests of fairness time should be afforded to any party to consider such documentation.

33.8 If before a hearing it becomes apparent to the Panel that the case will involve specialist (including medical) evidence, or has elements which are unusual or difficult, the Panel may direct that such evidence be served in such a manner that the hearing of the case may be properly and fairly conducted.

33.9 The Panel shall be entitled to rely upon audio or video footage, including but not limited to television evidence when considering any case before it. The Panel should, where practicable, identify to any person or club charged of the existence of such footage it intends to rely upon and where the material is not publicly available invite the person or club charged to attend a viewing in advance of any hearing to be afforded an opportunity to inspect this material. The existence of such material having been identified, it will be incumbent upon the person or club charged to decide through the Secretary to the Panel to inspect the material. Where a person or club who is the subject of a charge intends to rely on such material, it will be the responsibility of that person or club to provide copies of the footage which the Panel can view no later than 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

33.10 The Panel shall be entitled to rely upon any evidence or material which it deems capable of being relevant to the issues before the Panel giving such weight as it deems fit to the evidence, dependent upon its source and its content. It will be for the Panel to determine what evidence it hears and considers.

33.11 Where it appears to the Panel that a player, official, or club has acted in a manner intended to frustrate the process of conducting an effective hearing, the Panel shall have the power to charge that person or club pursuant to Rule 34.13 and in the case of a match official refer the matter to the IFA Disciplinary Committee.

33.12 If the circumstances so require, the Panel may arrange for a hearing to be conducted by video conference or any other similar method.

RULE 34: PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCTING OF HEARINGS – (IFA Article 37)

Principles

34.1 Hearings before the Disciplinary Panel are disciplinary proceedings; the Panel is not a court of law. The Panel shall endeavour, where possible, to abide by the provisions under this Rule; however, it shall retain an overriding discretion to act in accordance with the overriding objective.

34.2 The burden of proof regarding disciplinary infringements rests on the Affiliated Member League. It is for the Affiliated Member League through the process set out in this Code to present evidence to the Panel and establish a case against a person or club charged. Where it appears to the Panel that the Affiliated Member League has failed to discharge that burden, the Panel shall be entitled to discontinue charge proceedings. In cases of mistaken identity pursuant to Rule 33.1, whilst the burden of proof is on the Affiliated Member League, the Panel will be entitled to assume that the relevant match official's identification was correct and best placed to act as they did until such time as evidence is produced by the person or club challenging the decision to displace that assumption.

34.3 The standard of proof in all disciplinary cases is on the balance of probabilities. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no sliding scale.

34.4 The NIBFA Disciplinary Panel will be drawn from a reserve of members of the affiliated leagues. The quorum for the Panel is 3 members. The Panel shall have the power to appoint Sub-Committees as they see fit to deal with all disciplinary matters including hearings. Each Sub-Committee shall comprise of no fewer than 3 members.

34.5 During the course of any hearing, all submissions and questioning must be directed through the appointed Chairman of the Panel. During any hearing, the Chairman of the Panel shall, in his discretion, direct the parties on how proceedings are to be conducted.

34.6 Where a hearing is convened, all members of the Panel must avoid a situation in which they or any Club that they represent or are associated with has, or may have, a direct or indirect interest that conflicts, or possibly may conflict, with the interests of the Panel or the overriding objective. No member of the Panel shall be entitled to vote on any matter directly related to or involving the Club that they so represent or are associated with. Members of the Panel must declare any such conflict of interest to the Panel as soon as they become aware of it. It shall be incumbent upon any person or club appearing at a hearing before the Panel to identify at the outset of proceedings whether they believe any such conflict of interest arises. If required, the Chairman of the Panel will determine whether a conflict of interest has arisen and take what steps are necessary to ensure that a fair hearing results pursuant to the overriding objective.

34.7 Any person or club charged in proceedings and appearing before the Panel who is of the opinion that they have not been given reasonable notice of the charges or the evidence to be relied upon during any hearing shall be entitled to invite the Panel to consider whether an adjournment should be granted. The Panel will determine whether any adjournment is required pursuant to the overriding objective.

34.8 Where notice has been given of a hearing to any person or club charged pursuant to Rule 17 the Panel shall have the power to proceed to a hearing in the absence of the person or club charged if they fail to attend at the date and time notified without providing a reasonable excuse. Where the Panel find that the attendance of any person or club charged or required to attend is necessary to properly determine any issue before them, the Panel shall have the power to suspend any such person or club until such time as they appear before the Panel, in which event every reasonable attempt will be made to agree with the person the date for a further hearing.

34.9 Any player, official, club or league charged will be entitled to be represented at a hearing by a nominee or representative providing notice of the attendance of such persons (including the name, contact details and profession of such a person) has been given to the Panel no later than 48 hours before the hearing. If such notice has not been given, it shall be at the discretion of the Panel to refuse such a person entry to the hearing.

34.10 The player, official and/or representatives of the club or league charged shall be admitted to the hearing, together with the relevant match official(s) or other such person who submitted a report or evidence in relation to the charge(s) before the Panel, including evidence relied upon by the person or club charged. It shall be at the discretion of the Panel to refuse any such person entry to the hearing where there has been inadequate notice as directed in this Code.

34.11 The Panel shall have the power to require the attendance at the hearing of any witness who can give relevant evidence on the issues before the Panel. In any case where a witness required by the Panel to attend the hearing refuses or fails to attend, the Panel shall be entitled to take account of any written evidence available from that witness and determine what weight can be attributed to that evidence in the absence of their attendance.

34.12 Persons or clubs charged shall be entitled at a hearing to call relevant evidence from any person. Clubs must give notice in writing or by email to the Panel of the name and contact details of any such witness together with details of the nature of any such evidence, including a written account of that person's evidence no later than 48 hours before any hearing. The Panel shall determine whether such evidence is relevant for the purpose of any hearing and direct whether such evidence may be relied upon pursuant to the overriding objective.

Contempt of the Disciplinary Code

34.13 Where it appears to the Panel that, during any charge procedure, hearing, or in the aftermath of any such procedure or hearing, any party has sought to deliberately mislead the Panel or endeavoured by any means to frustrate the due process of proceedings pursuant to this Code, the Panel shall be entitled to charge any such persons with being in Contempt of the Disciplinary Code. In such circumstances, the Panel will determine whether to deal with such matters summarily as they arise or whether to adjourn pursuant to the overriding objective. The Panel shall have the power to sanction any party found to have been in breach of these provisions by way of suspension or fine.

Proceedings at Hearings

34.14 At the commencement of a hearing, the Chairman shall confirm the identities of the persons admitted to the hearing and introduce the Panel members.

34.15 Before hearing evidence, the Panel shall satisfy itself that the player, official and/or club is aware of the reasons for their presence at the hearing and the nature of the allegations made against them.

34.16 The Panel (only) shall have the power to appoint a Case Presenter to assist the Panel at a hearing when it is deemed appropriate to do so. Such a person must be legally qualified and shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Panel. The case presenter shall have the role of outlining the case, presenting the evidence defined at paragraph 34.18 to the Committee and, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Panel, challenging, the evidence as defined at paragraph 34.19. The Case Presenter will be excluded from any aspect of a hearing which does not involve the presentation of evidence, submissions on the facts or the Panel determination. In cases where a Case Presenter is appointed, supplementary questions from the Panel shall only be asked by the Chairman of the Panel. As a person appointed by the Panel, the Case Presenter shall be treated by all parties involved in the hearing with the same degree of respect to be afforded any member of the Panel. The Chairman may disengage or direct the Case Presenter as appropriate pursuant to the overriding objective. Any person charged in relation to a case where a Case Presenter is to be used shall be notified of this no later than seven days before the Hearing.

Sanction Only Hearings

34.17 Where in advance of a hearing, the person or club charged has indicated that they accept the charge(s) alleged but wish to make representations in respect of the appropriate sanction, the person or club charged or the representative (but not both) may, at the discretion of the Panel be invited to attend a hearing to make relevant representations to the Panel; the Panel shall be guided by Rule 34.23 in terms of the receipt of such representations. Where the person or club charged wishes to call evidence in these circumstances, the Panel will be guided by the principles set out at Rules 34.18 - 34.23. All deliberations and decisions of the Panel shall be guided by Rules 34.24 - 34.30 of this Code. The Panel has the right to hold a hearing in any circumstance that it feels necessary, regardless of whether the person or club charged wishes to make representations in terms of sanction. Parties are encouraged to attend in order that the matter may be dealt with in accordance with the principles overriding objective set out in clause 1.6.

Charge & Sanction Hearings

34.18 The Panel shall first hear and/or consider the evidence available to the Panel including (but not limited to) the evidence upon which a charge has been issued. The player, official, club or league charged, or their representative (but not both) shall be given the opportunity through the Chairman to challenge any such evidence. The Chairman of the Panel shall have discretion to restrict questioning pursuant to the overriding objective.

34.19 The Panel shall then hear and/or consider any relevant evidence called on behalf of the player, official, club or league charged. The Panel and/or any person appointed by the Panel for the purpose of presenting a charge to the Panel shall be entitled, through the Chairman of the Panel to challenge any such evidence.

34.20 The Panel may draw such inferences as it considers appropriate from the failure of any person concerned with any charge to give evidence in accordance with this Code or to answer a question put to them during a hearing. Nothing in this article should be regarded as conflicting with the presumption of innocence in favour of the person or club charged and the burden of proof upon the Affiliated Member League to prove a charge is made out.

34.21 The Panel shall be entitled to consider any relevant disciplinary record of any person or Club as part of the evidence in the case. However, the Panel must not come to any finding of fact which is founded singularly or significantly on any previous adverse disciplinary finding. Previous disciplinary findings must not be used to bolster the evidence against a person or club charged when the other evidence is weak or tenuous.

34.22 The Panel shall be entitled to receive and consider all relevant evidence including (but not limited to) oral evidence, written statements, television, and radio evidence, extracts from social media and other internet- based material. Where a witness purports to give relevant evidence, that person should attend to give live oral evidence. Any statement or letter submitted in the name of any person will be deemed to be from the purported author of such material unless proven to the contrary and can be used against that person by the Panel for any other relevant purpose including separate disciplinary proceedings. Where evidence is not first-hand, such evidence will be given such weight as the Panel deems fit.

34.23 At the discretion of the Chairman, following the conclusion of the evidence at a hearing, the player, official, club or league and/or their representative(s) (but not both) shall be given the opportunity to supplement any written submission to the Committee and make limited representations on the evidence before the Panel and in respect of the sanction which would be imposed were the charge to be proved. The Chairman of the Panel shall have a discretion to restrict any representations including placing a time limit upon them.

Deliberations

34.24 Having heard the evidence and any submissions, the Chairman shall invite all persons other than the members of the Panel to retire whilst the Panel considers its decision in private.

34.25 When coming to their determination, the Panel shall do so only on the evidence which has been called, referred to or presented before the Panel at the hearing. At the Chairman's discretion, following retirement the Panel may recall the parties to deal with any issue concerning their deliberations.

34.26 The Panel shall come to its determination in respect of the charge and any sanction based on a straightforward majority. Where required, the Panel shall have a casting vote.

Decisions

34.27 Following their deliberations, the person or club charged and/or their representatives shall be invited to return before the Panel for the delivery of the Panel Committee's determination. The Disciplinary Panel pass their decisions entirely independently; in particular, they shall not receive instructions from any other body. The person or club charged shall be informed of the Panel determination, that is to say:

- What charge(s), if any, have been proved
- What charge(s), if any, have not been proved
- If proved, what core findings of fact the Panel have reached in coming to their determination on the charge
- What sanction has been imposed in respect of any charge proved
- What factors have been considered in determining any sanction imposed.

34.28 Any person or club against whom, following a hearing, a charge has been proved, shall be notified by the Panel that confirmation of the decision will be given in writing by email to the email address previously provided during the charging procedure. They shall be reminded of their right of appeal both at the conclusion of the hearing and subsequently in writing and must comply with the following conditions pertaining to an appeal.

(a) Disciplinary appeals shall be heard by a disciplinary appeals panel. Each disciplinary appeal panel will be appointed by NIBFA.

(b) Clubs in default of their financial obligations to a League more than 28 days from when they fall due
shall forfeit the right to submit a disciplinary appeal.

(c) A player, official or Club shall have no right of appeal against cautions or dismissals except in the case of alleged mistaken identity for a player who is cautioned or dismissed in a match.

(d) Subject to the conditions at (b) & (c), a Club may submit a Disciplinary Appeal to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel in the case of any penalty issued by NIBFA on behalf of any affiliated member league or club.

(e) Any Disciplinary Appeal on behalf of a player official or Club as per conditions at (d) must be lodged by that Club's Registered Secretary and will only be accepted for consideration by the Disciplinary Appeals Panel if lodged by that official or Club's Registered Secretary on official Club headed paper.

RULE 35: FAILURE TO RESPECT DECISIONS (IFA Article 38)

35.1 Anyone who fails to comply with a decision passed issued through the NIBFA Disciplinary process, (subsequent appeal decision) or IFA: will be fined for failing to comply with a decision will be granted a final deadline by the body issuing the final sanction in which to pay the amount due or to comply with the decision (Only for clubs:) will be warned and notified that, in the case of default or failure to comply with a decision within the period stipulated, points will be deducted or relegation to a lower division ordered where a member league can facilitate this. A transfer ban may also be pronounced.

35.2 If a club disregards the final time limit, NIBFA shall be request member leagues to implement the sanctions threatened.

35.3 If points are deducted, they shall be proportionate to the amount owed.

35.4 A ban on any football-related activity may also be imposed against natural persons.

RULE 36: MISCONDUCT WHICH HAS COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE OTHER THAN BY MEANS OF A MATCH OFFICIALS REPORT - (IFA Article 39)

36.1 A club submitting a complaint of misconduct about any player, official, match official or club must submit their complaint in writing dispatched by email on club headed paper to secretary of the league and *nibfa.discipline@irishfa.com* within 14 days from the alleged misconduct coming to their attention. NIBFA will send a copy of the complaint to the club or person who is the subject of the complaint.

36.2 A deposit of £100 shall be lodged in accordance with 36.1 of this code, which shall be returnable only where it is determined that there is a case to answer.

36.3 In lodging a complaint the club must state fully in writing outlining their complaint and include copies of all evidence, documents, and written submissions which the Club intends to rely on to substantiate their complaint within the specified timeframe.

36.4 NIBFA, a Member League, or Committee members of same or department within the IFA submitting such a complaint of misconduct will not be required to adhere to the procedure detailed in 36.2 of this Code. However, such a claim must be submitted in writing with a full explanation of the claim within 14 days of the alleged misconduct coming to their attention. A copy of the complaint will be sent to the club or person who is the subject of the complaint.

36.5 A Match Official submitting such a complaint of misconduct will be required to adhere to the procedure detailed in Articles 36.1 and 36.2 of this Code. Such a claim must be submitted in writing with a full explanation of the claim within 14 days of the alleged misconduct coming to their attention. A copy will of the complaint will be sent to the club or person who is the subject of the complaint.

36.6 The Disciplinary Panel reserves the right to deal with cases of serious misconduct that arise outside of the referee's attention.

36.7 All complaints of misconduct from a club will require full co-operation from the claimant.

RULE 37: MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES - (IFA Article 40)

37.1 Where a match official's report indicates that an offence has occurred which is not specified in this Disciplinary Code the Committee reserves the right to impose sanctions within the IFA Disciplinary Code.

RULE 38: DISCIPLINARY APPEALS PROCEDURE – (IFA Article 41)

38.1 A Disciplinary Appeal must be made in writing on official Club headed paper and sent by Special Delivery Post within five days of the date on which notification of the decision or penalty being appealed against was sent by NIBFA.

38.2 Disciplinary Appeals must be addressed to the Disciplinary Appeals Panel and sent to the address on the notification as sent per 38.1

38.3. The Disciplinary Appeal being lodged must include the following payment and documentation:

(a) A payment in the sum of £50 for a player or £100 in the case of an official or Club, which is refundable in the case of a successful appeal.
(b) A copy of the decision or penalty being appealed against.
(c) Confirmation of the date upon which notification of such decision or penalty was received by the appellant.
(d) All additional documentation, submissions, and details of evidence upon which the appellant intends to rely at the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.

38.4.1 It will be at the discretion of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel as to whether any further documentation or evidence, not so lodged as per clause 38.3, shall be considered at the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.

38.4.2 All Disciplinary Appeal Hearings shall commence within a reasonable period from receipt of the Disciplinary Appeal. The NIBFA Disciplinary Secretary or his agent shall inform all parties to the Disciplinary Appeal of the venue, date, and time of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.

38.4.3 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel can issue directions to the parties in respect of the hearing prior to proceedings commencing.

38.4.4 All parties involved in the Disciplinary Appeal must, at least three days before the hearing, confirm in writing, by post, fax or email to the name and relationship to the party, of all persons who will be attending the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing on their behalf, or at their request. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall have discretion to permit the attendance of any persons not confirmed within the stated deadlines.

38.4.5 Any party involved in the Disciplinary Appeal, which fails to attend a Disciplinary Appeal Hearing if requested to do so may be subject to disciplinary action. The case may be heard in their absence.

38.4.6 In cases of urgency, The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may amend the time limits indicated above to facilitate an expedited Disciplinary Appeals process.

38.4.7 Upon receipt of a Disciplinary Appeal, the decision or penalty being appealed shall be set aside pending the outcome of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.

38.4.8 Should the Disciplinary Appeals Panel consider a Disciplinary Appeal to be of a frivolous nature or merely to release a player or official from suspension to enable them to participate in a match, they shall have the power to penalise the player, official and or Club as it deems appropriate.

RULE 39: EVIDENCE

39.1 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel will have absolute discretion regarding evidence.

39.2. The following are admissible:
39.2.1 Reports from Match Officials,
39.2.2 Reports from Match Monitors and referee observers,
39.2.3 Declarations from the parties and witnesses, material evidence, expert opinions, and unedited audio or video recordings.
39.3 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall hear evidence from all witnesses it considers relevant to the case. It is a matter for the Disciplinary Appeals Panel to deem if a witness is relevant to the case in hand. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may refuse to hear a witness or to take evidence that is not considered relevant or which would otherwise unnecessarily delay the proceedings.
39.4 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel shall make decisions based on the rules and the evidence before them.
39.5 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may request a party or any other body to submit information or documentation.
39.6 Facts contained in Match Officials' or Match Monitors reports are presumed to be accurate
39.7 Evidence of the inaccuracy of the contents of Match Officials' or Match Monitors reports may be submitted for consideration by the Disciplinary Appeals Panel.

RULE 40: PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCT OF DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

40.1 A member of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel is obliged to retire from the consideration of any case if it involves their Club.

40.2 The Appellant player, official or Club may be represented by a club official who shall be admitted to the hearing.

40.3 At the commencement of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing, the Chairman of the Appeals Panel shall confirm the identities of the persons admitted to the hearing and introduce the Disciplinary Appeals Panel members. The Appellant player, official or Club will be required to give good reason for any objection to the composition of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel.

40.4 The Appellant player, official or Club and/or their representative shall be given the opportunity to comment upon and supplement his written submission to the Appeals Panel.

40.5 At any time, the Chairman, and through him, members of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel may ask questions of any of the parties. The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may draw such inferences as it considers appropriate from the failure of the person charged to give evidence or answer a question put to him.

40.6 Evidence from any witness called by the Appellant player, official, Club may be heard at the discretion of the panel.

RULE 41: NOTIFICATION OF DECISION RELATING TO DISCIPLINARY APPEAL HEARING

41.1 The Disciplinary Appeals Panel may issue an oral decision after the hearing and shall provide written notification of its decision to the Appellant player, official or Club within a reasonable period from the date of the Disciplinary Appeal Hearing.

41.2 Decisions and other documents intended for players or officials will be addressed to the listed Secretary of the Club concerned.

41.3 Decisions shall be formally communicated by way of ordinary letter post, fax and/or electronic mail.

RULE 42: FORM & CONTENT OF THE DECISION RELATING TO DISCIPLINARY APPEAL HEARING

42.1. The decision shall be in writing and contain:

(a) The composition of the Disciplinary Appeals Panel.
(b) The names of the parties.
(c) The terms of the decision, including the date of coming into force.
(d) Notice of the channels for appeal.

RULE 43: APPEAL TO IFA

46.1. Disciplinary Appeals Panel decisions may be appealed to the Irish Football Association Appeals Committee in accordance with the Article 14 of the IFA Articles of Association.

RULE 44: NIBFA DISCIPLINARY CODES

47.1 The procedures described within the code may be adapted to suit the Northern Ireland Boys Football Association and its affiliated Youth Leagues noting that some powers can be administered by the NIBFA only. However, the fines & sanctions detailed in this code must be adopted for the purpose of harmonising disciplinary sanctions.

47.2 Northern Ireland Boys' Football Association and its affiliated Youth Leagues shall be entitled to choose their means of communication when notifying suspensions or charges.

Appendix 1

IRISH FA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

Adopted by NIBFA on 20.08.2019 as the policy & procedures document for all affiliated leagues and clubs.

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Section 1 Introduction

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The welfare of children and young people is paramount to our club. We endeavour to provide an environment which values and protects all children and young people. It is our policy promote good practice and ensure each young person is protected from inappropriate behaviour and all types of abuse while having a positive experience at our club.

Our club endeavours to safeguard children and young people by adopting the standards set out by the Irish Football Association. To achieve this, we will:

1) Appoint a Child Welfare Officer and communicate their contact details to all club members.
2) Adopt the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures in their entirety.
3) Ensure our coaches/volunteers engaged in Regulated Activity have completed appropriate vetting checks through the Irish FA as part of the club's safe recruitment process before commencing their role. Vetting checks will be updated every 3 years.
4) Ensure all coaches/volunteers working with or responsible for under 18's have attended the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Workshop within 6 months of taking up their role. This should be updated every 3 years.
5) Have procedures for dealing with complaints or concerns regarding poor practice, abuse or neglect consistent with the Irish FA safeguarding policy.
6) Adhere to Irish FA Codes of Conduct and ensure these are communicated to all club coaches, players and parents.

Scope

This policy document covers all functions of our club and applies to all staff and/or volunteers, particularly those who engage in regulated activity with children and young people, club members and representatives.

Equality statement

Our club is committed to ensuring a fun and safe environment for all, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability or persons without, and persons with dependents and persons without.

Section 2 Children's Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (International Treaty)

What is the UN convention?

The convention is a set of minimum standards – the bottom line – in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the convention.

Who is a child?

In the convention 'a child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

What rights do children have?

There are many rights written into the convention which include, for example, rights relating to:

- children having a say in their education;
- protection of the environment in which children live;
- reasonable standards of living;
- protection from violence, abuse and exploitation;
- protection for children cared for away from home and for children with a disability;
- children being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture and practice their own religion;
- reasonable standards of health and development;
- children suspected of committing a crime and children convicted of crimes.

Each point in the convention is called an article. There are five articles that are especially important for Irish FA staff and volunteers to be aware of:

Article 1: No Discrimination

Article 3: Acting in The Child's Best Interests

Article 6: Making It Happen (the government has promised to make laws and change policies and procedures to give children these rights)

Article 12: The Child's Right to Express an Opinion

Article 19: Protection from Abuse and Neglect

Are these all 'legal' rights?

Since the UK government has signed the convention, no law or administrative action should contradict it. There is a committee at the United Nations which checks on whether governments are keeping their promises. Current legislation does not make all these rights available to children.

More information about children's rights in local law can be obtained from the Children's Law Centre, who can advise you or put you in touch with specialist groups with information relating to any issues.

The Children (NI) Order 1995

The Children (NI) Order 1995 is based on a clear and consistent set of five principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children and young people, they are;

- **Paramountcy** the welfare of the child and young person is paramount to this club
- **Parental / Guardian Responsibility** parents / guardians have responsibility for ensuring their child is safe and the young person's rights are protected rather than rights over them
- **Prevention** the club will put all good practice measures in place to reduce any potential risks of harm
- **Partnership** parents / guardians and statutory agencies will work together to prevent abuse and harm
- **Protection** the statutory agencies have a legal duty to investigate when a child or young person is at risk from harm or abuse. This club is committed to working in partnership with any statutory intervention to protect a child.

Children and young people have the right to be safe. Our staff and/or volunteers have a duty to ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

Section 3 Responsibility for Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football is a shared responsibility. Our club fully endorse the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures found under the Foundation section at www.irishfa.com. We have appointed a Club Child Welfare Officer(s) who has been ratified by our club committee.

The club child welfare officer plays a fundamental role in the creation of a child-centred ethos that promotes the positive aspects of football. This can be achieved by communicating to every adult in the club that they have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and young people and protect them from inappropriate behaviour and promote a culture of fun.

The role and responsibilities of the child welfare officer includes the following:

- Work with others in the club to create a positive child centred environment.
- Adopt the safe recruitment procedures outlined by the Irish FA to ensure all volunteers in Regulated Activity have completed appropriate vetting checks, administered by the Irish FA prior to taking up their role.
- Ensure all club volunteers have attended Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football training in line with NIBFA, NIWFA, GDC, SSG affiliation requirements within 6 months of taking up their role.
- Be the first point of contact for any complaints relating to poor practice and/or safeguarding issues and maintain appropriate records of any complaints, actions or decisions taken.
- Disseminate relevant information throughout the club as and when necessary.
- Liaise with the Irish FA, clubs, leagues and any other relevant affiliated bodies to ensure any concerns are dealt with at the earliest opportunity.

As a club, we will ensure that the club welfare officer has:

- Completed the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Course
- Completed the Irish FA Child Welfare Officer Course (within 6 months of being appointed)
- Completed a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Check through the Irish FA
- Agreed to take responsibility for their own development to maintain their knowledge and skills to fulfil the role

For additional information on the roles and responsibilities of the club child welfare officer see the Irish FA Safeguarding Policy and

Procedures or the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App currently available at Google Play and iTunes.

Section 4 Safe Recruitment Procedures

Our club recognises its responsibility to ensure that all staff/volunteers providing football opportunities for children and young people are appropriately selected, supported and have the necessary safeguarding knowledge to help them in their roles. Our selection process includes but is not limited to:

- An application process
- Confirmation of any experience working with children
- Previous coaching experience
- A commitment to engage in additional training as required by the club
- Reference checking

Vetting Checks

Our club is required to ensure that any volunteer who is engaged in regulated activity (welfare role, first aider, coach, transporting children, overnight stays) completes an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure Check.

Once we are satisfied that the volunteer is suitable to represent our club we will ensure that an appropriate AccessNI application is completed prior to them taking up their role and at 3 yearly intervals thereafter. The process is as follows:

- We will issue a hard copy of the AccessNI application form (available at www.irishfa.com) to each applicant.
- Each applicant must complete the application in full, including the online registration for an Enhanced Disclosure Check (against the Barred list if the work is unsupervised).
- Each applicant must return the application form to our club welfare officer or chairperson along with 3 pieces of identification for identity checking.
- Each applicant should consider submitting a self-declaration form outlining any relevant cautions and/or convictions to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 6LU.
- The club welfare officer/chairperson should record the name, dob and AccessNI reference number and forward the application form and copies of identification to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 6LU.

On receipt of the completed application the Irish FA will:

- Process the application to AccessNI
- Receive notification from AccessNI outlining:

(i) Nothing to disclose
(ii) Certificate Issued (previous cautions and/or convictions)
(iii) Further information required from the applicant

The Irish FA will conduct a thorough risk assessment on any disclosures. Our club volunteers will provide the Irish FA with the original disclosure certificate and a detailed explanation of any disclosures identified by the AccessNI check. The Irish FA may be required to obtain third party information and/or share information with our club. This will only be done with the consent of the volunteer.

Our club will engage fully in this process and comply with any decision taken by the Irish FA Case Management Panel.

Safeguarding Training

All our staff and volunteers will attend the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football training course within 6 months of taking up their role. This will cover:

- Basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues
- Recognising a child protection concern including guidance on how to respond to, record and report concerns in line with Irish FA guidelines
- Volunteers responsibility to safeguard children and young people who participate in Irish FA programmes
- Awareness of the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures – including codes of conduct

Volunteers will be required to attend refresher training in safeguarding on a 3-yearly basis either via face to face training or online learning. Face to face training must be completed after 9 years.

Section 5 Responding to concerns, complaints or allegations

We will take any complaint or concern about the safety and welfare of a child seriously. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- The conduct of a club volunteer towards any other club member – child, parent/guardian, spectator, Irish FA and/or other match officials.
- The conduct of any club representative towards any member of another football club, league, Irish FA and/or match official.
- Any concern, raised by a child or adult, that indicates they (or another person) have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed by another individual.
- The conduct of any club member that may cause reputational damage to the club.
- Any concerning behaviour that is observed by a club representative.

Any concerns you may have should initially be directed to our club Child Welfare Officer. If the complaint is about that individual, you should raise the issue with the club Chairperson or another senior official as necessary.

We will consider if your concern relates to poor practice and is a breach of our Code of Conduct. This matter may be addressed internally. Serious cases of poor practice may be referred to the Irish FA/NIBFA. All concerns will be fully investigated.

The outcome of any investigation may be:

- No case to answer
- Advice and warning as to future conduct
- Supervision/monitoring
- Support/additional training
- Suspension from the club
- Club membership rescinded

We will also consider if your concern is potentially child abuse or criminal behaviour. We will record the nature of the concern and immediately share this information with statutory authorities and the Irish FA/NIBFA. Our club will be guided by the advice from relevant authorities.
We may have to make a referral to the DBS. If this is the case, we will liaise with the Irish FA and any other appropriate body.

Section 6 What is Child Abuse?

> "Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings: in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them."
>
> *(Ref: Department Of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) NI Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures, 2005)*

Child abuse occurs when a person in a position of greater authority or power causes significant harm to a child or young person. Research indicates that this harm can take place in many settings, including sport, and that the perpetrator is more often an adult whom children and young people know and place their trust in, rather than a stranger.

Child abuse is a very difficult and emotive subject which requires education and open discussion so that everyone feels confident in recognising the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and knows how to respond to concerns in line with Association and statutory guidelines.

By creating a better understanding of the issue, and by facilitating open discussion about abuse, the Irish FA also endeavours to deter those who may wish to use football as a means of gaining access to children and young people for inappropriate reasons.

Child abuse inquiries indicate that abuse which takes place in a public setting is rarely a one-off occurrence. Therefore, it is imperative that all allegations and suspicions of abuse are taken seriously and acted upon immediately to prevent further harm to children and young people

The Department of Health Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2017) Report formally recognises five types of abuse:

Physical abuse	occurs when a person deliberately hurts a child or young person or gives a child or young person access to alcohol, drugs or other dangerous substances
Emotional abuse	occurs when a person persistently shouts, taunts or threatens a child or young person. They may also convey to them that they are worthless or inadequate
Neglect	occurs when a person persistently fails to provide a child or young person with basic needs such as food, water and clothing. The child or young person may also be left unsupervised and not cared for
Sexual abuse	occurs when a person takes advantage of a child or young person to gratify their own sexual needs
Exploitation	occurs when a person manipulates or abuses their power and control over a child or young person for their own personal gain.

Although bullying is not formally recognised as a type of abuse under the Children (NI) Order, the Irish FA considers it to be a form of harm which must be taken seriously and responded to.
For more detailed information regarding the categories of abuse, refer to www.irishfa.com/foundation/youth-and-grassroots-football/safeguarding.

Section 7 Code of Conduct

Football should be a positive experience for all participants. Our club expects high standards of behaviour from all our representatives – players, coaches, volunteers and supporters. Football is passionate and naturally competitive and can evoke different emotions and reactions. These, at times can be both positive and negative and can spill onto the pitch. We have a shared responsibility to ensure poor conduct does not compromise the safety and welfare of children and young people. Any behaviour which compromises this ethos may result in disciplinary action.

Players - Children and young people at our club are expected to:

- Show respect to players, coaches/volunteers and spectators
- Play fairly, respect officials and accept their decisions
- Respect opponents and not cheat
- Not use violence
- Remain within the defined boundary of the playing area/coaching area
- Behave and listen to all instructions from the coach/supervising adult
- Take care of all equipment owned by the club/league/SSG centre
- Refrain from bad language or racial /sectarian references
- Refrain from bullying or persistent use of rough and dangerous play
- Report abuse and/or inappropriate behaviour
- Be gracious in defeat
- Refrain from any inappropriate use of social media that may be critical of any club member or bring our club into disrepute

Children and Young People have the right to:

- Be safe and be listened to
- Be respected
- Privacy
- Enjoy football in a protective environment
- Be referred for professional help if needed
- Be protected from abuse/inappropriate behaviour from any other person
- Participate on an equal basis, based on their ability
- A positive experience of competition
- Have their concerns taken seriously

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the appropriate coach and the Club Welfare Officer informed. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Behavioural contract
- Suspension from training/matches
- Expulsion from the club

Your parents/guardians will be informed of any action taken by the club or concerns about your behaviour.

Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians involve with our club are expected to:

- Show respect, appreciation and support for the club coaches and volunteers
- Complete and return club registration forms along with consent forms pertaining to your child's participation with the club
- Inform the club of any health concerns pertaining to your child – particularly breathing, chest conditions or allergies. This may include any other condition including ADHD and/or Autism prior to football related activity.
- Be punctual when delivering and collecting your child to and from football training or matches. Inform the coach of any change of circumstance or collection arrangements
- Ensure your child is prepared for football – appropriate attire depending on weather conditions, appropriate footwear, shin guards and if required, prescription safety glasses, fluids and snacks if needed
- Behave in a manner that reflects the good name of the club, make yourself aware of and adhere to rules of games centres Encourage your child to play by the rules and to do their best
- Be realistic and promote your child's participation in football for fun and enjoyment
- Accept officials and referee's decisions
- Behave responsibly on the side-lines and engage positively with other parents and coaches
- Refrain from any inappropriate use of social media that may be critical of any club member or bring our club into disrepute
- Never enter the field of play unless invited by an official

Parents/Guardians have a right to:

- Know their child is safe and supervised during training and matches (unless prior arrangements re supervision agreed)
- Be informed about any problems or concerns relating to their child(ren)
- Be informed if their child is injured
- Make a positive contribution to decisions made by the club
- Raise any complaints or concerns they may have related to their children's involvement with the club

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the appropriate coach and the Club Welfare Officer informed. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Behavioural contract
- Parent/Guardian may be asked not to attend training sessions and/or matches for an agreed period
- **If parental poor behaviour continues, then ultimately your child may be asked to leave the club because of your actions**

Code of Conduct for Coaches and Volunteers

All coaches and volunteers at our club will:

- show respect to everyone involved in the game (i.e. coaches, players, match officials, parents and spectators)
- be an excellent role model and always display exemplary behaviour. This includes not smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs or using foul, racial, sectarian or discriminatory language in the presence of children and young people.
- only develop open, honest, professional and respectful relationships with children and young people
- promote the positive aspects of football and never condone rule-violations or the use of prohibited substances
- not equate success purely with results / winning, or equate losing with failure
- respect decisions made by match officials and never publicly criticise their decisions
- never enter the field of play without permission from the referee
- never use offensive, insulting, abusive or inappropriate language
- agree to complete appropriate vetting checks and engage in any subsequent risk assessment with the Irish FA
- attend appropriate training as and when required in line with Irish FA affiliation requirements – safeguarding, first aid etc

When coaching/volunteering children and young people I will:

- always put the welfare of children and young people before winning or achieving goals
- work in an open environment and avoid spending time alone with children and young people away from others
- only partake in one-to-one coaching with a child or young person if it is necessary, part of the overall team training session and is done with the knowledge of the club and agreement with the child/young person and parent
- make them feel safe and ensure that coaching and volunteer ratios are appropriate to the needs of the group
- make football a fun experience
- communicate in a constructive, effective and age-appropriate manner
- be positive by giving constructive feedback, praising efforts and encouraging achievements
- ensure that if any form of manual / physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed club guidelines. If physical support is needed, I will talk openly to the child or young person, explaining what I am doing and why, but I understand that for coaching purposes within football there are limited reasons for physical support. I agree that children and young people should always be consulted before they are touched, and their agreement gained. Parental / guardian views about manual support will always be carefully considered
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people, including those with a disability, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing any child against their will
- carry out a risk assessment and ensure that the equipment and environment used for every club activity is safe
- keep a written record, and inform senior coach and parent of the young person, of any injury that occurs, including details of any treatment given
- never engage in bullying behaviour
- challenge any form of bullying behaviour and report it to club Welfare Officer and parent of the young person
- avoid spending any time alone with children or young people away from others.

The following actions will never be sanctioned. I will never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a changing room, bath or shower with a child or young person
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children or young people to use foul, abusive, racial, or discriminatory language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person – even in fun
- engage in sexual relationships with any player under 18 years of age while that unequal power relationship exists, and will notify the Club Welfare Officer of any relationships where there is a potential or actual abuse of trust
- engage in inappropriate use of social media – this includes never posting comments on social media sites that compromise the welfare of a child or young person, cause them harm, or bring the club or sport into disrepute
- reduce a child or young person to tears as a form of control
- encourage or bully a child or young person into playing while injured
- show favouritism
- allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
- undertake personal care for children or young people
- enter or remain in the changing room while players are showering or changing if they are of a different gender to myself.
- invite or allow children or young people to stay with me at my home.

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the head coach or Club Welfare Officer. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Additional training
- Mediation
- Period of supervision
- Suspension
- Expulsion from the club

Section 8 Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is hurtful behaviour which no child or young person should have to experience. The impact that bullying can have on a child's or young person's life should never be underestimated. In extreme cases, bullying can lead to a child or young person self-harming or taking their own life. Our club is committed to providing an environment which promotes fun, respect, inclusivity and equality for everyone involved.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour that compromises our club's ethos and will therefore be challenged and responded to. Volunteers who witness bullying behaviour, whether it's child-to-child or adult to child, must respond immediately and report it to our Club Welfare Officer. Cases of serious bullying may be reported to the Irish FA Safeguarding team.

- All volunteers must respect every child and young person's need for, and right to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition, opportunity and equality are available.
- Bullying behaviour will not be accepted or condoned at our club.
- Any form of bullying will be taken seriously, be investigated and be promptly and appropriately responded to.
- Everyone involved in our club must understand what bullying is and how it affects those involved.
- Everybody has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.
- Our anti-bullying policy and reporting procedures should be made known to everyone involved in the club, so they know how to respond to bullying, should it occur
- Our club will support children and young people, and their parents / guardians, should they be subjected to bullying.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING: VOLUNTEERS

- All cases of bullying must be reported to the club welfare officer.
- Parents and guardians should be made aware that their child is being bullied, or is bullying others, and should be invited to meet with relevant club volunteers to discuss the problem.
- Where appropriate, the PSNI may be contacted
- Mediation should be used to help achieve a resolution but only if there is informal consent and agreement from all parties.
- The bullying behaviour should be promptly addressed and stopped.

Section 9 Useful Contacts

Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App
Health and Social Care Trusts In Northern Ireland

Each trust has a Gateway team to deal with initial reports of abuse, and more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison and advice on concerns.

Northern HSC Trust Tel 0300 1234 333 (0900-1700) **Out of hours** 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)
South Eastern HSC Trust Tel 0300 1000 300 (0900-1700) **Out of hours** 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)
Southern HSC Trust Tel 0800 7837 745 (0900-1700) **Out of hours** 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)
Belfast HSC Trust Tel 028 9050 7000 (0900-1700) **Out of hours** 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)
Western HSC Trust Tel 028 7131 4090 (0900-1700) **Out of hours** 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

Police Service Of Northern Ireland Public Protection Units

The following are PSNI Public Protection Units throughout Northern Ireland. Contact them via the police exchange 028 9065 0222 or 101 and the relevant extension below:
North/West Belfast Tennent St PSNI x 28969
South/East Belfast Willowfield PSNI x 23570
Newtownards/Bangor Newtownards PSNI x 31065
Carrickfergus/Newtownabbey/Antrim Antrim PSNI x 36070
Armagh/Newry Lurgan PSNI x 39084
Cookstown/Omagh/Enniskillen Omagh PSNI x 41630
Limavady/Londonderry/Magherafelt Maydown PSNI x 57016
Coleraine/Larne/Ballymena Ballymoney PSNI x 63605 A

NSPCC
Helpline 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Child Protection In Sport Unit 028 9035 1135/011 6234 7278 | www.thecpsu.org.uk
ChildLine Freephone 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Access NI 0300 200 7888 www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Disclosure and Barring Service
Information or queries relating to referrals or barring of adults from working with children and young people
01325 953795 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 028 7238 2391 www.ceop.gov.uk
Kidscape (Anti-Bullying Charity) 0207 730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk
PIPS (Suicide Prevention Charity) 028 90287836 www.pipsprogrammes.com
Lifeline 24-hour general helpline 0808 808 8000
Nexus Counselling service for survivors of abuse www.nexusinstitute.org

Belfast 028 9032 6803
Derry/Londonderry 028 7126 0566
Portadown 028 3835 0588
Enniskillen 028 6632 0046

Sport NI 028 9038 1212 www.sportni.net
Volunteer Now 028 9023 6100 www.volunteernow.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

www.bullying.co.uk (anti-bullying charity)
www.thinkuknow.co.uk (CEOP's internet safety education programme)

Summary

We are committed to the good practice guidelines and procedures outlined throughout this policy. As a club, we accept our responsibility to provide an environment which always promotes the safety and welfare of children and young people.

In addition to this policy document, we are guided by additional policies outlined in the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures document found www.irishfa.com/foundation/youth-and-grassroots-football/ safeguarding. This includes:

- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Communications and Social Media Policy
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Transporting Children and Young People
- Travelling to Away Fixtures/Tournaments/Residentials
- Guidelines on Confidentiality
- Organising Events/Festivals/Tournaments

The Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App is available to download.

Appendix 2

VETTING CHECKS

In order to register an official, all clubs, leagues, affiliated bodies and Associations must follow appropriate selection procedures ensuring they are satisfied with the applicant/volunteer. This process should include but is not limited to:

- An application process
- Confirmation of any experience working with children
- Previous coaching experience
- A commitment to engage in additional training as required by the club
- Reference checking

If satisfied with the applicant/volunteer, the club, league or association/affiliated body must ensure that all volunteers engaging in Regulated Activity complete an Enhanced Disclosure Vetting Check prior to confirmation of their membership.

To allow the Irish FA/NIBFA to assess the suitability of a club official to take up membership of the NIBFA, the club, league/association or affiliated body must ensure that the club official engaging in Regulated Activity completes a satisfactory vetting check.

The application process is as follows:

- When satisfied with the applicant, the club will issue a hard copy of the AccessNI application form to each applicant. This application can be found at https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-foundation/grassroots-and-youth-football/safeguarding
- Each applicant must complete the application full, including the online registration for an Enhanced Disclosure Check (against the Barred list if the work is unsupervised).
- Each applicant must return the application form to the club welfare officer or chairperson along with 3 pieces of identification for identity checking.
- Each applicant should, if necessary, submit the self-declaration form outlining any relevant cautions and/or convictions to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 6LU.
- The club welfare officer/chairperson should record the name, dob and AccessNI reference number and forward the application form and copies of identification to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 6LU. All information should be included on the relevant online club registration system.
- On receipt of the completed application the Irish FA will:
- Process the application to AccessNI
- Receive notification from AccessNI outlining:

(i) **Nothing to disclose** – The Irish FA/NIBFA will inform the club welfare officer/chairperson that the individual could be considered for appointment

(ii) **Certificate Issued** – The Irish FA will request from the applicant, the original disclosure certificate and a full explanation of any disclosures outlined within. The applicant may provide or be required to provide relevant additional information allowing the Irish FA to assess the individual's suitability to fulfil their proposed role. This may include but is not limited to written references and/or additional reports relating to the convictions. The applicant may be required to attend an interview as part of the assessment process. The Irish FA will inform the club, league or affiliated body if the applicant has been successful and any measures that should be put in place to manage any identified risk. The club/league/affiliated body may be required to engage in this assessment process.

(iii) **Further information required** – the Irish FA may be required to request additional information from the applicant for the purposes of progressing the application.

This decision will be taken by the Irish FA Case Management Panel.

The Irish FA is committed to equal opportunities for all and does not preclude applicants with criminal convictions. Convictions will only be considered when relevant to the position that the applicant has applied for. Applicants whose disclosure certificate returns information in relation to their criminal record will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Disclosures do not necessarily preclude a person from taking a role within affiliated youth football.

The assessment of suitability will depend on several factors:

- the nature of the position
- the self-disclosure of any prosecutions or convictions
- the seriousness, timing and any possible pattern that emerges of any information disclosed
- the potential of reoffending to cause harm to young people/vulnerable adults

The following information is considered:

- Age of applicant now and at the time of the offence
- Type and nature of the offence
- Number of offences on record
- Pattern of offending or date since last offence
- Contact with young people and/vulnerable adults
- Any mitigating factors
- Any aggravating factors
- Disclosure by applicant
- Cooperation with case management process

Disclosure of certain types of convictions/prosecutions may automatically preclude the applicant from a position working with children. Examples of offences that may prohibit an applicant are:

- Any offence of a sexual nature
- Any offence against a child
- An offence that causes gross bodily harm
- An offence of kidnapping
- A series of continuous offending that might cause concern for the well-being of children

Any applicant who submits inaccurate information (at any stage of the process), omits relevant information or does not engage meaningfully in the assessment process may not be permitted to take up membership of the NIBFA either temporarily or permanently.

All documentation will be returned to the applicant on completion of the process. The Irish FA will retain confirmation of the decision to grant membership or not.

All clubs, leagues, affiliated and associated bodies must ensure they maintain accurate and up to date record of all club officials including confirmation of vetting checks and safeguarding training, both of which should be updated every 3 years.

Appeals

An appeals process can be made available to any individual who is subject to a decision made by the CMP.

- All requests must be submitted in writing, by special-delivery post, within 14 days after the date the decision was intimated in writing to the individual concerned.
- A fee of £75 must be enclosed with the appeal. The fee shall be returned only where the appeal is upheld or not heard.
- The request must clearly identify the decision the individual wishes to appeal, on what grounds they wish to make the appeal, and reasons as to why it would be unfair not to change the decision. Evidence must also be submitted to support the claim.
- The Appeals Panel will exclude any person who sat on the original CMP.
- Where an appeal has been rejected or not heard, the initial decision made by the CMP will stand.
- The Appeals Panel will notify the individual, in writing, of the outcome of the appeal process.

Should an individual wish to withdraw their appeal prior to the hearing taking place, they must notify the Irish FA's Safeguarding Team in writing. In such cases, the original decision made by the CMP will be upheld. The individual may also be subject to a cancellation fee.

Appendix 3

PLAYER TRAINING/TRIALS AGREEMENT FORM

Agreement for club registered players to attend trial, training or as a guest player for another club during the period of the registration. Please PRINT ALL sections except for signature.

Name of Player _____Name of Club_____

I _____ head of youth/secretary* of the above-named club hereby

approve the Request from Name of Club _____ to invite the

above named player to a trial, to train and or to guest for the said team in a tournament between

the following dates _____ to _____ inclusive.

Signed _____ Role _____Date _____

Declaration

I _____ head of youth/secretary* of Name of Club_____

Acknowledge the cooperation of; Name of Club _____

In releasing the above-named player and will comply with the agreed dates noted above. I also

understand any failure to comply with these dates will leave our club subject to sanction as per the

current league disciplinary code.

Signed _____ Role _____Date _____

*delete as appropriate but the approval must be authorised by an official at this level of the club.

This signed document and a copy must now be submitted to the league or leagues of the two clubs named above.

League use only

Name of League _____

Received by; _____Print Name

Date; _____

Appendix 4

Article 19 Protection of minors

1. International transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18.

2. The following three exceptions to this rule apply:

a) The player's parents move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football.

b) The transfer takes place within the territory of the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) and the player is aged between16 and 18. In this case, the new club must fulfil the following minimum obligations:

(i) It shall provide the player with an adequate football education and/or training in line with the highest national standards.

(ii) It shall guarantee the player an academic and/or school and/or vocational education and/or training, in addition to his football education and/or training, which will allow the player to pursue a career other than football should he cease playing professional football.

(iii) It shall make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the player is looked after in the best possible way (optimum living standards with a host family or in club accommodation, appointment of a mentor at the club, etc.).

(iv) It shall, on registration of such a player, provide the relevant association with proof that it is complying with the obligations.

c) The player lives no further than 50km from a national border and the club with which the player wishes to be registered in the neighbouring association is also within 50km of that border. The maximum distance between the player's domicile and the club's headquarters shall be 100km.

In such cases, the player must continue to live at home and the two associations concerned must give their explicit consent.

3. The conditions of this article shall also apply to any player who has never previously been registered with a club and is not a national of the country in which he wishes to be registered for the first time.

4. Every international transfer according to paragraph 2 and every first registration according to paragraph 3 is subject to the approval of the subcommittee appointed by the Players' Status Committee for that purpose. The application for approval shall be submitted by the association that wishes to register the player. The former association shall be given the opportunity to submit its position. The sub-committee's approval shall be obtained prior to any request from an association for an International Transfer Certificate and/ or a first registration. Any violations of this provision will be sanctioned by the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the FIFA Disciplinary Code. In addition to the association that failed to apply to the sub-committee, sanctions may also be imposed on the former association for issuing an International Transfer Certificate without the approval of the sub-committee, as well as on the clubs that reached an agreement for the transfer of a minor.

5. The procedures for applying to the sub-committee for a first registration and an international transfer of a minor are contained in Annexe 2 of these regulations

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Pertinent facts to be included in documents **Document Category**	**Pertinent Facts**
Documentation of academic education	A signed and stamped statement issued by the relevant academic provider that confirms the player's enrolment, the start date of the classes, the qualification the player will receive upon completion of the course, the player's expected date of graduation, and a signed weekly academic schedule of the player that clearly indicates the days on which each class meets and the duration of each class.
Documentation of football education	□ For male players, the club's training category for training compensation purposes □ For female players, a statement from the association concerned confirming that the applicant club is deemed to be in "line with the highest national standards" of women's football education in that country □ The player's weekly football training schedule (including the day and duration of each training session) □ A statement of the club wishing to register the player that specifies the team of the club that the player will be joining
Documentation of accommodation / care	□ Address □ Guardian's name / identity & relationship to player
Employment contract – player or player's parents	□ Employer's name □ Employer's address / location □ Employee's full name □ Job description □ Remuneration details □ Employment start date □ Terms of validity
Parental authorisation	□ Parent's full name □ Player's full name □ Authorisation
Proof of birth date (birth certificate) – player	□ Player's full name □ Date of birth □ Place of birth □ Parents' full name
Proof of identity and nationality – player or player's parents	□ Full name □ Nationality
Proof of residence – player's parents	□ Residence start date □ Address / location

Request for approval of first registration / Request for approval of international transfer	□ Formal request □ Grounds for the request / explanation of the circumstances forming the basis of the request □ Date of the request
Work permit – player or player's parents	□ Country □ Date of issue □ Permit holder's full name □ Terms of validity
Documentation of exchange programme	Official information about the exchange programme (name, purpose, funding, duration, etc.) provided by the organisers of the exchange programme.
Document Category	Pertinent Facts
Registration form for exchange programme	A copy of the registration form for the relevant exchange programme signed by the minor player and/or his/her parents.
Confirmation of player's return	A confirmation, issued and signed by the organisers of the exchange programme or the minor player's parents, that the minor player will return to his/her home country upon completion of the programme.
Documentation of academic education (specific to exchange students)	A confirmation, issued and signed by the minor player's academic institute (school/college) in his/her host country, that indicates the dates of the envisaged duration of the relevant studies and includes a detailed timetable of the player's classes.
Confirmation of player's participation from academic institute in home country	A confirmation issued by the minor player's academic institute in his/her home country of the player's participation in the relevant exchange programme.
Documentation of accommodation/care (specific to exchange students)	Specific details concerning the supervision and accommodation of the minor player during the exchange programme that include, in particular, the exact name and address of the player's host parents.
Authorisation of host parents	A declaration of consent issued by the minor player's host parents giving their consent to the player's registration for the club of the host country's football association.
Proof of refugee status – player's parents	A copy of the decision taken by the relevant national authority that grants the player's parents the status of refugee or "protected person" or, alternatively, an official confirmation from the relevant national authority that the minor player's parents have been admitted to the procedure for being granted the right of asylum, as well as a copy of their temporary residence permit Proof of refugee status – player's in the host country.
Status of new club	A declaration issued by the football association of the minor player's host country indicating whether the club for which the player wishes to be registered is professional or purely amateur (club without a professional team and without legal, financial or de facto links to a professional club).

Proof of refugee status of the player	A copy of the decision taken by the relevant national authority that grants the player the status of refugee or “protected person” or, alternatively, an official confirmation from the relevant national authority that the minor player has been admitted to the procedure for being granted the right of asylum, as well as a copy of his/her temporary residence permit in the host country.
Proof of custody	A copy of the decision of the competent national authority regarding the current legal custody of the minor player.
Authorisation of custody holder	A declaration of consent issued by the party that holds the minor player’s custody giving its consent to the player’s registration for the club of the host country's football association.
Parental situation	A declaration regarding the current situation and whereabouts of the player’s parents that is provided by the minor player, or the association of the player’s host country, or any other pertinent authority/entity.
Status of player with former club	A declaration issued by the minor player indicating whether he/she has ever been registered for a club in his/her home country (or any other country) and, if so, whether the player was previously registered as an amateur or a professional.

Exception according to Regulations or Legal precedent/jurisprudence	Art. 19 / 2a				Art. 19 / 2b				Art. 19 / 2c				Legal precedent/ jurisprudence	
otherwise known as...	International				EU				Cross-Border				5 years	
International Transfer or First Registration?	FR		IT		FR		IT		FR		IT		FR	
Professional or Amateur?	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur	Prof.	Amateur
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Releasing Association verification required?			Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes		
Mandatory Documents														
Documentation of Academic Education					√	√	√	√						
Documentation of Accommodation/care					√	√	√	√						
Documentation of Football Education					√	√	√	√						
Employment Contract – Player	√		√		√		√		√		√		√	
Employment Contract – Player's Parents	√	√	√	√										
Parental Authorisation					√	√	√	√						
Proof of Birth Date (Birth Certificate) – Player	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Proof of Consent of Releasing Association									√	√	√	√		
Proof of Distance for 50km rule									√	√	√	√		
Proof of Identity & Nationality – Player	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Proof of Identity & Nationality – Player's Parents	√	√	√	√										
Proof of Residence – Player									√	√	√	√	√	√
Proof of Residence – Player's Parents	√	√	√	√										
Request for Approval of First Registration	√	√			√	√			√	√			√	√
Request for Approval of International Transfer			√	√			√	√			√	√		
Statement from Releasing Association														
Work Permit – Player	√		√											
Work Permit – Player's Parents	√	√	√	√										