

# Eastern Suburbs AFC Disciplinary Code

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## **PREAMBLE**

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At Eastern Suburbs AFC we welcome players from all walks of life, and appreciate that all of our members and their whanau join with good intentions. All members are expected to do their best to treat both themselves and others with respect under the guidelines and rules provided by the Club, Northern Region Football, and New Zealand Football.

As a community club, we know all members are engaged through a shared passion for football and genuine care for the people involved. Eastern Suburbs AFC is committed to supporting everyone in the ESAFC Community including players, coaches, volunteers, families, and supporters to participate in an environment that is respectful, safe, and fair.

Despite the good intentions of all involved, problems do sometimes arise. When people breach policies designed to ensure the fair conduct, safety, and wellbeing of others we acknowledge that it is important to respond calmly, promptly, and with thought to all aspects of a situation. People are entitled to raise concerns or complaints, and to have these addressed in a fair and timely manner.

The following documents lists Eastern Suburbs AFC values and behaviours which we feel are pinnacle in creating a safe and enjoyable football environment for all involved. In the event of any breach of code of conduct or other serious misconduct we expect that all members act in the best interests of the Club by working to informally resolve or to escalate with a formal complaint.

### **Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

Eastern Suburbs AFC recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document. As a club we are committed to upholding the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and upholding the principles of partnership, protection, and participation.

As a club we are embarking on a journey to grow and embed a culture of diversity and inclusion, which contributes to making football the most inclusive sport in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## PURPOSE

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The purpose of this document is to ensure all players, volunteers, coaches, supporters, and families involved at Eastern Suburbs AFC are aware of the expected behaviours and attitudes to ensure a safe and enjoyable footballing environment.

As a community club it is important that all participants take part with our youngest and most vulnerable members in mind.

The document will cover undesirable behaviours, serious misconduct, and the potential implications of such. These actions are considered unacceptable in any instance, most specifically in and around training and game environments.

Eastern Suburbs AFC aim to support a low-level resolution in the first instance for all applicable situations, with clear guidance given to deal with more serious breaches and misconduct. The Club will ensure an approach to any alleged misconduct is fair, including enabling culturally appropriate responses and processes.

All information in this document considers best practice *Safeguarding* and *Working with Children* policies in place at New Zealand Football level. In some instances the club may be required to adhere to or request for Northern Region Football or New Zealand Football guidance.

## CORE LILYWHITE BEHAVIOURS & VALUES

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“Being a Lilywhite” is our guiding document for behaviours both on and off the pitch. Football is more than results and tactics boards; it is a powerful vehicle for supporting cognitive and behavioural skills in young people. Tying into the Climate of Development from Aktive’s Good Sports initiative, our 4 behaviours are designed to help create positive and uplifting environments for all players who are a part of Eastern Suburbs AFC.

“Being a Lilywhite” encompasses four key aspects which we feel are important in each individual’s footballing journey:

- i. **HUMILITY:** Show respect, be humble, be honest, and show manners
- ii. **CONTAGIOUS ENERGY:** Bring energy, show commitment, enthusiasm, and healthy competitiveness
- iii. **WE NOT ME:** Understand the ‘team first’ mentality, the importance of unity & belonging, and the strength that comes with winning and losing together
- iv. **GROW THROUGH IT:** Always be open minded & resilient, with emphasis on working hard to continue learning

We understand that developing these skills is like learning on a pitch, it takes time, practice, and support from coaches, peers, and parents on the sideline. As a young player joins our club we welcome their entire family into our community. We need Lilywhites on and off the field to help maintain positive and uplifting environments for all.

For parents and coaches we encourage you to promote the 4 behaviours of a Lilywhite in yourself, our community, and in your children playing for the club. For more information about supporting our young players, we encourage you to read about Good Sports and look through the Good Sports Spine to learn about how you can support your child to be the best they can on and off the field.

For more information please go to <https://aktive.org.nz/what-we-do/good-sports/> or reach out to the club.

# GOOD SPORTS SPINE®

The Good Sports Spine is a tool to help parents, coaches, teachers and sport administrators understand how they impact children's sport experiences. The two different 'climates' should be seen as opposite ends of a continuum. To support children to have positive sporting experiences, adults should aim to always fall under the Climate of Development.



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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Eastern Suburbs AFC is committed to providing football in a fun, safe, and respectful environment for all participants. We recognise children's right to be free from all forms of abuse, and acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard them. This policy is in line with New Zealand Football guidelines and outlines the actions taken by ESAFC to protect children and vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all Eastern Suburbs AFC employees, contractors, and volunteers who have regular contact with a child or vulnerable adult in the course of their duties. This includes coaches, club officials, and volunteers.

Safeguarding is the term for protective measures taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, prevent risk of injury or harm from taking place, and being ready to respond if we're concerned that harm may be happening. This policy outlines the measures that ESAFC will take to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and the process it will follow in the event of any concerns being raised.

### **General Training & Match Day Guidelines**

Coaches and volunteers should:

- Ensure activities are age appropriate
- Use positive and age appropriate language
- Ensure physical contact is relevant and appropriate to the activity
- Ensure any filming/photography is appropriate and gain parent/caregiver consent
- Always ensure another adult, or at minimum another child, is present or if not possible ensure any meetings take place in an open and public space
- Ensure that all relationships are respectful and relevant to the football environment

Coaches and volunteers will not:

- Leave children unsupervised or out of sight
- Engage in any intimate or overfamiliar relationships
- Engage in one-on-one digital communication other than for relevant coach/athlete feedback
- Intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, or undermine
- Bathe or change in the same areas

## **Protocols for Transporting Children or Vulnerable Adults**

- Hold a full NZ driver's licence or approved equivalent
- Refrain from consuming alcohol or drugs (illegal or prescription where they might impair the driver's ability to drive safely) prior to or during the journey
- Ensure that any vehicles used have a current WOF, are appropriately insured and that passengers do not exceed the permitted maximum capacity
- Ensure that seat belts are worn
- Adhere to speed limits
- Gain the parents'/caregivers' written consent for their child or vulnerable adult to be transported in another adult's car
- Advise parents/caregivers of pick-up/drop-off locations and expected departure/arrival times
- Provide contact details of key staff to children and vulnerable adults, their parents and/or caregivers.

## **Safety Checking of Club Personnel**

Eastern Suburbs AFC will ensure that all club personnel are police vetted, including coach and administration staff. Individuals being vetted will complete a NZ Police Vet and provide identification documents to the club's safeguarding officer. Refusing to undertake police vetting (or failing the vetting) will result in ineligibility to work with children or vulnerable adults at the club.

## **Protocols for Handling Allegations of Suspected Abuse**

Eastern Suburbs AFC will respond to allegations of suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse in a manner which ensures the child's or vulnerable adult's safety is the first and paramount consideration. This includes any instances where an allegation is made against Club personnel.

All concerns will be reported to the designated Safeguarding Advisor at Northern Region Football, or to the NZF Safeguarding Manager. Contact details are available on the [NZF website](#), where there is a flowchart which outlines the process to follow if abuse is suspected. The NZF and Federation Safeguarding team will then advise the club on next steps.

All concerns or allegations of sexual abuse, or if an immediate response is required to ensure the child's or vulnerable adult's safety will be reported immediately to the NZ Police.

For further information about safeguarding you can refer to [NZ Football's Guidelines for Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults](#).

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN

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Eastern Suburbs AFC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and will act to ensure that a safe environment is maintained for all children within its responsibility. Alongside ensuring all club coaches and volunteers work within this policy, ESAFC will also ensure any members employed by or contracted to the club undertake regular police vetting processes.

Any incidents which you feel may cause harm to children or young people and/or goes against club disciplinary policy or code of conduct should be reported as soon as possible to the club through the methods listed later in this document. Any issues reported will be dealt with swiftly by the club, either through club disciplinary processes or with support from Northern Region Football and/or New Zealand Football.

All club coaches and volunteers should apply a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity. The following protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and boundaries in a range of situations:

- Activities should be appropriate for age and development stage
- Use positive and age appropriate language when in the presence of children
- Create a safe and open environment minimal of pressure
- Exercise common sense
- Do not send children off to train alone and out of sight/supervision
- Ensure children are using appropriate equipment and protective gear
- Ensure all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity
- Do not engage in any intimate, overly-familiar, or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18
- Ensure that any filming or photography is appropriate and in public areas
- Do not drink alcohol in the presence of children, or offer alcohol to anybody under the age of 18 under any circumstance
- Do not engage in one-to-one digital communication with a child, other than for administration or relevant coach/player feedback
- Do not allow players, coaches, spectators, or family members to engage in any form of bullying behaviour

All participants should:

- Avoid private or unobserved situations where you may be alone with a child; always have another adult present, or at minimum another child
- Ensure to knock and announce yourself prior to entering a changing room, and try to have another adult present
- Avoid driving a child unaccompanied; if this is not practical then have the child sit in the back seat
- Do not invite or encourage children to your home
- Always have another adult present when staying anywhere overnight
- Take extra care to protect yourself against undue risk or situations which could be misread



## **PHYSICAL ASSAULT, VIOLENCE, OR ABUSE**

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Eastern Suburbs AFC will not tolerate any form of misconduct by players, coaches, club staff, volunteers, spectators, or other sporting participants.

Any participant who is proven to have taken part in physical assault, violence, or abuse will be subject to sanctions as listed later in this document.

Violent conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Deliberately punching, kicking, hitting, or otherwise physically injuring another person
- Intentionally spitting at another person
- Involvement in a fight or brawl
- Excessive force, brutality, or intention to harm another player while on the field
- Any attempt to physically intimidate another person

If you witness anything which you feel could be categorised as or contribute to the above behaviour, please contact the club through the below channels.

## **OFFENSIVE OR INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR**

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Eastern Suburbs AFC will not tolerate any form of offensive or intimidating behaviour by players, coaches, club staff, volunteers, spectators, or other sporting participants.

Any participant who is proven to have intentionally intimidated another person will be subject to sanctions as listed later in this document.

Offensive or intimidating behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Threatening another person in any way, including in person or through digital communication
- Insulting another person in any way, specifically through offensive gesture or language
- Attempting to bribe, fix, or falsify information which could interfere with the fair nature of a game
- Harassment or continued discrimination towards a person
- Persistently targeting the referee or a member of the opposition, either verbally or physically, in a way which demeans or excessively criticises their actions
- Bullying, including yelling, screaming, isolating, ignoring, continuously criticising, or any other behaviour which creates a high pressure or hostile situation for another individual
- Intentionally inciting hatred or violence at a game or training

If you witness anything which you feel could be categorised as or contribute to the above behaviour, please contact the club through the below channels.

## **RACISM OR DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR**

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Eastern Suburbs AFC will not tolerate any form of racism or discriminatory behaviour by players, coaches, club staff, volunteers, spectators, or other sporting participants.

Any participant who is proven to have taken part in such will be subject to sanctions as listed later in this document.

Racist or discriminatory behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Publicly disparaging, discriminating against, or denigrating someone on account of race, colour, language, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic or ethnic origin
- Paraphernalia which displays racist or discriminating views
- Carrying out any form of offensive or intimidating behaviour towards a person because of their race, colour, language, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic or ethnic origin
- Selecting or refusing to select players, teams, referees, volunteers, or any other club participants due to their race, colour, language, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic or ethnic origin
- Using derogatory language in reference to a specific team, player, referee, or other participant because of their physical characteristics or specific disability

If you witness anything which you feel could be categorised as or contribute to the above behaviour, please contact the club through the below channels.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT - PLAYERS**

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We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game

Games and trainings are for players to have fun with their friends while learning the basic technical, physical, tactical, and social skills that come with football

It is imperative that all players follow this code of conduct at all times

### **I WILL:**

- Play by the Rules and within the spirit of the game and with sportsmanship
- Accept decisions made by the coach with respect
- Treat everyone with respect at all times, and avoid verbal, physical, or racial abuse
- Set an example of *Lilywhites Behaviour* by being humble in victory and dignified in defeat
- Bring my personal best attitude and energy to games / trainings
- Respect all equipment and playing facilities, and not hang on goals or nets
- Give my best effort each time I play (maximum effort = maximum enjoyment)
- Play to enjoy every moment on the field, even when things are difficult
- Be present and focus the way I play, regardless of the score

**I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by Eastern Suburbs AFC. I MAY BE:**

- Issued with a verbal warning from a club representative
- Required to meet with relevant Director of Football
- Stood down for a period of time and placed on a good behaviour timeline
- Required to leave the club

### **By Signing this Code of Conduct:**

- We commit to providing the best possible positive experience and environment to play football
- You commit to acting in a way which makes both yourself and the club proud, on and off the field

## **CODE OF CONDUCT – PARENTS, GUARDIANS, SPECTATORS**

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We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game

Eastern Suburbs are committed to ensuring football can be enjoyed in a safe, positive environment

In-House football is for players to have fun with their friends while learning the basic technical, physical, tactical, and social skills that come with football

It is imperative that spectators and parents/caregivers follow this code of conduct at all times

### **I WILL:**

- Remember that players play for FUN and to learn, not to win
- Applaud effort and good play; winning is not the most important outcome
- Always model good behaviours and attitudes, while showing respect for others
- Let the coach/referee do their job; it is not my job to confuse the players by telling them what to do
- Encourage the players to respect the opposition, the coach/referee, and their teammates
- Never criticise a player for making a mistake – mistakes are central to learning
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, racist, or abusive language or behaviour

### **I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by Eastern Suburbs AFC. I MAY BE:**

- Issued with a verbal warning from a club representative
- Required to meet with the Club Operations Manager
- Required to meet with the Club Executive
- Asked to leave the match venue
- Requested by the club not to attend future games
- Stood down for a period and placed on a good behaviour timeline
- Required to leave the club, along with any dependents

We appreciate your support as we work alongside New Zealand Football and Northern Region Football to stamp out abuse and model positive behaviours for our up-and-coming Lilywhites

## INFORMAL RESOLUTION

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Members are always encouraged, where comfortable, to raise problems directly with the person involved unless there are safety concerns or the issue is too serious to try and resolve in this way. At Eastern Suburbs AFC we encourage a '*see something, say something*' mentality and support volunteers to advocate for their players in a calm and rational manner.

If you believe that saying something at the time of an incident could in any way cause the situation to escalate or put a participant in danger, then please refrain from engagement. In this instance, please remove yourself and others from the situation and contact the club through the below channels.

If you have a query or are unsure whether somebody's actions were correct please feel free to contact your volunteer grade coordinator or relevant section chair in the first instance.

If you would like to discuss the rules of a competition or any behaviour/situation that you did not feel comfortable to intervene please contact the club administration team within 48 hours.

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS & INCIDENT REPORTING

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Where a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached informally, or a there is a serious alleged breach of the disciplinary code please raise with the administration team or club chair person within 24 hours.

If an incident is serious or involves a member(s) of another club, you will be asked to complete a formal Incident Report. A template for this can be found on our [website](#).

If the incident involves a member(s) of another club we may be required to report to Northern Region Football and take guidance from them to rectify the situation. As a club affiliated to Northern Region Football and New Zealand Football, we are required to take direction from their disciplinary committee when any incident occurs between clubs.

In the event of an incident which occurs internally at Eastern Suburbs AFC the club will work promptly to resolve by taking steps such as:

- Holding a meeting with the individuals involved
- Requesting an apology is given, where appropriate
- Any other action considered to be appropriate, in consultation with the person(s) involved

Incidents will be dealt with at operational, chair, or executive level depending on the seriousness of a complaint/allegation.

When considering the complaint/allegation, the club will consider:

- What the complaint/allegation is about
- Whether there is basis for the complaint/allegation
- How serious or urgent the complaint/allegation is
- Whether there is a set process or precedent for the type of complaint/allegation
- Culturally appropriate processes depending on the person(s) involved
- Whether the complaint/allegation may indicate a broader problem
- What risks the complaint/allegation raises for the Club
- What kind of resolution the complainant is seeking
- Any other relevant information

## DECISIONS & SANCTIONS

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Allegations of a breach of disciplinary code or other serious misconduct may be dealt with by different levels of the organisation depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation:

- Operations and administrations personnel
- Club chairperson or relevant board member
- Executive committee

In the process of rectifying a situation, the Club will ensure a fair process including:

- The person complained about, or in alleged breach, is informed of the allegation(s)
- The person complained about is given reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegation
- All explanations and viewpoints are considered prior to any conclusion reached

The outcome of a complaint/allegation will be communicated to parties directly involved.

By being involved at Eastern Suburbs AFC, all players, staff, coaches, volunteers, spectators, and families must understand the importance of behaving appropriately in all situations. All club participants in breach of the disciplinary code, code of conduct, or having found to have been involved in serious misconduct may experience sanctions such as:

- Issued with a verbal warning from a club representative
- Required to meet with relevant Club Director of Football
- Required to meet with the Club Administration Personnel
- Required to meet with the Club Chair
- Required to meet with the Club Executive
- Asked to leave the match venue
- Requested by the club not to attend future games
- Stood down for a period and placed on a good behaviour timeline
- Required to leave the club, along with any dependents

Where the Club is unable to reach a suitable solution with the person(s) involved, or if a participant from another club is involved, the complaint/allegation may be referred to the disciplinary committee at Northern Region Football or New Zealand Football.