

Ballymena United Football Club Anti-Discrimination Policy

Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by, everyone equally.

Our commitment is to confront and eliminate discrimination, whether by reason of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

Ballymena United Football Club, in all our activities, will not discriminate or in any way treat anyone less favourably on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

These commitments apply to;

- Advertising for volunteers
- Selection of candidates for volunteers
- Courses
- External coaching and activities
- Team selections
- Appointments to any titled positions

Ballymena United Football Club will not tolerate sexual or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal and will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it might occur.

Ballymena United Football Club is committed to the development of the programme of ongoing training and awareness raising events and activities aimed at promoting the eradication of discrimination within its own organisation and within the wider football community.

Ballymena United Football Club (the Club) is utterly opposed to any manifestation of racism in print by actions or verbally on or off the pitch. Consequently the Club fully endorses UEFA's ten point plan of action for professional football clubs, which calls for clubs to;

1. Issue a statement saying the club will not tolerate racism, spelling out the action it will take against those engaged in racist chanting. The statement should be printed in all match programmes and displayed permanently and prominently around the ground.

RESPONSE

The Club has played an active role in anti-racist and anti-sectarian activities mounted by both the Irish FA and NIFL and has made it clear that it will not tolerate racist behaviour and/or chanting from any spectator (home or visiting).

Furthermore, the Club match programme and website routinely confirms in writing that it is a criminal offence, for which spectators may be arrested, to take part in racist behaviour and that persons convicted of such offences will be the subject of exclusion orders banning them from football grounds. The Club has actively supported and prominently displayed posters for 'Football for All', 'Kick it Out' and other relevant campaigns. Ground Regulations outlining the code of conduct expected of supporters in respect of racist behaviour are on display around the ground.

2. Make public address announcements condemning racist behaviour at matches.

RESPONSE

Public address announcements are made prior to each match condemning such incidents and reinforcing the Club's policy and its determination to take the strongest possible action against any individual or group responsible.

3. Make it a condition for season ticket holders that they do not take part in racist abuse.

RESPONSE

An explicit statement of the Club's policy in this respect appears on all season ticket application forms as a condition of sale. Our commitment to the ten-point plan is also printed on the season ticket card.

4. Take action to prevent the sale of racist literature inside and outside the ground.

RESPONSE

The Club, in consultation with Mid and East Antrim Council and the PSNI, will take all relevant action in respect of preventing the sale of such literature inside the ground and will support the prosecution of any group or individual suspected of being engaged in such activities.

5. Take disciplinary action against players who engage in racial abuse.

RESPONSE

The Club will take appropriate action against any player, or other employee, proven to have engaged in racist abuse or behaviour. The Club will exclude any volunteer engaged in activities under the control of the Club, in the event of him/her being proven to have engaged in racist behaviour and/or abuse.

6. Contact other clubs to make sure they understand the Club's policy on racism.

RESPONSE

Ballymena United Football Club communicate annually to member clubs and the Irish FA, in writing, it's commitment to anti-discrimination.

7. Encourage a common strategy between stewards and Police for dealing with racist abuse.

RESPONSE

The Club already operates in partnership with PSNI in respect of all aspects of match planning, crowd behaviour/control at and the prevention of racist behaviour and/or abuse is addressed.

8. Remove any racist graffiti from the ground as a matter of urgency.

RESPONSE

In conjunction with Mid and East Antrim Council, any racist graffiti would be removed as a matter of urgency.

9. Adopt an equal opportunities policy in relation to employment and service provision.

RESPONSE

The Club is an equal opportunities employer and compliant with the relevant Northern Ireland legislations. We have a separate equal opportunities policy.

10. Work with all groups and agencies, such as the Police, Players Union, supporters, schools, sponsors, local businesses and voluntary organisations to develop pro-active programmes and make progress to raise awareness of campaigning to eliminate racial abuse and discrimination.

RESPONSE

As previously stated, the Club plays an active role in activities promoted by the Irish FA and NIFL and will continue to do so. Our Youth Development programme also incorporates specific learning for youth players with regard to anti-discrimination.

Signed on behalf of Ballymena United Football Club:



Matthew Armstrong
Chairman
January 2023