YFC Behaviour Policy

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. YFC is committed to providing young people with opportunities to gain experience, grow, and develop into responsible members of the community. We strive to create an enjoyable and supportive environment where positive behaviour is promoted to ensure the smooth running of all activities. By setting clear expectations, we lay the foundation for a respectful, safe, and engaging experience for all members.

   1.2. This policy outlines the behaviour standards expected of YFC members and provides guidance for event organisers in addressing behavioural issues. It applies to all YFC activities, including club meetings, travel, social events, and competitions, at Club, County, Area, and National levels. All members and their guests are expected to adhere to this policy.

   1.3. This policy extends to both real-world and digital/online interactions. Comments or images shared on social media and other online platforms can have profound consequences, including disciplinary action, legal repercussions, and reputational damage to both individual members and YFC as a whole.

   1.4. This policy should be read in conjunction with YFC Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Drugs and Alcohol, and Social Media Policies....

2. **Expected Behaviour & Conduct**
   2.1. All members must act with respect, whether online or face-to-face, towards all YFC members, staff, and the general public.

   2.2. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, and inappropriate language or behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include violence, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, cyberbullying and drug use (this list is not exhaustive). Refer to Section 6 for details on consequences of violations.

   2.3. Members must uphold the values of YFC, including teamwork, integrity, and responsibility.

   2.4. All YFC events and social gatherings should be conducted in a manner that reflects positively on YFC.

   2.5. Members should be mindful that their online presence may be viewed as representing YFC, even on personal accounts.

3. **Establishing Behaviour Standards**
   3.1. Setting and agreeing on acceptable behaviour standards is crucial. YFC members should actively participate in creating a club-wide agreement to encourage ownership and accountability. An effective agreement should:
      3.1.1. Be developed collaboratively with YFC members.

3.1.2. Be agreed upon and upheld by YFC members, YFC club & county officers, YFC staff and the parents/guardians of YFC members.
3.1.3. Contain a concise and clear set of rules.
3.1.4. Use positive and accessible language.
3.1.5. Apply to all YFC events and situations, including competitions, social gatherings, trips and online communications.
3.1.6. Be effectively communicated to all members, including new recruits and parents/guardians.
3.1.7. Be consistently and fairly upheld by YFC club, county and NFYFC officers, and staff.

3.1.8. Reflect the YFC Values and YFC Code of Conduct.

4. **Maintaining positive conduct**

4.1. Most YFC members act responsibly and positively represent their club, county, and YFC as a whole. However, unacceptable behaviour may occasionally occur, requiring action from event organisers.

4.2. All YFC events, including meetings, trips, and competitions, require proactive planning to anticipate and manage potential behavioural issues.

4.3. Ensuring consistency, fairness, and proportionality in responses to misconduct is essential.

5. **Unacceptable Behaviour and Disciplinary Action**

Alcohol & Drugs

5.1. Members must adhere to legal drinking age requirements and local licensing laws.

5.2. Excessive alcohol consumption leading to inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Refer to Section 6 for details on consequences of violations. All incidents related to alcohol misuse will be reviewed, and appropriate actions will be taken where necessary.

5.3. Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs at any YFC event is prohibited. All incidents related to illegal drug use will be reported to the police. YFC will review all incidents, and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken where necessary.

T-Shirt Slogans and Club & Event Branding

5.4. T-shirt slogans should be appropriate, inclusive, and reflect the values of YFC. Club branding should maintain professionalism and uphold a positive public image of YFC.

5.5. YFC has a nationwide zero-tolerance policy regarding club clothing or merchandise that contains words and/or images of a sexualised, misogynistic, or misandrist nature. This also applies to content that promotes, endorses, or glorifies excessive alcohol consumption or discrimination towards individuals, locations, or reputations.

5.6. Political statements of clothing. Text or images should reflect the YFC Values and be consistent with the charity commission guidelines concerning campaigning which avoid party politics.

Social Media

5.7. Unacceptable behaviour includes (but is not limited to);

- Cyberbullying
- Trolling
- Harassment
- Hate speech
- Collusion or cheating
- Posting or reposting of harmful content.

Unacceptable representation includes anything that may bring YFCs into disrepute or threaten member safety.

5.8. **Disciplinary action may be taken in response to the following behaviours:**

5.8.1. Abusing a Position of Trust (Sexual Offences Act 2003).
5.8.2. Acts or decisions that harm the reputation of YFC members, YFC clubs, YFC county federations and/or the NFYFC. (use of social media, t-shirt slogans, alcohol fuelled conduct are particular topics).
5.8.3. Assault.
5.8.4. Bullying.
5.8.5. Coercion.
5.8.6. Cyberflashing or sharing/threatening to share intimate images (Online Safety Act 2023).
5.8.7. Discrimination.
5.8.8. Drug or alcohol abuse (refer to NFYFC's Drug and Alcohol Policy).
5.8.9. Drugs possession or drug use.
5.8.10. Excessive alcohol consumption leading to inappropriate behaviour.
5.8.11. Failure to report or prevent physical violence.
5.8.12. Failure to report a safeguarding concern or failure to act on safeguarding information reported to you.
5.8.13. Grooming.
5.8.14. Harassment.
5.8.15. Illegal activities.
5.8.16. Inappropriate or abusive language.
5.8.17. Intimidation.
5.8.18. Provocation or goading leading to conflict.
5.8.19. Reckless behaviour around motor vehicles.
5.8.20. Safeguarding: Non-compliance with the safeguarding policy or procedures or event-specific safeguarding arrangements/requests.
5.8.21. Sexual assault, including sexual activity without consent.
5.8.22. Sexual harassment.
5.8.23. Sexual activity in the presence of a child (child = any person under the age of 18).
5.8.24. Theft.
5.8.25. T-Shirt Slogans and Club & Event Branding. Breaches of the YFC zero tolerance policy (detailed above).
5.8.26. Vandalism.
5.8.27. Violence.

This is a list of examples, and it is not exhaustive.

6. **Consequences**

6.1. Any breach of this policy will result in an investigation by the county federation leadership. The county leadership team may escalate the case to the NFYFC.
6.2. Any beach of this policy will usually lead to a temporary suspension whilst the individual(s) and the incident(s) are in the investigation stage.
6.2.1. Note: Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt or innocence. It is a tool used to protect all YFC members – both the accused and all other YFC members whilst the facts of an incident are established.

6.3. Disciplinary actions for individuals may include verbal/written warnings, suspension, or removal from the club, depending on the severity of the misconduct.
6.4. Other actions for individuals may include undertaking learning or additional training,

6.5. Disciplinary actions for YFC clubs include verbal/written warnings, suspension, or loss of entitlement to attend YFC social events, YFC meetings, YFC competitions or other YFC events, depending on the severity of the misconduct.

6.6. The county federation and the NFYFC retain the right to disaffiliate a YFC Club for decisions taken that adversely affect the reputation of the YFC. This means the club and its members will no longer be part of the NFYFC or County Federations. For example, this will mean: The right to use the name Young Farmers Clubs (or YFC) will be lost, insurance cover withdrawn, exclusion of all YFC activities and a report made to the Charity Commission.

6.7. The severity of an incident and the history of the individuals involved will be considered when determining appropriate actions.

6.8. **Low level conduct incidents - consequences**

6.8.1. Early interventions are encouraged to create a safer and more positive experience for everyone involved in YFC activities.

6.8.2. Low-level concerns may arise about the behaviour of a YFC member . A low-level concern is any concern that is part of a spectrum of behaviour or the manner a YFC member has acted in a way that:

6.8.2.1. Is inconsistent with code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct inside and outside of YFC activities **which can be dealt with at the time**.

6.8.2.2. Is not considered serious enough for referral to be made to a behaviour panel because this is a low level **and a** first 'offence' **which can be dealt with at the time**.

6.8.2.3. Is inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour **which can be dealt with at the time**.

6.8.2.4. Is behaviour that might be considered inappropriate because of the circumstances (the place people are, the people they are with) **which can be dealt with at the time**.

6.8.2.5. Examples of such behaviour could include:

6.8.2.5.1. Using inappropriate language (sexualised, intimidating or offensive including swearing and similar).

6.8.2.5.2. Use of social media, which may affect the reputation of self or others, or the reputation of the YFC club/county federation or the NFYFC.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Adhering to and upholding the spirit and intent of this policy enables YFC members create a positive, respectful, and enjoyable environment for all.

8. Review and Monitoring

8.1. Feedback and intelligence from young people, those in leadership roles, staff, and other stakeholders will inform policy improvements.

8.2. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date with legal and best practice developments.

NFYFC
Apr25

Procedure: Responding to inappropriate conduct

1. **Overview**
   1.1. This full procedure outlines the steps to address incidents of inappropriate behaviour within YFC, ensuring a fair, transparent, and efficient process. The outlined actions aim to uphold the integrity of the organisation while protecting its members. Its use fosters a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

2. **Confidentiality and Safeguarding**
   2.1. The process of investigating and responding to conduct/behaviour reports/concerns respects confidentiality; however, where a risk to a person is identified, the YFC safeguarding procedures will be followed.

   2.2. The safeguarding procedures include, when necessary, that information will be shared with relevant statutory authorities (for example LADO or police) as required in law. *Reminder that those in a position of trust have a duty to refer some types of incidents to the LADO and/or police or other statutory agency.*

   2.3. Where a risk is identified concerning the wellbeing (including mental wellbeing) of a person, the YFC will inform the person concerned that a referral should be made and will seek consent to make a referral to the correct and expert support service. If the identified risk is that the person is at immediate risk of harm or to harm others, the YFC will inform the relevant emergency service.

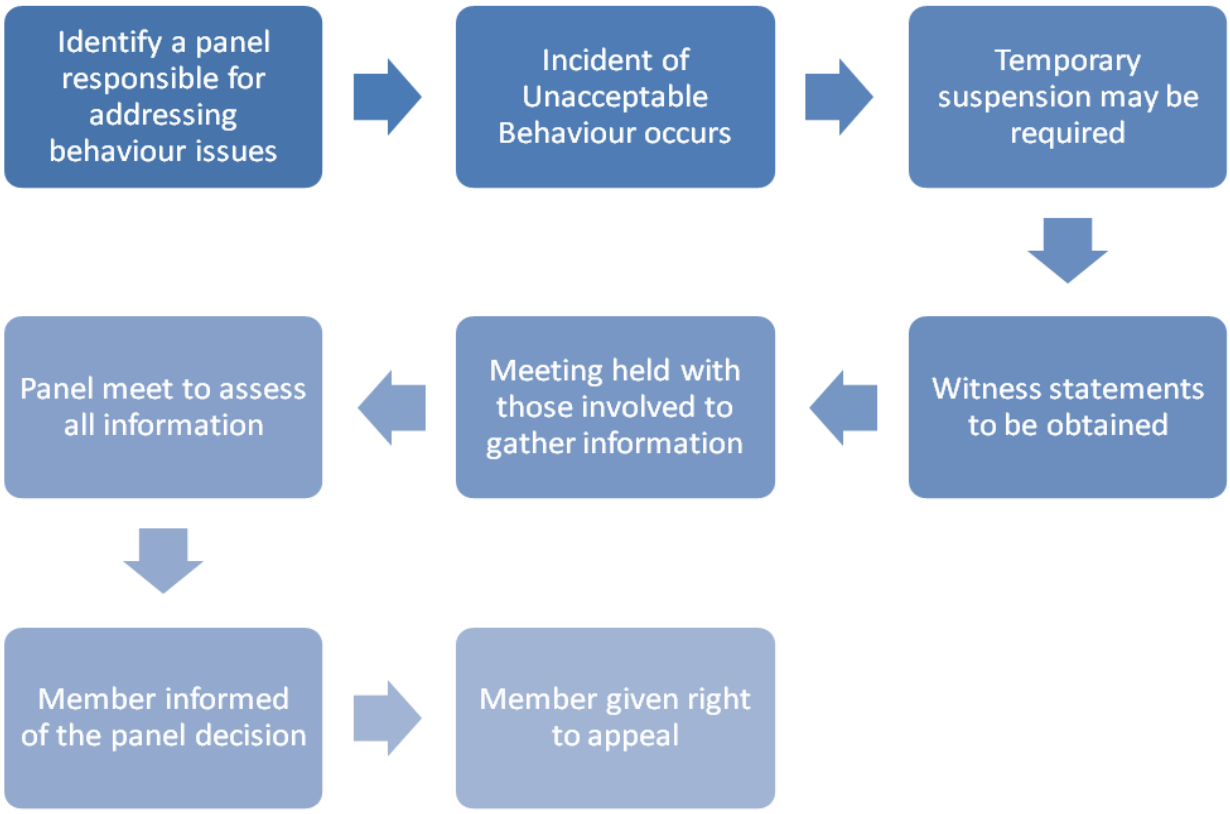
3. **Responding Low level conduct incidents**
   3.1. NOTE: Discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, violence, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and possession or use of illegal drugs is NEVER considered a low-level concern and will always be subject to a full behaviour panel process.

   3.2. Low level conduct incidents should be dealt with on the scene. For example, a YFC member being asked to moderate their conduct right away.
      3.2.1. A record of this intervention should be kept. Should the conduct occur again, or escalate after the first low level intervention, the record of the first intervention is critical to refer to.

   3.3. If a low-level incident occurs a second time within a given time, a formal written warning should be issued to the YFC member - to remain on record for 12 months.

   3.4. If a low-level incident occurs a third time, this is no longer low-level, and the full panel process should be applied, and the previous interventions should be disclosed to the behaviour panel.

4. **Summary of behaviour panel process**



5. **Establishing a Panel**
   - 5.1. At the beginning of each YFC year, county federations should form a disciplinary panel in anticipation of potential incidents.
   - 5.2. The panel should be diverse, consisting of a county officer, the county president, a safeguarding officer, and a management committee representative.
   - 5.3. To ensure impartiality, county staff members should not serve as panel members but will oversee administrative duties.
   - 5.4. Panel members must commit to confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest upon learning the details of an incident.
   - 5.5. Any attempts to influence or interfere with panel members will result in disciplinary action.

6. **Incident Reporting & Initial Response**
   - 6.1. If an incident occurs, the club officer, county staff member, or event organiser must document the details as soon as possible.
   - 6.2. Depending on severity, external authorities (e.g., police) may be involved.
   - 6.3. **At this stage, the accused member(s) may be suspended temporarily until a formal disciplinary meeting is convened. Reminder:** Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt or innocence. It is a tool used to protect all YFC members – both the accused and all other YFC members whilst the facts of an incident are established.
   - 6.4. During suspension, the member should be assigned a point of contact for updates.
   - 6.5. A formal notification letter should be sent, outlining the allegation and confirming the suspension.

7. **Information Gathering**
   - 7.1. Witness statements should be collected and documented using the provided template (Appendix 6).
   - 7.2. Evidence such as CCTV footage, photos, and social media content should be reviewed.
   - 7.3. All gathered information must remain confidential and accessible only to the panel.

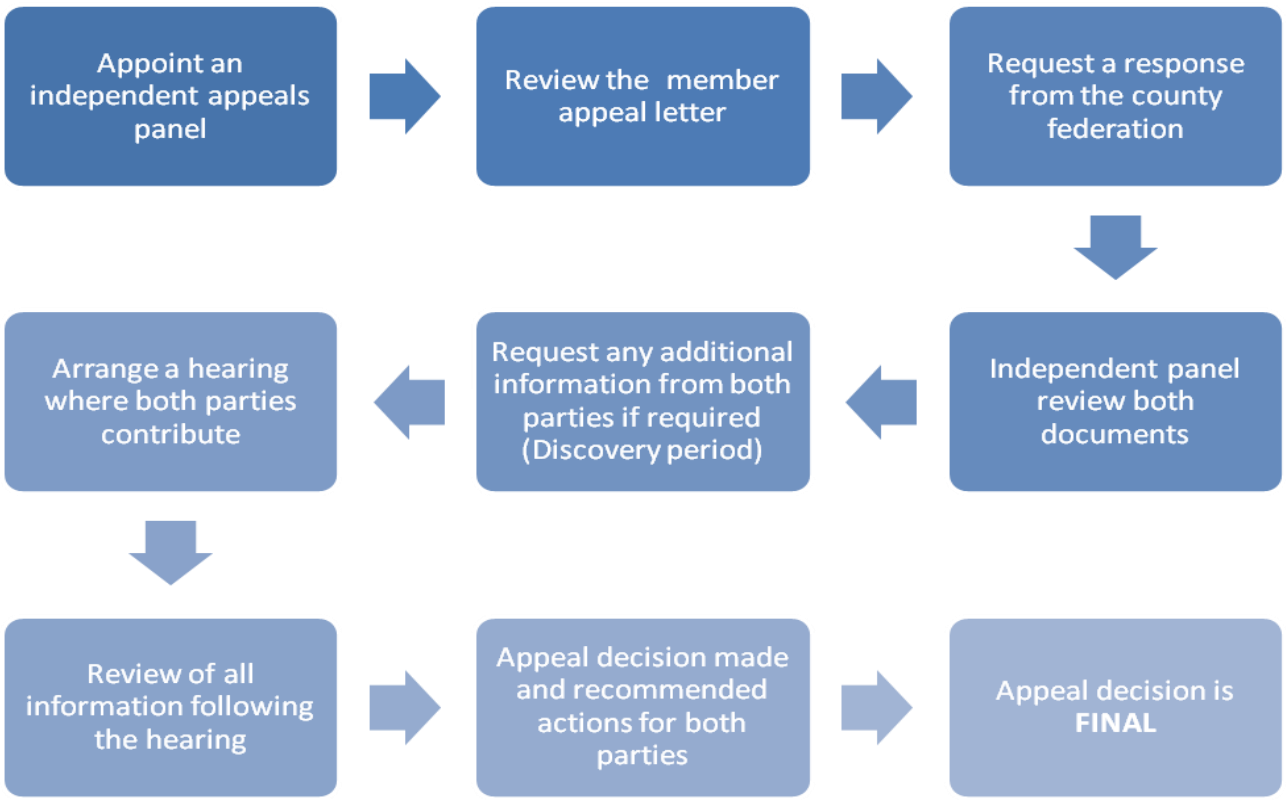
8. **Disciplinary Meeting**
   - 8.1. When the information gathering is complete, a disciplinary meeting must be arranged as soon as reasonably possible.
   - 8.2. The member should be given no less than 7 days notice of the disciplinary meeting
   - 8.3. The accused member has the right to present their case to the panel.
   - 8.4. They may be accompanied by another YFC member (18-28 years old) or, if under 18, a parent/guardian.
   - 8.5. Witnesses' identities should remain confidential, but their statements may be shared.
   - 8.6. The panel should critically assess all presented evidence, ensuring it is credible and free from malicious intent.

9. **Decision & Sanctions**
   - 9.1. The Disciplinary Panel must reach its agreed decision within 7 days of the panel meeting.
   - 9.2. After reviewing all information, the panel determines the appropriate sanction, if any.
   - 9.3. Previous misconduct records should only be considered after assessing the current incident.
   - 9.4. If the incident involves safeguarding concerns, alcohol/drug misuse, or bullying, relevant policies should be referenced.
   - 9.5. The Disciplinary Panel must reach its agreed decision within 7 days of the panel meeting and must communicate the outcome within a further 7 days.
   - 9.6.

10. **Sanctions include:**
    - 10.1. **Verbal Warning** – Recorded in the member's behaviour log.
    - 10.2. **Written Warning** – A formal warning documented in the member's file.
    - 10.3. **Event Ban** – Temporary exclusion from specific social or competition events.
    - 10.4. **Suspension from YFC Activities** – For a defined period (e.g., 3, 6, 12, or 24 months).
    - 10.5. **Permanent Ban** – Only applied in severe safeguarding cases as determined by external authorities (e.g., police, DBS).
    - 10.6. Any attempt to breach the ban will lead to further disciplinary action.
    - 10.7. NOTE: If a member is banned from all YFC activities, their membership record should be marked as 'banned ' on this SILO membership system.

11. **Communication of Decision**
    - 11.1. All sanctions must be communicated in writing, with copies stored for reference. As above, The Disciplinary Panel must reach its agreed decision within 7 days of the panel meeting and must communicate the outcome within a further 7 days.
    - 11.2. Members under 18 should have decisions conveyed to their parents/guardians.
    - 11.3. The communication must include the right to appeal
      - 11.3.1. Appeals to be received in writing within 14 days of the date of the outcome letter.
      - 11.3.2. The appeal letter should clearly set out the reason for the appeal and relief that is being sought.

12. **Right to Appeal**
    - 12.1. Members have 14 days from the date of the outcome letter to appeal.
    - 12.2. Appeal requests must be acknowledged within 3 working days.
    - 12.3. Appeals against a club decision are escalated to and heard at the county level.
    - 12.4. Appeals against a county decision are escalated to and heard by the NFYFC.



13. **Appeals Procedure:**
    - 13.1. **Panel Appointment** – The county federation or the NFYFC appoints an independent appeals panel.
    - 13.2. **Evidence Review** – The appeal letter and initial case records and supporting documents are assessed.
    - 13.3. **Response** – The club provides the county appeal panel with its rationale and justification of the decision made or the county provides the NFYFC appeal panel with its rationale and justification of the decision made.
    - 13.4. **Document Circulation** – All evidence is shared with appeal panel members.
    - 13.5. **Panel Review** – The panel may request additional information if necessary.
    - 13.6. **Appeal Hearing** – A formal hearing may be scheduled, where both parties present their cases.
    - 13.7. **Deliberation & Decision** – The panel reaches a verdict within 10 working days of the hearing.
    - 13.8. **Final Decision** communicated with 7 days of the panel reaching its verdict – the decision is communicated to both parties and is binding.
    - 13.9. **Case review and recommendations** – The panel may propose procedural improvements for YFC moving forward.
    - 13.10. **The decision of the NFYFC appeals panel is final and cannot be challenged further.**

14. This procedure ensures fairness, clarity, and efficiency in handling inappropriate behaviour within YFC, fostering a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

NFYFC
April 2025