

Shepshed Dynamo Y&J Club Discipline & Safeguarding Framework

For Coaches, Parents, Spectators & Players aged 5 –18

Aligned with FA Rules and Safeguarding Children principles. For internal club use. Always escalate serious matters to County FA / Statutory Agencies as required.

Key Principles

- **Child-centred & proportionate:** Sanctions must be age-appropriate, educational where possible, and consistent with safeguarding. Financial penalties are not imposed on youth players (club may be charged instead).
- **Location:** Applies at training, matches, on the way to/from training or matches, and anywhere when representing the club or bringing the club into disrepute — including online and via digital communications.
- **Physical contact between players:** A momentary shove, push or scuffle between players of similar age/size in the heat of play or training that does not involve striking, excessive force, intent to injure, or injury is **not** treated as Physical Assault or Violent Conduct requiring expulsion. It is managed under Unsporting Behaviour Conduct or as a coaching/behaviour matter (verbal warning / time-out / education). Clear intent, excessive force, repeated incidents, targeting, or any injury elevates the matter. Age and developmental stage of the players involved will always be taken into account.
- **Digital harassment:** Includes abusive, threatening, discriminatory, bullying or harassing messages or content sent via instant messaging, text message, email, social media, group chats, the internet or any other digital platform. Applies whether the content is public or private, and whether sent during or outside football activities. Screenshots / evidence should be preserved. Aggravated (discriminatory) digital content is treated under Aggravated Verbal or higher.
- **Aggravated:** Includes reference (express or implied) to protected characteristics (race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion/belief, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) — FA Rule E3.2. Standard minimum 10-match suspension for participants (mitigation possible down to 6).
- **Reporting:** Any assault, serious violent conduct, discrimination, digital harassment of a safeguarding nature, or other safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the Club Welfare Officer / Designated Safeguarding Officer and, where appropriate, County FA and/or Police / Children's Services. Remember, if a child is in immediate danger do not delay and contact the Police.

Incident Category Definitions

Unsporting behaviour	Minor misconduct: dissent (not abusive), minor pushing/pulling in challenge, delaying restart, showing lack of respect, minor foul language not directed at a person, persistent minor infringements.
Verbal Abuse	Offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures directed at a person (player, official, coach, spectator). Includes threats that are not immediately credible or accompanied by physical action.
Aggravated Verbal	Verbal abuse that includes reference (express or implied) to a protected characteristic, or is particularly severe/prolonged/targeted.
Digital Harassment	Abusive, threatening, bullying, harassing or intimidatory messages or content sent via instant messaging apps, text message, email, social media, group chats, forums, the internet or any other digital platform. Includes sharing images/videos without consent, doxxing, or persistent unwanted contact related to football activity. Aggravated (discriminatory) digital content is treated as Aggravated Verbal or higher.
Physical Assault / Violent Conduct	Use or attempted use of excessive force or brutality when not challenging for the ball; deliberate striking, kicking, head-butting, spitting, biting, or any contact intended to injure. Instant dismissal from the activity and further sanction.
Aggravated Physical	Physical assault that is discriminatory in nature, involves a weapon/object, causes injury, is against a match official, a child, or is premeditated/group attack.

1. PLAYERS (aged 5–18)

Incident	1st Offence	2nd Offence	3rd / Further	Notes / Location
Unsporting Behaviour (incl. minor shove / push between players)	Verbal warning by coach + education / reminder of Players code of conduct. Parent/carer informed.	Written warning. Possible 1-match / session exclusion from selection. Meeting with coach & parent/carer.	Formal disciplinary meeting. 2–4 match suspension from matches/training. Behaviour contract. Possible referral to County FA if persistent.	Applies to training, match, travel, club activities. Minor peer shove managed here — not expulsion. Age and stage of development considered.
Verbal Abuse	Immediate removal from activity if ongoing. Written warning. Parent/carer meeting. Possible 1–2 match ban. Apology required.	2–4 match suspension. Formal meeting with Club Welfare Officer / Committee. Behaviour contract.	Longer suspension (4–8 matches or more). Possible club membership review. Referral to County FA.	Anywhere representing club. Report to CWO. If vs official → higher end.
Aggravated Verbal (discriminatory)	Immediate removal. Minimum 6–10 match suspension (FA guideline). Parent/carer meeting. Report to County FA.	Longer ban (12+ matches or fixed period). Membership review. Strong consideration of expulsion from club. Report to County FA.	Expulsion from club + report to County FA / FA. Possible safeguarding referral.	Zero tolerance. Protected characteristic language. Anywhere (including digital).
Digital Harassment (messaging / social media / online)	Written warning. Parent/carer meeting. Education on online conduct. Possible temporary removal from team chat groups. Evidence preserved. Apology required where appropriate.	2–4 match suspension. Formal meeting with CWO / Committee. Behaviour contract including digital conduct. Removal from club digital channels if relevant.	Longer suspension or membership review. Referral to County FA. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met (e.g. threats, stalking, image-based abuse).	Applies to any digital platform. Preserve screenshots/evidence. Report to CWO same day. Discriminatory digital content escalates to Aggravated Verbal.
Physical Assault / Violent Conduct	INSTANT DISMISSAL from the activity. Immediate suspension pending investigation. Parent/carer informed. Report to CWO & County FA. Typical	Extended suspension or expulsion. Formal hearing. Strong likelihood of club expulsion + County FA charge.	Expulsion from club. Full report to County FA / FA. Possible police involvement.	Exception: Momentary peer shove without excess force/injury stays under Unsporting behaviour. Intent, force, injury or

	sanction 3+ matches (or more); may be longer depending on severity/injury/intent.			targeting = this category. Anywhere. Age and development considered.
Aggravated Physical	INSTANT DISMISSAL. Immediate indefinite suspension pending investigation. Report to Police if appropriate, County FA, safeguarding agencies. Likely lengthy ban.	Expulsion + maximum available sanctions. Full multi-agency reporting.	Player excluded after 2 nd offence.	Highest severity. Against officials, children, discriminatory, or causing injury. Anywhere.

Important note on physical contact between players: Football involves contact. A shove or push between players of similar age in a competitive moment that is not excessive, does not cause injury, and is not intended to harm is managed as Unsporting Behaviour Conduct (warning / education / selection consequence). It is **not** automatic expulsion. Coaches and officials must still address it firmly and consistently, taking into account the age and developmental stage of the players involved. Any escalation, injury, or clear violent intent moves it into Physical Assault with instant dismissal and formal process.

2. COACHES / TEAM OFFICIALS / MANAGERS

Incident	1st Offence	2nd Offence	3rd / Further	Notes / Location
Unsporting Behaviour (dissent, poor touchline behaviour)	Verbal warning from Club Official / CWO. Reminder of Code of Conduct & Grassroots Code. Recorded.	Written warning. Possible temporary removal from touchline / coaching duties for 1–2 matches. Meeting with Committee.	Formal suspension from all coaching / matchday duties (e.g. 4+ matches or fixed period). Behaviour contract. Possible removal of coaching role.	Training, match, travel, club events. Role model expected.
Verbal Abuse	Immediate removal from activity if ongoing. Written warning. Meeting with CWO / Chair. Possible 2–4 match touchline ban.	Longer suspension from coaching (e.g. 6–12 matches or fixed period). Formal hearing. Possible suspension of coaching qualifications referral.	Removal from coaching role / club membership. Report to County FA.	Especially serious if directed at children or officials.
Aggravated Verbal	Immediate removal. Minimum 6–10 match suspension from all football activity (FA guideline). Report to County FA. DBS / safeguarding review.	Permanent exclusion from club + FA action.	Coach / Official excluded after 2 nd offence	Zero tolerance. Safeguarding implications high. Includes digital content.
Digital Harassment (messaging / social media / online)	Written warning. Meeting with CWO / Chair. Education on professional boundaries and online conduct. Possible temporary removal from club digital channels / team communications. INSTANT SUSPENSION & INVESTIGATION IF INVOLVES COACH / OFFICIAL CONTACTING MINORS. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met.	Suspension from coaching / matchday duties (e.g. 4–8 matches or fixed period). Formal hearing. Behaviour contract covering digital conduct. DBS / safeguarding review if involving children. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met. INSTANT SUSPENSION & INVESTIGATION IF INVOLVES COACH / OFFICIAL CONTACTING MINORS. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met.	Removal from coaching role / club membership. Report to County FA. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met. INSTANT SUSPENSION & INVESTIGATION IF INVOLVES COACH / OFFICIAL CONTACTING MINORS. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met.	Applies to any digital platform, including private messages to players/parents. Preserve evidence. Report to CWO immediately. Particularly serious if directed at children. NO COACH / OFFICIAL SHOULD BE CONTACTING MINORS DIRECTLY.
Physical Assault / Violent Conduct	INSTANT DISMISSAL from the venue and all duties. Immediate suspension from all football activity pending investigation. Report to County FA, Police if appropriate, safeguarding. Likely lengthy ban.	Expulsion from club. Maximum sanctions sought via County FA / FA.	Permanent exclusion + multi-agency action.	Anywhere. Highest priority safeguarding response.
Aggravated Physical	INSTANT DISMISSAL from the venue and all duties.. Immediate suspension from all football activity pending investigation. Full multi-agency reporting (Police, Children's Services, County FA, FA Safeguarding). If found guilty after investigation, Permanent exclusion.	Permanent exclusion + multi-agency action after 1 st offence.	—	Anywhere. Criminal threshold likely. Highest priority safeguarding response.

3. SPECTATORS / PARENTS / CARERS

Incident	1st Offence	2nd Offence	3rd / Further	Notes / Location
Unsporting Behaviour (negative comments, mild dissent)	Verbal request to stop / reminder of Spectator Code of conduct by coach or club official. Recorded if persistent in the session.	Written warning from Club. Request to stay away from touchline for remainder of match / next match. Parent/carer meeting.	Ban from attending matches / training for a defined period (e.g. 2–4 matches or fixed time). Possible membership review of linked player.	Training, match, travel-related. Club can require removal from venue.
Verbal Abuse	Immediate request to leave the venue if ongoing. Written warning. Possible 2–4 match attendance ban. Meeting with Club Official / CWO.	Longer attendance ban (e.g. rest of season or fixed period). Formal letter. Possible linked player membership conditions.	Permanent ban from club venues / activities. Report to County FA if appropriate. Possible police if public order.	Anywhere associated with club. Club has duty under FA Rule E21 (supporter behaviour).
Aggravated Verbal	Immediate removal from venue. Attendance ban (minimum several matches / fixed period). Report to County FA. Possible police report.	Longer or permanent ban. Strong action against linked membership if relevant.	Permanent exclusion from all club activities + County FA / police action.	Zero tolerance. Club must act under FA rules on supporter misconduct. Includes digital content.

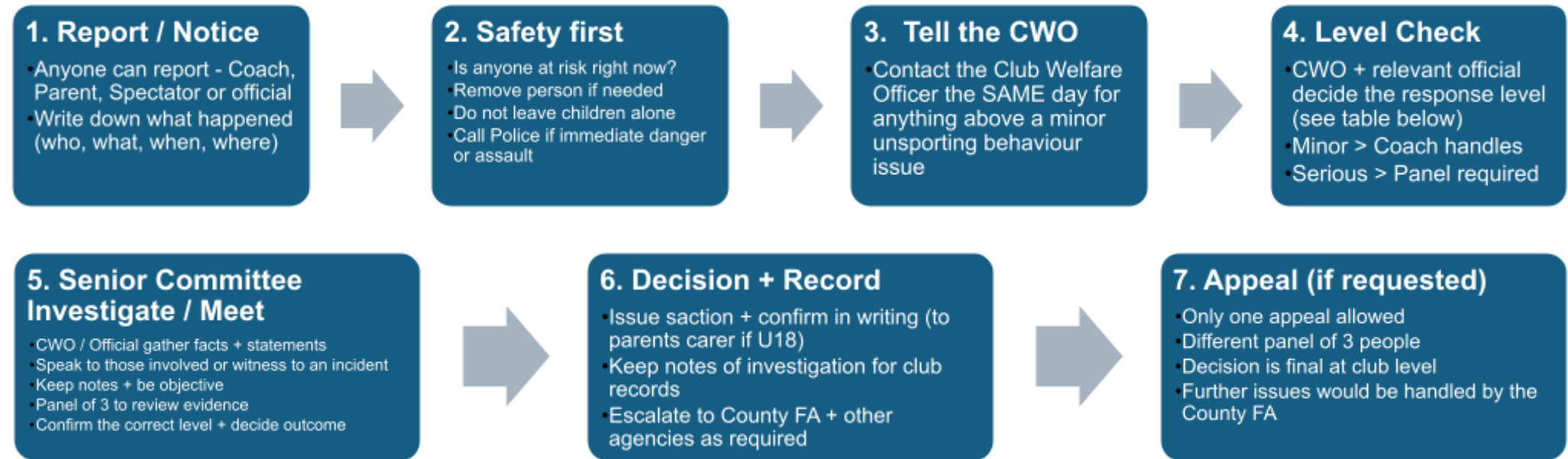
Digital Harassment (messaging / social media / online)	Written warning. Request to cease contact via digital channels. Possible temporary attendance ban or removal from club digital groups. Evidence preserved.	Attendance ban (e.g. several matches or fixed period). Formal letter. Possible linked player membership conditions. Report to County FA if persistent or serious.	Permanent ban from club venues / activities and digital channels. Report to County FA. Possible police involvement if criminal threshold met (threats, stalking, image-based abuse).	Applies to any digital platform directed at players, coaches, officials or other spectators. Preserve screenshots. Report to CWO. Discriminatory content escalates.
Physical Assault / Violent Conduct	INSTANT REMOVAL from venue. Immediate indefinite ban pending investigation. Report to Police and County FA. Club will support full prosecution / FA action.	Permanent ban + full multi-agency support for action against individual.	—	Anywhere. Criminal offence threshold. Club prioritises safety of children and officials.
Aggravated Physical	INSTANT REMOVAL from venue. Permanent ban. Immediate multi-agency reporting (Police, Children's Services if children present, County FA, FA). Club fully supports criminal and football sanctions.	—	—	Anywhere. Highest priority response.

There's Been an Issue Reported — Who Does What Now?

A simple guide for coaches, team managers and club officials. Follow the steps that match the situation.

Quick Process Flow

Use this overview first. Then look at the response level table below to see who acts and when a full panel is needed.



What Level of Response Is Needed — and Who Does What?

Match the type of incident to the level. If in doubt, treat it as higher and speak to the Club Welfare Officer (CWO).

Level	Typical situations	Who leads / decides	What happens	Panel needed?
LEVEL 1 — Minor	Unsporting behaviour conduct; minor shove between players; mild touchline comments; one-off minor digital message that is not threatening or discriminatory (unless from adult to U18 – treat as Level 3)	Team coach or team manager. Parent/carer informed and involved for youth players. CWO informed if pattern emerging.	Verbal warning, education, reminder of code of conduct. No formal hearing.	No
LEVEL 2 — Moderate	Verbal abuse; repeated unsporting behaviour; digital harassment that is not discriminatory or threatening; spectator persistent poor behaviour.	CWO + relevant coach / team official or Committee member. Parent/carer involved for youth.	Written warning, meeting, possible short suspension / attendance ban, behaviour contract. Recorded formally.	Usually no full panel. CWO + one other official is enough. Escalate if disputed.
LEVEL 3 — Serious	Physical assault / violent conduct; aggravated (discriminatory) verbal or digital content; threats; coach misconduct involving children; repeated Level 2; any case that may lead to expulsion or long ban.	DISCIPLINARY PANEL required. Must include Club Chairman AND Club Welfare Officer (or DSO). Plus at least one other independent committee member.	Formal investigation, statements, hearing opportunity, written decision and sanction. May report to County FA / Police / Children's Services.	YES — Panel mandatory Chair + Welfare Officer must sit.
LEVEL 4 — Critical / Safeguarding	Aggravated physical assault; assault on a child or match official; serious sexual or safeguarding allegation; credible threat of serious harm; any criminal-threshold incident.	Immediate CWO + Chair action. Interim suspension. Report to Police and/or Children's Services and County FA without delay. Panel still formed for club decision, but external agencies lead safeguarding/criminal response.	Interim ban pending investigation. Full multi-agency reporting. Club supports external processes. Club panel decides membership status.	YES — Panel mandatory + statutory reporting.

Roles & Responsibilities (Who Does What)

Anyone (coach, parent, player, spectator)	Can report a concern. Write down facts. Tell the coach or CWO. Keep children safe in the moment.
Team Coach / Manager	Handles Level 1 on the day. Issues verbal warnings and education. Informs parent/carer. Records the incident. Escalates Level 2+ to CWO the same day. Does not decide serious sanctions alone.
Club Welfare Officer (CWO)	Receives all Level 2+ reports. Advises on level. Leads or co-leads investigations. Must sit on every Disciplinary Panel for serious issues. Makes safeguarding referrals. Keeps confidential records. Supports those involved. Seeks support and guidance from County FA.
Club Chairman	Must sit on every Disciplinary Panel for serious (Level 3/4) issues. Ensures process is fair and timely. Can issue interim suspensions with CWO. Represents the club to County FA if needed.
Disciplinary Panel	For Level 3 and 4. Must include Chairman, Welfare Officer and one further independent committee member. Considers evidence, hears the person involved, decides sanction. Issues written outcome.
Appeals Panel	Three different people who did not sit on the original Disciplinary Panel. Reviews process and decision. Can uphold, reduce or increase sanction, or send back for re-hearing. Decision is final at club level — no further club appeal.
Club Committee / Secretary	Supports administration (letters, records, membership status). Ensures constitution and codes are followed. May appoint Appeals Panel members.

Disciplinary Panel (Serious Issues — Level 3 & 4)

When is a panel required? Any Physical Assault / Violent Conduct, Aggravated Verbal or Digital content, threats, coach misconduct involving children, cases that may lead to expulsion or a long ban, or any Level 4 safeguarding/criminal matter.

Who must be on the panel? Always the Club Chairman and the Club Welfare Officer. Add at least one other committee member who is independent of the incident. No one who is a witness or has a clear conflict of interest should sit.

How the panel works (keep it simple and fair):

1. CWO gathers statements and evidence (including digital screenshots if relevant).
2. Person involved (and parent/carer for under-18s) is told the allegation in writing and invited to respond / attend a meeting.
3. Panel meets, reviews evidence, and hears from the person if they wish to speak.
4. Panel decides the outcome and any sanction, guided by this chart and the club constitution.
5. Written decision is sent to the person (and parent/carer) with the right to appeal explained.
6. If the matter meets County FA or statutory thresholds, CWO/Chair report externally — the club process runs alongside, not instead of, external action.

Appeals Process

There is one club-level appeal only. After the appeal decision, the matter is closed at club level. For Level 3 & 4 issues, County FA will always be informed of the investigation and outcome to seek confirmation that the club has made the correct decision. (Separate County FA or FA routes may still exist for certain charges — this does not reopen the club process.)

Who can appeal?	The person who received the sanction (or their parent/carer if under 18).
How to appeal	Write to the Club Secretary (or nominated official) within 7 days of receiving the written decision. State clearly the grounds (e.g. new evidence, process unfair, sanction disproportionate).
Appeals Panel	Three people who did not sit on the original Disciplinary Panel and who have no conflict of interest. Appointed by the Committee / Secretary. They review papers and may hold a short hearing.
What the panel can do	Uphold the original decision; reduce the sanction; increase the sanction; or send the case back for a fresh hearing if process was seriously flawed.
Finality	The Appeals Panel decision is final at club level. There is no second appeal within the club. The person is informed in writing.
Timescale (guide)	Acknowledge appeal within 3 days. Aim to complete the appeal within 14–21 days of the appeal being lodged, unless complexity requires longer (person is kept informed).

Simple Do's and Don'ts for Coaches & Volunteers

DO

Act immediately on safety
Write down facts the same day
Tell the CWO for anything serious
Stay calm and fair
Involve parent/carer for youth players
Preserve digital evidence (screenshots)
Follow this chart and club codes

DON'T

Ignore or "hope it goes away"
Decide serious sanctions alone
Discuss the case on social media or group chats
Leave children unsupervised while dealing with an incident
Promise outcomes you cannot control
Destroy or alter evidence
Sit on a panel if you are a witness or conflicted

Additional Process & Safeguarding Notes

1. **Immediate safety first.** Remove the individual from the activity / venue if necessary to protect others. Do not leave children unsupervised.
2. **Record everything.** Date, time, location, people involved, witnesses, exact words/actions, any injury, action taken. For digital incidents, preserve screenshots, message headers, URLs and timestamps. **Use club incident form / safeguarding log. SUGGEST THIS IS SOMETHING CREATED – WE DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE THIS**
3. **Inform the Club Welfare Officer / Designated Safeguarding Officer** the same day for any Verbal Abuse, Digital Harassment and above, and for any physical incident (even minor peer shove if there is concern). CWO decides on further escalation.
4. **Opportunity to respond.** For formal sanctions beyond a simple verbal warning, the individual (and parent/carer) should be given the opportunity to respond before a final decision. Serious cases require a formal disciplinary process with right of appeal as per club constitution.
5. **FA / County FA jurisdiction.** On-field cautions and sendings-off are dealt with under FA Disciplinary Regulations (automatic suspensions apply). Club sanctions are additional and for conduct that brings the club into disrepute or breaches club codes, including off-field, non-matchday and digital incidents.
6. **Youth players — no fines.** Financial penalties must not be imposed on youth players; any fine arising from FA processes is the responsibility of the club.
7. **This chart is guidance.** Severity, intent, age, previous record, impact, and mitigation are always considered. The Club Committee / Disciplinary Panel retains discretion within FA rules and the club's own constitution and codes of conduct.

Ensure all coaches, officials and parents/carers are aware of the standards expected under the Codes of Conduct they agree to at the beginning of every season.