

Standards of Personal Behaviour

Adopted June 2016

Standards of Personal Behaviour within Young Farmers

YFC prides itself on giving young people the opportunity to learn and develop as good citizens and responsible members of the community. YFC should be an enjoyable experience and promoting positive behaviour is essential to the smooth running of any activity. This provides a foundation for the running of our clubs, reduces the likelihood of negative behaviour occurring, and ensures that activities are fun, engaging and safe for everyone. Members of YFC have an important role in supporting one another to manage their own behaviours and to make positive choices. This policy is designed to inform our members what is expected of them as a member of YFC and also to support the event organisers in addressing behaviour issues. This policy is to be applicable at all Club, County, Area and National events whether it is a club meeting, travel, social event or competition and all members and their guests are expected to abide by the policy. The term 'the Federation' is inclusive of all parts of YFC from Club to NFYFC.

Setting standards for members of YFC

It is important that acceptable standards are created and agreed by members and that all members are aware of what these are. The most effective way to do this is to actively involve members in creating a group agreement for the club and as a county as a whole. Members are more likely to remember and stick to a set of standards of behaviour that they themselves have played a part in creating.

Tips for an effective club agreement are as follows:

- Created in partnership with members.
- Mutually agreed and 'owned' by the members of YF clubs and the county officers and staff team.
- Doesn't contain too many rules.
- Worded positively.
- Language appropriate to the level of understanding of the members
- Relevant to all circumstances – e.g. competitions, social events, shows, meetings, trips and residential trips.
- Effectively communicated to everyone, including new members and parents/carers/guardians, if member is under 18 years old.
- Followed by the club and county officer teams at all times.
- Displayed prominently (where possible) within the meeting and referred back to.
- Reviewed regularly – we would recommend at the start of each new YFC year along with programme planning

Further guidance can be found in section three of the The Source

It is helpful to refer back to this regularly and review the agreement; this could be done alongside programme planning or after the recruitment of new members. Some counties produce a 'guide' for being a member of their club/county and their behaviour standards are included within this. Regular reminders about the standards of behaviour help everyone know what is accepted and what to expect if their behaviour falls below the standards of our organisation. An example code of conduct for the different levels of the organisation can be found in Appendix 1.

In the majority of cases, members are mindful of the need for acceptable standards of behaviour and promoting a positive public image for themselves, their club and county, and YFC as a whole at all times. But there may be occasions when unacceptable behaviour is brought to the attention of YFC event organisers. A list of potentially unsuitable behaviours has been compiled for your information in Appendix 7. The behaviours listed are not an exhaustive list but highlight some of the areas that may jeopardise membership of a YFC. These behaviours have been categorised in terms of severity by current YFC members.

Unacceptable Behaviour Guidance

The following are examples of where disciplinary action is warranted:

- Physical violence against another individual.
- Goading or provocation which may lead to inappropriate behaviour, such as fighting.
- Condoning physical violence by not revealing prior knowledge or not taking action to prevent physical violence.
- Intimidation of other members or members of the public.
- Vandalism to any property or equipment.
- Inappropriate behaviour in and around motor vehicles, on both public roads and private land.
- Abusive language (to members of the public, including parents/supporters of other teams and YFC members).
- Drug and / or Alcohol Abuse – a policy on Drug and Alcohol use and abuse is available from NFYFC.
- Theft - of articles belonging to YFC members or members of the public or equipment belonging to guests/entertainers or articles of equipment belonging to a venue.
- Offensive behaviour.
- Any behaviour, which has or possibly will bring the Federation into disrepute.
- Any behaviour, which has or possibly will jeopardise the Federation booking future venues, sports facilities and services.
- Offences that are against the law.

**Note - All guidance contained in the documents applies to member's behaviour both in the real world and digital one. Comments and images posted on social network sites and similar channels are public and can carry repercussions for your YFC membership, your personal future, result in you becoming liable for prosecution and damage the reputation of your YFC and Young Farmers as a whole.*

When members behaviour is unacceptable

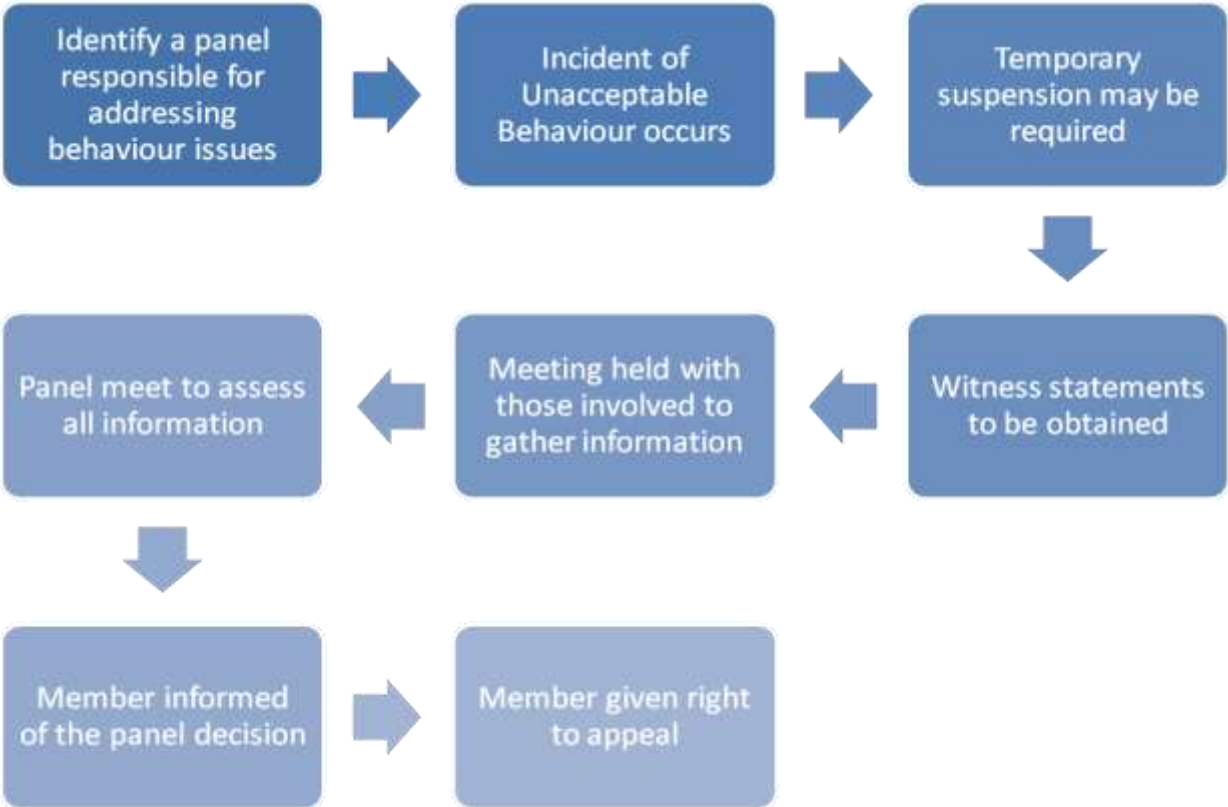
YFC members take part in a variety of events including club meetings, trips, social events, competitions, training and travel. It is essential when planning these events that situations that could lead to inappropriate behaviour are assessed, it is important to plan ways of managing that behaviour in

advance. In order to ensure that actions taken to address unacceptable behaviour are consistent, proportionate and fair across all counties affiliated to NFYFC, both members and staff members have been consulted on the content of this policy. It is vital that members are aware of the potential consequences of their actions. The actions taken following an incident will depend on the severity of the incident in question and may take into account the behaviour history of the members involved.

Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

All incidents of inappropriate behaviour should be addressed using the procedure outlined below which demonstrates the procedure for working through a behaviour issue. The supporting points below explain the flow of actions.

Figure 1 – Procedure for addressing behaviour incidents



- **Action 1 - identify a panel** – We would recommend that at the start of the YFC year each county federation identifies a panel in advance of an incident of inappropriate behaviour. We would advise recruiting more people than required and have a pool of people from which to select a panel to cover cases of conflict of interest and availability. This can consist of a member of the county officer team member, county president, safeguarding officer and a management committee representative. It is essential that the panel members are given the role description for a panel member (Appendix 5) and fully understand the importance of confidentiality of

information. Panel members should declare any conflicts of interest upon discovering the names of those members involved in an incident.

All members of the YFC must respect that the panel is established to deal with difficult and emotional decisions, members who attempt to interfere with panel members will be subject to disciplinary measures.

*We would strongly recommend that county staff members are **not** panel members as it is important that they remain impartial and retain strong relationships with all clubs and members. Members of staff would be expected to administer and coordinate the procedures on behalf of the county.*

- **Action 2 – Unacceptable Behaviour Incident** - In the unfortunate event of a YFC member(s) behaving inappropriately, it will be the responsibility of the club officer/county staff member or event organiser in charge to ascertain, as calmly and constructively as possible, the nature of and details relating to the incident. This should be recorded in writing at the earliest opportunity. Dependent on the nature of the incident external services such as the police may be involved in the incident. Dependent on the severity of the incident and the risk the member poses to others they may require suspension until the panel invite them to a disciplinary meeting.

During this suspension time they should be allocated a point of contact within the organisation who they can contact to receive updates on the situation. A letter should be sent to them informing them of the allegation and their suspension until a meeting is held to discuss the issue. Example letters can be found in Appendix 3 and 4. This meeting should be arranged within 14 days of the incident.

- **Action 3 – Information gathering**- an account of the event may need to be sought from other members who witnessed the incident detailing the things they saw and heard. An example statement template can be found in Appendix 6. These statements should then be circulated to the panel; this will allow the panel members to have a full picture of the incident before the meeting and will speed up proceedings. Evidence gathered as part of the case should be kept confidential and shared only within the panel to support the decision making process. This can include CCTV, pictures or social media screen shots.

- **Action 4 – Meeting** - Before proceeding any further, it is essential that the person or persons involved in the incident are given the opportunity to explain his / her or their version of events to the panel. The YFC Member has a right to be accompanied by another YFC Member (aged between 18-26 years old) or if under 18 years of age, by parent, guardian or carer. Details of this person should be conveyed to the County Federation no less than two working days before the meeting.

The companion may address the meeting to put and sum up the YFC Members' case, respond on behalf of the YFC Member to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the YFC Member during the hearing. The companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the YFC Members behalf or address the meeting if the YFC Member does not wish it. During this meeting it is not appropriate to name the witnesses that provided information but you should share the information obtained. It is acceptable to share evidence gathered with the 'accused' in order to demonstrate that the panel have evidence to make an informed decision. Again the notes of this meeting should be recorded.

The panel should be aware that on occasion they may receive malicious reports that could influence their decision and they should not be afraid to challenge the validity of evidence presented to them. Where a report or statement is found to be malicious disciplinary action will be taken against the person.

- **Action 5 – Consideration of Information** - Following the contributions of those involved the panel should consider this information and the information gathered in the witness statements in order to make a decision on membership sanctions. Information to support this decision can be found in Appendix 7 and on page 7 of this document. Each behaviour incident should be judged in its own right and although members may have a record of previous misbehaviours this should be addressed once the initial incident is addressed. Any previous behaviour incidents may or may not impact the sanctions applied to a member.

During this process you may find that elements of the incident fall into the category of safeguarding, anti bullying or were due in part to the consumption of alcohol or drugs – where this is the case you should refer to the relevant policy for information and guidance.

- **Action 6 – Inform the member** - It is imperative that any sanctions or bans imposed are conveyed to the individual (and parents if under 18) in writing and are recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made. Sample letters can be found in Appendix 8 and 9.
- **Action 7 – Right to Appeal** – To be included in the correspondence informing the member of the result of the disciplinary the member should always be given the right to appeal. The appeals process can be found later in this policy. Appeal made against a county panel decision will be heard by the NFYFC, this procedure is detailed on page 8 of this document.

Membership Sanctions and bans

When deciding upon a course of action the panel should examine all evidence available to them at the time of the meeting. In order to support the committee with a decision a list of typical YFC offences have been categorised into different levels of severity (Appendix 7).

This has been created as a guidance note to support a decision and encourage consistency across the membership rather than a definitive. Depending upon the nature and severity of the offence, the event organisers/persons in charge (this could be any level of YFC – Club, County, Area or NFYFC) may wish to consider taking the following courses of action:

- *Verbal warning – recorded on the members behaviour log, stored confidentially*
- *A written warning to the member acknowledging unacceptable behaviour, also logged on file*
 - *Many counties employ a strike behaviour system where a strike would be given for both of the above stages and on the third strike a membership sanction would apply.*
- *A timed ban from one particular or all social events – generally used if the incident occurred at a social event*
- *A timed ban from one or all competitions - generally used if the incident occurred at a competitions event*
- *A timed ban from both social events and competitions*
- *A timed ban from all YFC activities for an agreed time, the length of time to be determined by the offence committed – common terms are 3 months, 6 months, 12 months and 24 months. A life ban should be avoided as YFC is an organisation for the development of young people and in being so everybody deserves the right to a second chance once any existing bans have been served.*

**Where the situation is of a serious safeguarding nature a life ban may be legally imposed by the Police or the Disclosure and Barring Service in order to protect other members of YFC and reduce risks to the organisation.*

Following the decision to apply a membership sanction the member should be made fully aware of the situation and the events he or she may or may not attend. If the member is banned from all YFC activities for a period of time the member should have their card removed and this should be held at the county office for the duration of the ban. The members' details should be held by the club, county or NFYFC so that event organisers and stewards are aware of members that are not permitted to attend events.

If a banned member attempts to attend events they are not permitted to attend during in the course of their ban this should be addressed with them and their case reviewed by the panel. Persistent attempts to break the terms of their membership ban may lead to a more severe punishment being applied to the member.

Right to Appeal

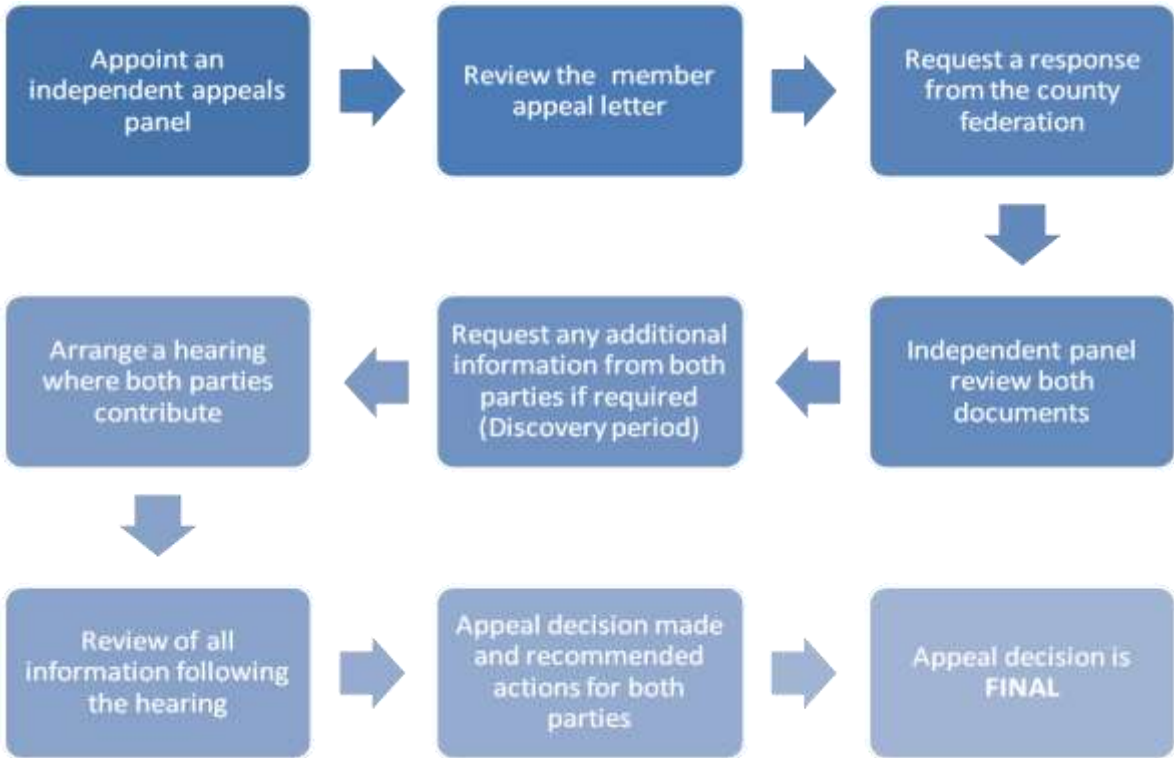
All members have the right to appeal to membership sanctions applied to them, they should do this within 14 days of receiving the letter informing them of the decision of the county panel. If a member appeals against a club decision then this appeal can be heard by the county federation. If a member appeals against a county decision this should be escalated to NFYFC as the county cannot hear an appeal where the appeal is against them, they are instead required to present the reason for the decisions made by the county federation panel.

Taken from the NFYFC Constitution –

11.1 Any Member Club which is aggrieved by the decision of the County Federation affecting the Club concerned shall have the right to appeal to the Council of the National Federation in the following manner:

11.1.1 The Member Club shall state in writing the grounds of complaint and the relief asked for, and shall send two copies of the statement and any relevant documents to the Secretary of the County Federation. The Executive Committee shall within one month transmit to the Secretary of the National Federation one of the said copies together with any comment they may think fit to make. The Council of the National Federation shall consider the matter and, after obtaining any further information from either party that it deems necessary, shall communicate its decision in writing to both parties, and such decision shall be final and binding upon them.

Figure 2 - The NFYFC Appeals Procedure



The Appeal procedure is conducted in the following way following receipt of the appeal letter, including the relief requested, along with any supporting documents or information –

Appeals procedure explained –

- **Step 1** – Appoint a panel - In order for the NFYFC Council to consider the appeal and to move things along as swiftly as possible it has been agreed that the NFYFC Council appoints a panel of three or five members of the current NFYFC Council (not otherwise connected to the Claimant or County Federation – an independent panel) to conduct the appeal.
- **Step 2** – Members of the panel are given the appeal letter and any supporting evidence to consider.
- **Step 3** – NFYFC to contact the county to obtain a response to the appeal. This is the point where the county provide any evidence it has relating to the situation, this may include witness statements, meeting minutes, photographic evidence and recommendations from external organisations such as the police.
- **Step 4** - This information is then copied and sent to panel members.
- **Step 5** – Review of the information contained in the appeal and the county response - After the reading the information the panel will have the opportunity to request any additional information from the both parties involved.
- **Step 6** – Arrange an Appeal Hearing – NFYFC will set a date and invite the member making an appeal and the county federation to present information to the panel for consideration; it is also an opportunity for the panel to ask any questions they may have about the incident or the decisions made. This meeting will usually take place at NFYFC as a neutral venue and timings will be arranged so that both parties will not meet on the day. The member appealing will be permitted to bring a supporting person that may also speak on their behalf. The county federation will be permitted up to three people to represent the views of the county.
- This could include the county chairman, a county staff members and the county president but this decision will be made by the county. No new documentation can be brought to this meeting for consideration.
- **Step 7** – This usually takes place on the day of the hearing following contributions from both parties whilst the panel are together
- **Step 8** - The panel reach and agreed decision and course of action for both parties. The appeal will go ‘in favour’ of one of the parties and this will be communicated to both at the earliest opportunity. Along with the appeal decision the panel may decide to make summarising statements and recommendations going forward there may be action points for all parties involved including the NFYFC in order to avoid a situation occurring in the future and to develop our procedures around dealing with situations and appeals.
- **Step 9** – The decision of the appeals panel will be **FINAL** and cannot be questioned by either party.

Promoting consistency across all sections of YFC

It would be extremely difficult for the NFYFC to provide a list of unsuitable behaviours and the punishments that should be applied in each instance. Each incident should be judged on its own individual factors including the of the nature of the incident, where it took place, the

consequences of actions, the victims, any damage caused and the impact on the club and county federation. In order to ensure that all YFC members follow the same standards of behaviour for our organisation our clubs and counties must work together to ensure that similar offences result in similar consequences. We should aim to avoid the situation of members joining neighbouring counties where their inappropriate behaviour procedures and sanctions are weaker. County federations should work together locally and also with the NFYFC to share incidents occurring in their counties and the punishments applied in order to ensure that they are working within a similar framework.

County staff should share information on behaviour issues and banned members that may attempt to join neighbouring counties during their area meetings. They should also seek to join forces with other areas that boarder the counties i.e. if Warwickshire banned a member they should inform Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

The email to counties should contain the following information, as a guide –

Dear County Office

The following member(s) XXXXX, Address, DOB and current membership number

Has been subject to a ban of 12 months from XXXX county federation, please be aware they may attempt to join your county federation.

This will allow for improved communication between areas and across the organisation and will demonstrate that clubs, counties and NFYFC are working together to raise behaviour standards across the organisation. NFYFC would not recommend that counties accept a membership application from a member that is serving a ban from YFC activities in another county.

Storage of Behaviour records

It is vital that records of behaviour incidents are filed confidentially by the club or county in the way that safeguarding incidents are. When a report is made to a club or county they should document the situation, date/time and the actions completed on addressing the situation, this record should not be closed until the situation is resolved. This file should include a record of all conversations had with those involved, copies of any witness statements and any letters sent out. We recommend that all club issues addressed are recorded and a copy is sent to county offices to ensure that secondary records are held to avoid this information being lost during changes in club leadership. The county should also keep their own records of incidents.

Working as a team

Although unfortunate, we do expect that when young people are on their journey to adulthood they will occasionally make unsuitable choices that may result in them being subject to the procedures outlined in this policy. As a youth organisation we are here to support rather than criminalise young people and where appropriate to do so we would recommend that the county and its members look at alternative ways in which inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.

Allowing members to understand the impact of their actions through restorative work and addressing the reasons why they behaved in that way initially may prevent future issues. Ongoing training and updates can also support preventative work and allow members to understand the expected behaviour as a member of YFC and the consequences should they fall short of these standards. The Curve training library is a good way for club and county officers to engage with club members positively to encourage them to work together and support one another.

This document replaces P&G 024 Standards of personal behaviour
June 2016

Appendix List

To support the implementation of this policy we have created a set of supporting documents.

Appendix 1 – YFC Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – NFYFC Annual Convention

Appendix 3 – Example suspension letter

Appendix 4 – Example suspension letter for parents of children

Appendix 5 – Panel member person specification

Appendix 6 – Statement template

Appendix 7 – Categories of behaviour in YFC

Appendix 8 – Example membership ban letter

Appendix 9 – Example membership ban letter for parents of children



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National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs is a registered Friendly Society

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