

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Star Soccer Academy – Season 2026/27. In line with The FA's Equality Policy, the FA Rules on discrimination and the Equality Act 2010.

1. Our commitment

Star Soccer Academy ("the club") is committed to football that is open to everyone and free from discrimination. Every child, parent, coach, volunteer and visitor is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and to take part without fear of abuse, exclusion or unfair treatment.

This policy applies to everyone involved with the club, at every venue we use, in matches and training, at camps and events, and in the club's online groups and social media.

2. What we mean by discrimination

Discrimination means treating a person less favourably, or putting them at a disadvantage, because of a characteristic they have or are believed to have. The characteristics protected by law are:

Characteristic	Includes
Age	Being treated unfairly because of age, beyond the normal age-group structure of youth football.
Disability	Physical, sensory, learning or hidden disabilities and long-term health conditions.
Gender reassignment	A person who is, has been or intends to go through a process of changing their gender.
Marriage and civil partnership	Applies to adults involved with the club.
Pregnancy and maternity	Applies to adults involved with the club.
Race	Colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, and includes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
Religion or belief	Any religion, religious or philosophical belief, or lack of belief.
Sex	Being male or female.
Sexual orientation	Being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual.

Discrimination can be direct (for example, not selecting a player because of their race) or indirect (a rule or practice that puts some people at a disadvantage without good reason). It also includes harassment (unwanted behaviour related to a characteristic that offends, humiliates or intimidates) and victimisation (treating someone badly because they have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's complaint).

The club also does not tolerate abuse or exclusion on grounds that are not protected by law but that are just as damaging to a child, such as a player's ability, appearance, family circumstances, the school they attend or the club they came from.

3. Standards we expect

- No one at the club will use discriminatory language, jokes, gestures, chants or messages, in person or online, whether directed at someone or said about them.
- Selection, playing time, positions, coaching attention and opportunities such as trials, tournaments and pathways are based on footballing criteria, effort and attitude, applied consistently to every player, and never on any protected characteristic.
- Fees, kit and access to sessions will be arranged so that no child is excluded unfairly, and the club will make reasonable adjustments for players and parents with disabilities.
- Religious observance, dietary needs and cultural dress will be respected and accommodated wherever reasonably possible.

- Coaches will challenge discriminatory behaviour immediately, whether from players, parents, opponents or spectators, and report it to the Club Welfare Officer.
- Everyone is expected to treat opponents, match officials and visiting supporters with the same respect as their own club.

4. Reporting discrimination

Any player, parent, coach or visitor who experiences or witnesses discrimination at a club activity should report it to the coach or the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible. Reports can be made in person, by phone or in writing. Nobody will be treated less favourably for raising a concern in good faith.

Club Welfare Officer: Matt Finnigan – matt@starsocceracademy.co.uk. Concerns can also be reported to the Leicestershire & Rutland County FA on 0116 286 7828 (option 1), to Kick It Out, or through The FA's discrimination reporting service.

5. How the club responds

- Every report is recorded and acknowledged, normally within two working days.
- Discrimination involving a child is treated as a safeguarding matter and handled under the club's Safeguarding Children Policy, including interim measures to protect the child affected.
- Discriminatory language or behaviour is a serious breach of the club's codes of conduct. Sanctions range from a formal warning to suspension or removal from the club, and are applied consistently.
- Alleged discrimination during affiliated matches is reported to the Leicestershire & Rutland County FA, which has its own disciplinary process and may impose sanctions independently of the club.
- The person who raised the concern is told the outcome and may take the matter to the County FA if they are not satisfied.

6. Responsibilities

The owner is responsible for making sure this policy is implemented and reviewed. The Club Welfare Officer is responsible for recording and responding to reports. Every coach and volunteer is responsible for upholding these standards, completing FA safeguarding and equality training as required, and challenging poor behaviour. Every parent and player is responsible for following the club's codes of conduct, which incorporate this policy.

7. Review

This policy is reviewed at least annually and following any change in FA requirements or the law. It is issued to all coaches and volunteers, available to parents on request and on the club website, and included in new-player welcome packs.

Approved by Matt Finnigan, Owner and Club Welfare Officer, September 2026. Next review due September 2027.