



Equality Policy

2024-25

Introduction

Bo'ness Athletic Football Club endorses the principle of sports equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in football (in all its levels and forms), whether as players, spectators, casual participants, club members, officials, volunteers, coaches, office-bearers in the club:

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation; and
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected, and in particular that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal obligations

Bo'ness Athletic Football Club is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in football and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment. Examples of the relevant legislation and the behaviours in question are given in the Appendix.

Positive action

The principle of Sports Equality goes further than simply complying with legislation. It entails taking positive steps to counteract the effects of physical or cultural barriers – whether real or perceived – that restrict the opportunity for all sections of the community to participate equally and fully.

Bo'ness Athletic Football Club will therefore seek to institute, support or contribute to appropriate measures or initiatives that enable access to football and participation in associated activities by people from any group that is under-represented in the sport or has difficulty accessing it.

Implementation

The following steps will be taken to promote this policy and sports equality in football:

- A copy of this document is published on the Bo'ness Athletic Football Club website.
- The Board of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club will take overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation and observation of this policy, and the requirement for all members of the organisation to follow this policy will be enshrined within the constitution.
- The Board will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club.
- Bo'ness Athletic Football Club will collaborate fully with any surveys or other initiatives designed to assess the level of participation of different sections of the community in football and will take account of the findings in developing measures to promote and enhance equality in football.
- Bo'ness Athletic Football Club will provide access to training, where appropriate, in order to raise awareness of collective and individual responsibilities for all of its Board members and enable access to suitable training for anyone involved in the sport, with a focus on coaches, and players in terms of equality and diversity training, as well as our general fan base.
- Bo'ness Athletic Football Club will ensure that members and volunteers behave in accordance with the policy, including where appropriate taking disciplinary action under the Club's constitution; and to ensure that access to membership is open and

inclusive; to support such measures and initiatives that Bo'ness Athletic Football Club may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

- It will be a condition of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club membership that individual and corporate members recognise they are bound by this policy; and support such measures and initiatives that Bo'ness Athletic Football Club may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board will review all Bo'ness Athletic Football Club activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis, and the Secretary will report on this issue at the AGM.

The Secretary will review any measures or initiatives that Bo'ness Athletic Football Club may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality in football, their findings being formally reported to the AGM.

The Board will review the policy itself at intervals of no more than three years, (or when necessary due to changes in legislation) and will report with recommendations to the AGM.

Complaints and compliance

Bo'ness Athletic Football Club regards all forms of discriminatory behaviour, including (but not limited to) behaviour described in the Appendix as unacceptable, and is concerned to ensure that individuals feel able to raise any bona fide grievance or complaint related to such behaviour without fear of being penalised for doing so.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any member or volunteer (inc. playing and coaching staff) who violates the Bo'ness Athletic Football Club Equality Policy.

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that they consider to be in breach of this policy by a member or volunteer of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club, should make a formal complaint to the club. In the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against Bo'ness Athletic Football Club itself or a member (including playing or coaching staff) of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Secretary of the Board. Contact details are available below.

The Secretary will investigate the complaint personally or appoint a designated individual of Bo'ness Athletic Football Club to do so. The investigation will be conducted impartially, confidentially, and without avoidable delay. Any person or organisation against whom a complaint has been made will be informed of what is alleged and given the opportunity to present their side of the matter.

The outcome of the investigation will be notified to the parties in writing and reported to the Board. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member or volunteer, the Board may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with the Bo'ness Athletic Football Club constitution.

Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from Bo'ness Athletic Football Club membership (inc. playing or coaching staff). In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Board will consider the severity of the matter and take account of any mitigating circumstances.

Where the violation of the Equality Policy by way of harassment, victimisation or discrimination amount to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

In the event that an individual associated with Bo'ness Athletic Football Club is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the Bo'ness Athletic Football Club Board and members (including playing and coaching staff) will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the relevant lawful authorities and, subject to the outcome, may consider taking action as above in relation to the matter concerned.

Email: Secretary@BonessAthletic.com