

# Athletic Union Sports Club Social & Behaviour Policy

## Committee Members

### Introduction

The Athletic Union (AU) recognises the value of social activity to compliment sporting activity for members of affiliated sports clubs. Social activity builds friendships, bonds and communities among club and team mates and can support individual and team development.

However the AU also recognises that in some situations, such social activity can pose physical and psychological risks if due care is not observed by those involved. In line with this, the AU encourages all clubs and members to drink responsibly.

This policy further explores the role and responsibility of clubs, their members and their committees in relation to "off the field" activity.

This policy includes:

1. University Code of Behaviour
2. Club & Members Responsibilities
3. Welcome Events, Team Building, Socials and Initiations
4. Managing Behaviour within your Sports Clubs
5. AU Management of Behaviour within Sports Clubs and Potential Sanctions for not adhering to this policy

## 1. University Code of Behaviour

Clubs and their members are reminded that they and their members are bound by the Cardiff University Student Code of behaviour. This code of behaviour states:

*"This Code shall apply to all students when they may reasonably be regarded as being under the auspices of the University. This shall include behaviour arising at any time when the student may be regarded as representing the University as an individual or as part of a team or group.*

*A student shall not engage in conduct which may involve an offence against a person; cause a nuisance, damage, deface, misappropriate or misuse any property of the University and the Students' Union; or otherwise behave in a manner likely to bring the University into disrepute or likely to cause offence to others.*

*A student shall not engage in any form of harassment towards other students which causes, or which might reasonably be expected to cause distress by such means as bullying, verbally or physically abusing, ill-treating or otherwise creating or maintaining a hostile environment for that other, including via the use of social networking sites, other websites or any other forms of electronic media and communication."*

This code of behaviour applies to all members of your team or club and any supporters or associated people connected to your club. It applies without geographic restriction, can be applied whether activity is official club activity or not and also relates to behaviour whilst travelling to and from club events.

## 2. Your Club Responsibilities

The Students' Union expects that affiliated clubs take all reasonable steps to ensure that it and its members conduct themselves in a manner that does not reflect negatively on the Club, Athletic Union, Students' Union or University and does not place any person in a situation where they are likely to be harmed.

### **Your Personal Responsibilities**

As a member of a club, you are bound by these guidelines and you should at all times act in a reasonable manner, obeying the law, any University or Union Policy and in a manner that does not put any other individual at risk.

If you are a committee member or are responsible for organising an event, your duty of care is extended beyond that of an ordinary member. You are still required to take all reasonable steps to prevent harm, but you are expected to have planned the event appropriately and taken into account procedures to use in the event of a problem arising.

### **What you need to do?**

We expect that all clubs, members, committees and other representatives:

- Will show appropriate respect towards members of the public, members of Cardiff University and other institutions, at all times
- Will behave responsibly and not act in a way that may damage the image of the club or bring the organisation into disrepute, or put any individual at risk of harm
- Will not encourage or coerce individuals into undertaking anything that they do not wish to do

## **3. Welcome Events, Team Building, Socials and “Initiations”**

The objective of welcome events is to allow members to meet, socialise and build relationships within a club or team. This is often done by encouraging groups of people to undertake activities outside their “comfort zone”. The AU only supports such activity:

- Where it is undertaken in a manner that does not place undue risk upon those involved, and
- Where it is not humiliating, unlawful or degrading to the individual or wider, and
- Where those involved are not forced to consume any fluid/substance and
- Where those involved are free to participate or abstain as they see fit, and
- Where there is no fear of reprisal or consequence for non-participation in some or all of the activity, and
- Where the activity does not bring the reputation of Cardiff University, Cardiff University Students' Union or the Sports Club into question or disrepute.

The term “initiation” has in recent years been linked to activities and behaviour that seek to humiliate new members, often involving excess alcohol. The Athletic Union does not condone any such activity or encouragement of such behaviour.

Any such welcome, team building or initiation events must follow the above guidelines and be organised appropriately. We expect all clubs undertaking any such events to also ensure that:

- There is no connection between participation in any other club activity and an individual's participation in a welcome event
- Where these events involve any element of the consumption of alcohol:
  - A sufficient number of responsible persons should refrain from consuming alcohol to supervise and monitor activity. They should be identified in order that new members are aware of the individuals who they can seek support or advice from
  - At no point shall any individual be encouraged or coerced into drinking alcohol if they appear too drunk
  - All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that members are not left to make their way home alone from club social activity

Whilst we expect all clubs to adhere to the following, we would also strongly encourage clubs to:

- Consider how the club can be made to feel as welcoming as possible to all students irrespective of personal characteristics
- Consider the barriers to participation for different students and seek to ensure all reasonable attempts are made to remove them

Club committee members are responsible, and will be held accountable, for the actions and levels of alcohol consumption of their members at any welcome, team building, initiation and social event throughout the year.

#### **4. Managing Behaviour within your Sports Clubs**

A culture of poor behaviour can develop where a club fails to tackle (or endorses) poor behaviour.

We expect that:

- Clubs are responsible for the actions of their members, both on and off the field of play.
- Clubs work to ensure that all members are appropriate representatives of a club
- Clubs will take appropriate action to manage behaviour.

We expect Clubs to take positive action to prevent inappropriate behaviour. This should include:

- Clear communication of expected standards of behaviour to all members
- Club activities and events to be organised with consideration of how to encourage appropriate/discourage inappropriate behaviour of members
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour of members when it occurs and taking appropriate action. This action should be proportionate, but clearly demonstrate that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Such action could/should include:
  - Unofficial or official warnings
  - Suspension of access to some or all club activities
  - Reporting of individuals/incidents to the Students' Union

If a committee need support or advice to undertake any such action, the Students' Union and Athletic Union will be happy to assist.

We strongly advise clubs to work to create a policy which can be shared with members and demonstrates that inappropriate behaviour may mean members are restricted from undertaking sporting activity.

If a club fails to take appropriate action to manage behaviour of its members, both on and off the field of play, the Athletic Union reserves the right to take action against individuals and the club as a whole in order to tackle behavioural problems.

#### **5. AU Management of Behaviour within Sports Clubs and Potential Sanctions for not adhering to this policy**

If the Athletic Union becomes aware of potential behavioural issues, which may have occurred on or off the field, it will work with various stakeholders to ensure a full investigation is conducted. Such stakeholders will include but not be limited to the Union and University staff, other institutions, venues and the police.

Any breach of this policy may result in one or more of the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

Athletic Union Club sanctions:

- Suspension or removal of access to sports facilities and Student Union transport.
- Removal of funding or resources.
- Responsibility for reimbursement for any damage or financial loss.

- Suspension or removal of Clubs/Teams from BUCS competitions or other frameworks.
- Downgrading of the Club's Tiering status.
- Disbandment of the Club.

Individual sanctions:

- Suspension or removal of the individual from all Club activity including BUCS competitions.
- Responsibility for reimbursement for any damage or financial loss.
- Suspension or removal of the individual from all Students Union activity.
- All cases may be communicated to the University for them to consider whether appropriate action is necessary within their code of behaviour.

**Please be in no doubt that any breach of this policy could result in a student(s) being excluded from the University.**