



**Penicuik Athletic Football Club
Montgomery Park
Carlops Road
Penicuik**

Equality Policy

Policy Statement

Penicuik Athletic Football Club ('the 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:

- have 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 that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Legal Obligations

The Club is committed to avoid and eliminate unfair discrimination of any kind in football and will under no circumstances condone unlawful discriminatory practices. The Club 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.

The 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 Club website.
- The Committee of the 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 Committee will take full account of the policy in arriving at all decisions in relation to activities of the Club.

- The 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.
- The Club will provide access to training, where appropriate, in order to raise awareness of collective and individual responsibilities for all of its Committee members, members and employees, 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.
- It will be a condition of Club membership that members formally adopt this policy and take steps to 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 the Club may institute or take part in to advance the aims of this policy.

Note: The Club will provide advice and training support to members in the above areas linked to wider club development support and implementation of programmes.

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

Responsibility, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Committee will review all Club activities and initiatives against the aims of the policy on an annual basis, and the Club Champion (see role description) will report formally on this issue at the AGM.

The Committee will appoint a designated project leader (Club Champion) who will review any measures or initiatives that the Club may institute or take part in to promote and enhance equality in football, their findings being formally reported to the AGM.

The Committee 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

The Club regards all of the 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 employee (inc playing and coaching staff), member or volunteer who violates the 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 of the Club, should make a formal complaint to the club via the relevant policies/procedure. In the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against the Club itself or an employee (including playing or coaching staff) of the Club, the person may raise the matter by writing directly to the Club Secretary. Contact details are available through the website.

The designated role on the Committee will investigate the complaint personally or appoint a designated individual of the 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 Committee. If the investigation reveals unacceptable discriminatory behaviour on the part of an individual member, corporate member, or member club the Committee may impose sanctions on that person or organisation in line with the Club constitution. Sanctions may range from a written reminder concerning future conduct up to and including temporary or permanent expulsion from Club membership (inc playing or coaching staff). In deciding what sanction is appropriate in a particular case the Committee 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 the Club is subject to allegations of unlawful discrimination in a court or tribunal, the Club Committee and employees (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.

Policy Review

The Club has made this policy available on the it's official website and keeps this policy under review, with additions or amendments made where deemed appropriate by the club, or under the advice of governing bodies or other relevant bodies.

Document Control

Mandatory Review Date

February 2026 – Reviewed no change

Next Review – February 2027

Signed: *Andrew Penman*

President

Penicuik Athletic Football Club

18 February 2024

Penicuik Athletic Football Club

Equality Policy

February 2026 revised

APPENDIX – Relevant legislation and forms of unacceptable discrimination

Legal Rights

Discrimination has been legally defined through the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination

Discrimination refers to unfavourable treatment on the basis of particular characteristics, which are known as the 'protected characteristics'. Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics are defined as age (employment only until 2012), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination 'on grounds of' a protected characteristic (1). This means that individuals will be protected if they have a characteristic, are assumed to have it, associate with someone who has it or with someone who is assumed to have it.

Forms of discrimination and discriminatory behaviour include the following:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination can be described as less favourable treatment on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to an individual or group that would put persons of a particular characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.

Discrimination arising from disability When a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified, this is unlawful. This type of discrimination only relates to disability.

Harassment

Is defined as unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or which creates an intimidating or hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Victimisation

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because he or she has made allegations or brought proceedings under the anti-discrimination legislation, or because they have helped another person to do so. To do so would constitute victimisation.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a form of personal harassment involving the misuse of power, influence, or position to persistently criticise, humiliate or undermine an individual.

(1) The exception to this is pregnancy and maternity, which does not include protection by association or assumption – a woman is only protected from discrimination on grounds of her own pregnancy.