WINSCOMBE FOOTBALL CLUB

DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Winscombe Football Club is committed to providing a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for players, coaches, officials, volunteers, members and visitors.

The Club prohibits the possession, use, supply or distribution of illegal drugs on Club premises or during Club activities. It will combine firm standards of conduct with appropriate welfare support.

2. Scope

This policy applies to registered players (including senior, women's and youth teams), coaches, managers, officials, committee members, employees, volunteers, parents, spectators and visitors while attending Club activities.

It applies to training, matches, tournaments, away fixtures, tours, social functions and other Club-organised activities.

3. Prohibited Activities

The following are prohibited on Club premises or during Club activities:

- Possessing, using, supplying, selling or distributing illegal drugs.
- Participating while impaired by illegal drugs, misused medication or other substances.
- Encouraging, pressuring or facilitating drug misuse by another person.
- Using performance-enhancing substances contrary to applicable FA anti-doping regulations.
- Misusing prescription medicines or supplying them unlawfully.

Suspected drug dealing or other serious criminal activity may be referred to the police.

4. Medication

Lawfully prescribed and over-the-counter medication may be used appropriately. Participants should check whether medication affects safe participation or is prohibited under applicable anti-doping rules.

Where medication could affect safety, seek healthcare advice and share necessary information confidentially with an appropriate Club official.

5. Safeguarding Children and Young People

Where concerns involve anyone under 18, the Club Welfare Officer must be informed promptly. Safety and welfare take priority.

Parents or guardians will normally be informed unless doing so could increase the risk of harm. Safeguarding advice or referrals will be sought where necessary; any disciplinary response will take account of age, circumstances and welfare needs.

No adult associated with the Club may supply or encourage illegal drug use by a young person.

6. Reporting Concerns

Concerns should be reported to a team manager, Club Welfare Officer, Club Secretary or Chairperson. Record relevant facts including date, location, individuals and the nature of the concern.

Reports will be handled discreetly. Individuals must not conduct their own searches, confront suspected dealers or put themselves at risk.

7. Responding to Incidents

The Club may remove an impaired person from participation, arrange medical assistance or safe transport, notify the Welfare Officer where safeguarding issues arise, record the incident and consider police or disciplinary referral.

In a medical emergency call 999. Suspected illegal substances should not be handled unnecessarily; seek police advice.

8. Disciplinary Action

Proportionate sanctions may include a formal warning, temporary suspension, removal from official duties, termination of membership or registration (subject to Club rules), or referral to the County FA or police.

Serious misconduct, including drug dealing or supplying drugs to minors, may warrant immediate protective restrictions pending investigation. Such restrictions do not establish guilt.

Individuals will normally have an opportunity to respond before a final decision and may appeal under the Club's disciplinary procedures.

9. Support and Rehabilitation

Individuals who disclose concerns about their own substance use will be treated sensitively and, where appropriate, signposted to professional support. Seeking help does not automatically trigger disciplinary action, but safety, safeguarding and serious misconduct may still require action.

10. Anti-Doping

Players and relevant participants must comply with applicable Football Association Anti-Doping Regulations and Social Drugs Regulations. The Club will cooperate with properly authorised investigations and testing. Players should check medications and supplements before use.

11. Confidentiality and Records

Information will be shared only where necessary for safeguarding, safety, lawful disciplinary action or legal obligations. Records will be securely held in line with data protection requirements and the Club's retention arrangements.

12. Responsibilities

The Club Committee oversees implementation and review. Managers and coaches promote compliance, respond to immediate risks and report concerns. The Club Welfare Officer coordinates safeguarding responses. All members and participants must comply and report serious concerns.

13. Related Policies and Shared Premises

Read this policy alongside the Club's Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedures, Health and Safety Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy.

For premises operated by Winscombe Sports & Social Club Limited, relevant premises rules and responsibilities also apply. The organisations should agree how shared-premises incidents will be handled.

14. Review

The Committee will review this policy annually or sooner following a significant incident, legal change or relevant FA regulatory amendment.

Committee Approval

Approved by	Winscombe Football Club Committee
Date approved	_____
Chairperson	_____
Next review	_____