

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Applicability

The IFA receives substantial public funding and provides a key service to the community as the body solely responsible for the administration and development of Association Football throughout Northern Ireland. Both the public and the Association's members are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from members of the IFA Board and its committees.

The aim of this Code is to

- (i) Provide assurance of those high standards, and
- (ii) Protect Board and committee members, both from criticism by others and from the effect of any misunderstanding they might themselves have of their responsibilities.

The Code applies to members of the Board and to committee members. It is a requirement that they acknowledge their awareness and acceptance of the content of the Code by signing a copy of it for retention with the Register of Interests maintained by the Association (see Appendix to this Code).

### Principles

You are expected to uphold the following principles.

**Selflessness:** You should take decisions based solely on the interests of the IFA and should not be influenced by any benefit for yourself or anyone else.

**Integrity:** You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence you in the performance of your duties. You should declare any private interests relating to your responsibilities and take steps to resolve any conflict arising.

**Objectivity:** You should make certain that, in the administration and development of football, the appointment of staff or the awarding of contracts, you ensure impartiality and that decisions are based on merit alone.

**Independence:** You should work for the benefit of the game at all levels and not be influenced by any sectional interest.

**Accountability:** You should accept accountability for your decisions and actions to the Association, to its members, and to the providers of public funds, and submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.

**Openness:** You should be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality so demand.

**Propriety:** You should be aware of the Articles of Association, Standing Orders, Regulations, and internal controls of the IFA and you should observe them scrupulously.

**Leadership:** You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

### **Financial Conduct**

Board and committee members have no authority as individuals to spend or benefit from IFA funds.

1. You should seek to safeguard IFA funds and resources from abuse, theft and waste.
2. You should be aware that it is potentially a serious criminal offence to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for the IFA showing favour to someone (or vice versa).
3. Only modest hospitality, given or received, may be deemed acceptable. By way of example, provided that no extravagance is involved, hospitality received could include tokens of goodwill, working lunches or social functions where you represent the IFA.
4. You should not receive any payment, grant or loan from IFA funds except as reimbursement of legitimate expenses.
5. You should not use IFA premises or facilities (including telephones, postage, or secretarial support) in connection with your own personal work or interests.
6. You should not take any outside appointment that conflicts with the interests of the IFA.
7. You should avoid, where possible, the use for private purposes of suppliers, contractors and consultants used by the IFA. If such use is necessarily made, you should declare it in the Register of Interests.
8. You should record any actual or potential conflict of interest in the Register of Interests. In considering whether an interest should be declared, the test is whether a member of the public might reasonably think that a particular interest could influence your judgment in the course of your IFA duties. Not all interests need to be declared: for example, if an interest were extremely remote or immaterial, it might not reasonably be thought to influence your judgment.
9. Interests include not only your own direct interests but also those of your immediate family who are those family members, or members of your household, who may be expected to influence you in your dealings with the IFA. These include as a minimum your spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister, and the spouses of any of these.
10. A potential conflict of interest should be identified at the earliest opportunity and notified to the chairman or relevant executive in advance of any meeting at which it will arise. Where such notification has taken place, you should not be issued with, consider or discuss papers relating to the matter in question. You should withdraw from the meeting during discussion of the matter and this should be noted in the minutes.

11. If you are present at a Board or committee meeting that is discussing an item that might be deemed to present a conflict for you that has not been identified in advance, you should declare the possibility of an interest. If the chairman considers that the interest is clear and material, you should take no part in the discussion or decision and leave the meeting.

### **Relationships**

1. You should show respect and courtesy to IFA staff. Close personal familiarity between you and individual staff members should be avoided.
2. You should observe impartially and fairly both the law and the Association's own procedures governing appointment, discipline and dismissal of staff. You should ensure that equality of opportunity is afforded to IFA staff and suppliers
3. You should not use informal channels to influence staff members on matters of IFA business.
4. You should not raise specific issues requiring a response at a meeting without giving prior notice either to the chairman or to the staff member responsible for that meeting.

### **Confidentiality**

1. You should not use for your own benefit or (except as required or authorised in the course of your IFA duties) divulge to any person confidential information acquired in the course of your IFA duties. The word 'divulge' includes passing information to someone in confidence when you should reasonably expect that it could then be made public.
2. Confidential information includes information relating to:
  - The business or football activities of the IFA
  - The activities of individuals or bodies with whom the IFA has dealings
  - Matters affecting IFA members, players, referees, Board and committee members, and staff.
3. The above does not apply to:
  - Information already in the public domain, except when its earlier release or publication has been improper
  - Information that you are required to provide in the course of any legal process
  - Information provided in accordance with the IFA's whistle-blowing policy.
4. Any written or electronic records held by you that contain confidential information shall be the property of the IFA and shall be returned by you upon termination of your relevant IFA duties (or upon earlier request).
5. You should be aware that if, following due process and irrespective of any disciplinary procedure within the IFA, you are found to have breached the above confidentiality requirements the IFA may be obliged to report the matter to the police if it is deemed that your actions, or those of a person to whom you have divulged information, might be criminal.

### **Collective Responsibility**

You should not seek to undermine, or persuade others to contravene, the majority decision of the Board or committee of which you are a member.

## IFA CODE OF ETHICS

This code is applicable to all Board and Committee members and staff of the Association, SDC and IFA Foundation, and the word 'Association' shall within the code be taken to mean the relevant body.

### **1. Introduction**

All applicable persons will be bound by this code and shall fulfil and exercise their duties and responsibilities. All must refrain from any activity or behaviour or attempted activity or behaviour which might give rise to the appearance or suspicion of improper conduct.

### **2. Articles of Association, Football regulations, Standing Orders, Disciplinary Code**

All applicable persons must abide by all the appropriate articles, regulations and codes as adopted by the appropriate Board.

*Articles of Association 21*

### **3. Neutrality**

In all their dealings with government institutions and all national and international bodies all persons shall remain politically neutral.

*Articles of Association 3*

### **4. Loyalty**

All persons shall have a duty of loyalty to the Irish FA, its officers, members, associations, leagues and clubs and to its rules and regulations as passed from time to time.

*Articles of Association 3 and 21*

## **5. Confidentiality**

All information received as part of their role within the Association shall be treated as and held as confidential and must not be shared with any third party. This obligation remains after the termination of the person's role within the Association.

*Articles of Association 13.5/14.9*

*Standing Orders 25/26*

## **6. Reporting and Whistle Blowing**

Persons who become aware of any infringement of the code must inform the CEO or Chairman in writing immediately outlining the breach, the person responsible and how the information was discovered.

*IFA Whistle Blowing Policy*

## **7. Co-operation**

All persons shall assist and cooperate truthfully with any investigation, committee or commission properly constituted by the Association. They must not take any action intended to obstruct, evade, prevent or otherwise interfere with any such investigation or case.

*IFA Disciplinary Code 1.5 and 37.13*

## **8. Conflicts of interest**

All persons must declare a conflict of interest when any matter in which they have, or may be perceived to have, an interest whether pecuniary or otherwise.

All persons shall annually complete an appropriate declaration of interests for themselves and their families.

*Articles of Association 21*

*Football Regulations 44*

*Standing Orders 34*

## **9. Gifts**

Small gifts may be accepted if they have a symbolic or trivial value and do not imply a request for any favourable treatment. The Board shall from time to time decide on the value of any gift which may be accepted. Any gift over that value must be reported and added to the gifts register and permission sought to enable this to be accepted.

It is a breach of the code to offer any gift or inducement to a third party.

*IFA Board Policy*

## **10. Discrimination and defamation**

No one shall offend the dignity or integrity of the Association, its officers nor any third party through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions. This will include, but not be limited to any words or actions on account of race, skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, gender, disability, language, religion, political opinion or sexual orientation.

Persons must not use offensive gestures or language to insult someone and shall not incite others to hatred or violence.

*IFA Disciplinary Code 27*

## **11. Forgery and Falsification**

No person shall forge any document, falsify an authentic document or knowingly use a forged or falsified document.

*IFA Disciplinary Code 30*

## **12. Abuse of position**

Persons shall not abuse their position in any way especially to take advantage of their position or for private gain.

*Standing Orders 34*

## **13. Betting, Gambling and similar activities**

Persons shall be forbidden from participating in, either directly or indirectly, betting, gambling, lotteries or similar events or transactions related to football matches or competitions. All persons must abide by the regulations put in place from time to time by the association to deal with such matters.

*Football Regulations 45 – 47*

**14. Bribery**

Persons shall not accept, give, promise, offer, receive, request or solicit any personal advantage (whether on their own or with third parties), nor shall they undertake any activity or behaviour that might give rise to the appearance or suspicion of the same.

*IFA Disciplinary Code 31*

**15. Misappropriation of funds**

Persons shall not misappropriate funds from the association or any member thereof.

*IFA Disciplinary Code*

**16. Manipulation of football matches or competitions**

Persons are forbidden from being involved in the manipulation of football matches and competitions. Such manipulation is defined as the unlawful influencing or alteration, directly (by act or omission) the result or any other aspect of a football match or competition whether for financial or sporting advantage.

*Football Regulations 46*

*IFA Disciplinary Code 32*

**Breach of code**

Any breach of the code shall in the first instance be reported to the IFA Board which shall decide on the process to be followed, whether a sanction is required or whether the matter should be referred to the IFA Disciplinary Committee to be further investigated and dealt with.

**Statement of Adherence by Board and Committee Members**

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the IFA Code of Conduct and the IFA Code of Ethics and will adhere to it.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_