



Spectator Suspension / Banning Policy

Season 2022-2023

1 July 2022



At Southampton Football Club we strive to ensure a safe, welcoming, and friendly environment for our fans to come and enjoy watching football across the Men's, Women's, and Youth teams.

Unfortunately, in instances whereby banning orders or suspensions have to be issued, the below information will provide clarity on how and when these may occur.

Policy Statement

1. This Spectator Suspension and Banning Policy is compliant with the requirements and principles of The Equality Act 2010.
2. This Policy must be applied fairly, equally, and consistently to all persons, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other unjustifiable grounds.
3. It also complements, and runs in conjunction with, Information Sharing Agreements held between Southampton Football Club, the Police, Football Authorities and other Football Clubs and relevant venues.

Purpose

1. The Spectator Suspension and Banning Policy is intended to maximize safety at matches involving Southampton Football Club, improve and protect the match experience of people attending such matches, protect the image and reputation of Southampton Football Club and, where necessary, safeguard the financial interests of the organisation.
2. Irrespective of any prohibition on attending football matches imposed by a Court of Law, Southampton Football Club requires a separate and transparent framework within which to impose realistic, consistent, and proportionate suspensions or bans on individuals attending such matches or other events organized by the Club in order to provide the above





safeguards.

3. Such suspensions or bans can be imposed for a variety of transgressions, but this process will predominantly address:
 - Misconduct deemed to have compromised safety or good order within a football stadium.
 - Conduct that presents a genuine, future risk to safety, or that could reasonably offend others or be taken to be discriminatory at matches involving Southampton Football Club;
 - Conduct that damages the reputation of Southampton Football Club.
 - Actions found to be in breach of the Ground Regulations or the Terms of Conditions of Entry applicable at St Mary's Stadium or any venue that any Southampton team is visiting,
or.
 - Conduct that is deemed contrary to the Core Values of the Club.

Underpinning Procedures

1. A Football Banning Order can be issued by the English Courts to ban a certain individual from attending football matches both home and abroad for a period of between 3 and 10 years. Additional and more precise conditions can also be imposed on a case-by-case basis. The authority for such an order is provided by The Football (Offences and Disorder) Act 1991.
2. However, following a breach of Ground Regulations or the Terms and Conditions of Entry, and not withstanding any ongoing or proposed pursuit of a Football Banning Order by the





Police, Southampton Football Club reserves the right to suspend or ban specific individuals from attending football matches or events and activities involving, hosted or organised by Southampton Football Club.

3. In addition to being suspended or banned from first team matches at St Mary's Stadium, such a suspension or ban may also prohibit:
 - Admission to, or presence at, all levels of Club representative matches, both home and away.
 - Attendance at, or upon, property either owned by or loaned/leased to the Club, including training grounds and retail/ticket outlets.
 - Involvement in any transport activities organised by the Club, and.
 - Attendance at any social functions organised by, or on behalf of, the Club.
4. Furthermore, such a suspension or ban will usually also incorporate:
 - Suspension or permanent cancellation of any Season Card and/or other concessionary privileges, and.
 - Suspension or cancellation of any match-ticket purchasing account.
5. Any period of suspension or ban involving a Season Card will be imposed without recompense, in accordance with the terms and conditions of issue. In the event of such cancellation no refund will be paid in respect of any unexpired portion of the Season Ticket.
6. Whilst each case will be dealt with on its own merits, the implications and scope of any suspension or ban will be outlined in clear terms within correspondence sent to the





individual concerned.

7. Should an incident involve any aggravating features such as, but not confined to, violent, threatening, dangerous, discriminatory behaviour, or involve any activity that threatens the safety management operation, Southampton Football Club reserves the right to increase the standard suspension or ban to reflect the seriousness of the circumstances.
8. A banning tariff has been set by Southampton Football Club which is outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

Schedule of interventions

1. Southampton Football Club reserve the right to eject any person/s from the Stadium failing to comply with the Stadium Regulations, or whose presence within the stadium is, or could reasonably be construed as constituting a source of danger, nuisance, or annoyance to any other person.
2. Southampton Football Club reserve the right to refuse admission, withdraw tickets or ban any person who, through their actions, behaviour, or opinion bring the Club's name or reputation into dispute.
3. The following is not conclusive, and other incidents will be categorised accordingly by Southampton Football Clubs Safety & Security Team.

Category A (Low)

Gesturing, Migration in Stand (Wrong area), Drinking in view, Ticket touting - individual resale, Adult on junior/concession ticket, persistent standing, smoking within the stadium, another ejected on ticket holders card.





Response

Issue a letter of warning

Action

- a) No additional measures to be taken unless deemed necessary by the Safety Officer.
- b) Advise Hampshire Police Football Intelligence Unit in line with the principles of the Information Sharing Agreement.

Category B (Medium)

Drunk, Underage drinking within the stadium, Ticket touting – multiple tickets, Disorderly / Abusive behaviour, Use of controlled drugs, accumulation of two Category A offences.

Response

Consider the issue of a letter requesting a meeting to discuss the incident, however these are seen as minor breaches and therefore attract a suspension only.

Letter will outline that the subject is suspended from all associated Club activities and property until such time or as a meeting has been held.

Action

Suspension for a period that encompasses a minimum of 5 'home' first team matches following date of decision (which may run consecutive to those already imposed).





Consider any additional and necessary exclusions.

Category C (High)

Drunk and disorderly, theft, breaching an existing ban, possession of an offensive weapon, affray, assault, foul/abusive/threatening behaviour, possession of a pyrotechnic, missile throwing or an accumulation of 'category B' offences,

Pitch Invasions.

Response

If appropriate pass fan details onto the police to be further investigated.

Consider a meeting to discuss the incident.

If a meeting is deemed to be appropriate, issue a letter to the subject requesting a meeting but also outlining that the subject is suspended from all associated Club activities and property until such time as a meeting has been held.

Action

Suspension for a period that encompasses a minimum of one calendar year from the date of the decision (which may run concurrent to any existing suspension already imposed).

Consider any additional and necessary exclusions.

Depending upon the frequency and relative seriousness of the incidents in question, a formal ban for a significantly longer period may be considered.





Category D (High+)

Discriminatory behaviour, assault on member of staff or an accumulation of 'category C' offences.

1. If appropriate pass fan details onto the police to be further investigated.

Consider a meeting to discuss the incident.

If a meeting is deemed to be appropriate, issue a letter to the subject requesting a meeting but also outlining that the subject is suspended from all associated Club activities and property until such time as a meeting has been held.

If appropriate pass fan details onto the police to be further investigated.

Action

Behaviour classified as being 'category D behaviour' will result in an indefinite ban from the stadium and all its activities.

Note: On occasions when a person ejected cannot be identified, the person obtaining the ticket or allowing use of their Season Card, will be held responsible for that person's actions and may be sanctioned accordingly.

Following any court decisions, the club may revisit individual cases and lift penalties if appropriate





Banning Process

1. On completion of the club's post-match investigation, anyone alleged to have breached Southampton Football Club rules and/or regulations shall be informed through a letter (or if necessary other appropriate communication) of such allegation. Their season ticket and ability to buy home/away tickets, shall be switched off. The person under investigation if appropriate, may be invited into a meeting with the safety officer and a disciplinary panel of at least 2 other persons. The person under investigation, has the right to bring an appropriate representative with them to this meeting. Anyone under the age of 18 years old, must be accompanied by an adult.

2. In the meeting;
 - Introductions
 - Allegations will be put to the person under investigation.
 - They will then receive a chance to reply to the allegation.
 - If appropriate any evidence will be shown to the person under investigation.
 - The disciplinary panel will then be allowed to question the person under investigation.
 - Finally, the Safety Officer will give a summary of the incident.

3. A letter will then be sent, informing the person under investigation, of the disciplinary panel's decision

Appeal Process

1. Appeal against any suspension or ban





2. Should any person appeal against a suspension or ban, then this appeal must be submitted in writing for the attention of the Chief Governance & Operations Officer at Southampton Football Club within 21 days of the date of the notification letter. No appeals received beyond this period will be considered. Any appeal MUST outline the reasons for the appeal and give information which the appellant may feel that any panel may find useful in making an appropriate decision.
3. The Chief Governance & Operations Officer will then ensure that a senior member of the Club Management considers the facts of the case and determines whether:
 - The terms of the existing suspension or ban will stand;
 - The terms of the existing suspension or ban will be reduced or amended;
 - The existing suspension or ban will be wholly rescinded.
4. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the appellant within 7 days.
5. If the appellant still feels aggrieved at the outcome they have recourse to the Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO).
6. The IFO has been established by the three English football authorities (The Football Association, The Premier League and The Football League) to receive and adjudicate upon complaints which have not been resolved at an earlier stage.
7. The IFO has been designated as the final stage for the adjudication of complaints which have not been resolved within football's complaints procedure. The IFO operates a system of non-binding arbitration.





8. In exercising its jurisdiction, the IFO does not seek to question the merits of judgements made by properly constituted Regulatory Commissions and Appeal Boards, unless there were shortcomings in the administrative processes which led to those judgements.
9. It is not the role of the IFO to retry cases, but it is its role to explore and review the procedures under which complaints have been dealt with and whether the outcomes were reasonable for all parties concerned.
10. Under the procedure agreed by the Football Governing Bodies, the adjudication of the IFO is final and there is no right of appeal against IFO decisions

Acceptable Behaviour Agreement

1. At the conclusion of any period of suspension or ban, the subject may be required to enter into a new and separate Acceptable Behaviour Agreement for an additional period of up to 12 months.
2. In all applicable cases, this requirement will be contained within the original correspondence sent to the subject at the outset of the ban.
3. The Acceptable Behaviour Agreement must be signed by the subject before any prohibitions are finally lifted.
4. Once an Agreement is signed, all existing prohibitions will be lifted with immediate effect and confirmed to the subject in writing.
5. Any breach of an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement will be dealt with in line with the original suspension / ban and will result in an additional suspension / ban being implemented



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SPECTATOR SUSPENSION / BANNING POLICY | June 2022

Breach / Offence	1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd Incident	Appeal Authority (only applicable for periods in excess of 5 games)	Review period
Drinking in view of the pitch	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	CG&OO	
Drunk entering / having entered the Stadium	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	CG&OO	
Misuse of concession ticket	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	CG&OO	
Persistent Standing	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	5 games suspension	CG&OO	
Obstructing Stairwells	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	5 games suspension	CG&OO	
Smoking in the Stadium	Ejection Only	5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	CG&OO	
Abusive / Threatening / Disorderly Behaviour	Minimum 5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	Minimum 12 months ban	CG&OO	
Use / Possession of Controlled Drugs	Minimum 5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	Minimum 12 months ban	CG&OO	
Ticket Touting	Minimum 5 games suspension	Minimum 10 games suspension	Minimum 12 months ban	CG&OO	
Damage to Stadium / Environs	Minimum 12 months ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Missile Throwing	Minimum 12 months ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Pitch Incursion	Minimum 12 months ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Possession / Use of any pyrotechnic within stadium or its environs	Minimum 12 months ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Possession of an Offensive / Prohibited Weapon	Minimum 12 months ban				
Assault	Minimum 12 months ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Abusive / Threatening / Disorderly / Violent Behaviour towards staff and / or Police	Lifetime Ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Racist / Discriminatory Abuse and/or behaviour	Lifetime Ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable
Threatening / Violent Behaviour	Lifetime Ban			CG&OO	Annually if applicable