



Oxford United Football Club
Sanctions and Banning Policy
Season 2024 – 2025

Safety and Operations Team

24 July 2024

PART 1: DEFINITIONS

In this Policy:

"Kassam Stadium" means Kassam Stadium, Grenoble Road, Oxford, OX4 4XP

"Club" means Oxford United Football Club.

"Malicious Communications" means conduct which intends to cause, or at least is foreseeable that it will cause, serious distress or anxiety to the target and/or recipient (including but not limited to any social media channel or platform, telephone calls and emails);

"Match" means all Club matches;

"Member" means any Club season ticket holder or any holder of other membership schemes

"Policy" means the Club's Sanctions and Banning Policy;

"Premises" means the Stadium and all other), land and buildings, including the footprint of such premises, owned and/or controlled by the Club which is being used for the holding of a Match or an Event;

"Sanctioning Officer" means an appropriately trained administrator who determines the appropriate sanction following the conclusion of an investigation that this Policy has been breached by a Member or any other individual;

"Sporting Events" means all sporting events held at the Kassam Stadium

In this Policy, the use of the singular includes the plural and vice versa.

PART 2: INTRODUCTION

Policy Statement

This Policy applies to any Member or other individual who commits a behavioural or ticketing offence as set out in Part 3, at any Match and/or Event at/on/in relation to any of the Premises. This includes offences under the Football (Offences) Act 1991.

This Policy is compliant with the requirements and principles of the Equality Act 2010 and will be applied accordingly.

This Policy complements the Stadium's Ground Regulations, Membership and Ticketing Terms and Conditions, the Ticket Touting Policy Statement and any other regulations specific to each of the Premises.

This Policy supersedes any and all other policies' application of sanctions, as of the date of publication, (July 2024)

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of and enhance the experience of all Members, Supporters, Event attendees and visitors to any of the Premises, regardless of the capacity they are attending in.

The framework of offences and corresponding sanctions alongside the appeals process outlined in this Policy are designed to give all Supporters, Members, Event attendees and visitors to any of the Premises clarity on how the Club will deal with transgressions.

PART 3: SANCTIONS

Sanction Conditions

Any period of ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction will apply to all Matches, Events and Premises and the right to access or purchase tickets, memberships or experiences.

There will be no refund of any monies paid for periods of ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction unless and only to the extent that such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction is overturned by the Club's Sanction Officer on appeal. To the extent such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction is overturned by the Sanctioning Officer, the Club will refund the cost of any Matches and/or Events paid for and missed as a result of such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction.

The Club does not assume any liability by virtue of this Policy or otherwise for any other direct, indirect or consequential losses arising in connection with the ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction.

Full details of any sanction and the process by which they are applied or appealed will be provided in writing.

Types of Offences and Sanctions

The following breakdowns are a guide for how the Club will treat behavioural and ticketing offences at Matches and Events, recognising that they are distinct and require separate sanctions.

Offences will be reported to the police where appropriate. In the event of a police investigation, the Club's own investigation will be suspended until the police investigation and any proceedings which might follow have concluded.

The Club will deal with each case on an individual basis and reserves the right to use its discretion within the recommended sanction bands provided below. In cases where proven offences involve aggravating features such as violent, threatening or discriminatory behaviour

or where the Club's safety operation is impaired, the Club reserves the right to apply a greater sanction than outlined below.

The Club also reserves the right to extend or reduce the recommended length of time of sanctions if the original sanction falls within the football off-season period or to reflect the forthcoming Match fixture schedule at the time of sanction. This is to ensure that a sanction is proportionate to the incident in question.

Where offences are committed by minors, the Club reserves the right to extend the ban to their accompanying parent(s) or guardian(s). This includes, but is not limited to, cases involving entering the field of play during Matches and Sporting Events and the possession and/or use of pyrotechnics, which are defined as handheld flares, fireworks and smoke bombs.

Behavioural Sanctions

Any Member, supporter or other individual who commits a behavioural offence at any Match, at/on/in relation to any of the Premises will be subject to the following recommended sanctions:

Level	Offence	Recommended Sanction
1	<p>Smoking (including e-cigarettes)</p> <p>Persistent standing in the Stadium's unlicensed standing areas</p> <p>Refusal to follow stewards' reasonable instructions.</p> <p>Misuse of Match tickets (e.g. in wrong area, using concession ticket)</p> <p>Drinking alcohol in view of the pitch during Matches</p>	<p>Written warning</p> <p>Acceptable Behavioural Contract (ABC)</p>
2	<p>Possession of any prohibited items listed in Ground Regulations (increased sanction possible depending on item)</p> <p>Repeated refusal to follow steward's reasonable instructions resulting in ejection</p>	<p>Up to a four (4) Match ban</p> <p>Acceptable Behavioural Contract (ABC) subsequently</p>
3	<p>Damaging property or facilities</p> <p>Attempting to gain access without a valid ticket</p> <p>Attending any Match while subject to a suspension as a result of an offence under the terms of this Policy</p>	<p>Up to a ten (10) Match/ ban</p> <p>Acceptable Behavioural Contract (ABC) subsequently</p>

4	<p>Violent or aggressive behaviour towards other Members, visitors to any of the Premises, staff or police</p> <p>Any other criminal activity including, but not exclusive to:</p> <p>Possession of pyrotechnics</p> <p>Entering the field of play or breach of segregation areas</p> <p>Throwing missiles</p> <p>Possession of an illegal substance</p> <p>Assault</p> <p>Use of discriminatory language</p> <p>Sending and/or relaying malicious communications targeted / directed at Club staff and/or players</p>	<p>Up to and including an indefinite ban</p>
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Where identifiable, Members, supporters and other individuals using discriminatory and/or threatening or abusive language towards Club staff and/or players via social media, telephone calls or emails will be treated as if the offence has been committed at any of the Premises. The Club reserves the right to use its discretion as to what constitutes discriminatory and/or threatening or abusive language, and such offence may incur a sanction up to and including an indefinite ban.

If requested for away Match fixtures, and where the presence of a banned Member, supporter or individual would pose a risk to others (in cases where offences have been violent, discriminatory, or threatening in nature), the Club will provide details of Members, supporters

and individuals sanctioned with a ban to relevant opposition clubs. Information (including name, address, date of birth and photo where applicable) will be supplied in line with information sharing agreements and approved by the Club's Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

The Club is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and manages personal data in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

The Club may impose sanctions in the event of a Member, supporter or an individual breaching regulations at another stadium during an away Match fixture, following an investigation consistent with our Policy for home Matches.

Ticketing Sanctions

Any Member, supporters or other individual who commits a ticketing offence including the unauthorised touting, selling or trading of tickets in connection with any Match will be subject to the following recommended sanctions:

Offence	Recommended Sanction
Unauthorised touting or selling home Match tickets for equal to or less than the face value.	First Offence: Written warning / Acceptable Behavioural Contract Second or subsequent offences: Up to an indefinite ban
Unauthorised touting or selling home Match tickets for more than face value.	Up to an indefinite ban
Unauthorised touting or selling home Match tickets to visiting football supporters.	Up to an indefinite ban
Unauthorised touting or selling away Match tickets for equal or less than face value.	First Offence: Written warning / Acceptable Behavioural Contract Second or subsequent offences: Up to an indefinite ban
Unauthorised touting or selling away Match tickets for more than face value	Up to an indefinite ban

All Match tickets are prohibited from being sold via third parties. All tickets for away Matches cannot be resold or transferred outside the conditions of purchase without express authorisation under any circumstances.

The Club reserves the right to act, including but not limited to precautionary action, against any Members, supporters or other individuals who are reasonably believed by the Club to be linked to anyone found to have sold Match tickets unofficially or in contravention of the Club's Ticket and Membership Terms and Conditions. This can be a link via previous purchase history, recorded methods of payment or by postal and/or email address.

SANCTION PROCESS

Any person subject of (i) any police investigation into an alleged offence under this Policy, up to the conclusion of that investigation and any subsequent proceedings; and (ii) any subsequent or separate investigation by the Club will be suspended from the right to attend all home and away Oxford United Matches, Events and Premises until such time as the police and club investigations have been completed.

In addition, any person subject to a police or club investigation in accordance with the police will also have their right to access or purchase tickets, memberships or experiences suspended for the duration of that suspension.

Any investigation by the Club may draw on a range of evidential sources including, but not exclusive to steward reports, police information and intelligence, witness statements, incident reports control room logs, CCTV footage, media and social media footage and coverage.

At the conclusion of any police investigation, where an individual is charged to court, they will remain suspended until such time as the court proceedings are completed. Where an individual is bailed by the police or is subject to investigation by the police for such an offence but not on bail, they will remain suspended until such time as the police investigation is concluded, or until the Club considers the suspension is no longer needed.

At the conclusion of any police investigation, and where no criminal charges have been brought, the Club will consider whether any breaches of the above policy have occurred. Therefore, the individual will remain suspended until such time as that investigation has been completed and the individual advised in writing (Sanction Notice) by the Club of any sanction or action to be taken with a rationale outlining the decision. The Club will send the Sanction Notice to the Member's or individual's email address or postal address on file, or as advised by the police or courts.

The range of sanctions are as shown in the above matrix.

Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)

ABC's set clear expectations and standards from both sides, the individual concerned and the Club, and highlight what is and is not acceptable. It makes all accountable for their actions and facilitates clear communication between the parties in this regard.

For all Members, supporters and individuals that have received a ban by the Club will be required to sign an ABC before being able to return to the Premises.

For any Members, supporters or individuals who breach their issued ABC, they will automatically receive a one (1) year ban from breach date. ABC's will cover behaviour at both home and away matches involving Oxford United Football Club.

PART 4: APPEALS

A decision or sanction can be appealed by submitting grounds for the appeal (together with any supporting evidence) in writing to Safety@oufc.co.uk within fifteen (15) working days of the Club sending the Sanction Notice.

Appeal Process

Upon receipt of an appeal against and supporting evidence, the investigating officer may, after considering the evidence presented, consider upholding, reducing or withdrawing the original sanction referring the case to the Head of Operations for review. Any such decision will be presented in writing to the appellant with an outline rationale for the decision.

In the event an individual wishes to further appeal against the decision or sanction the individual can request an appeal hearing or meeting with the Head of Operations acting as the Sanctioning Officer on behalf of the Football Club who will conduct a review into the case to consider whether the decision or sanction has been reasonably considered and is proportionate.

The investigating officer may refer any appeal directly to the Sanctioning Officer where necessary.

Where an appeal hearing or meeting date has been set and is required to be rescheduled, the appeal must, where reasonably practicable be heard within two (2) months of the originally scheduled appeal hearing date.

One of two appeal formats will be selected at the discretion of the Sanctioning Officer:

- a Virtual hearing held remotely; or
- an in-person hearing.

The Club shall have the right to schedule the date and format of the appeal hearing at its discretion and it is under no obligation to accommodate requests for the hearing to be held on a specific date or in a specific format.

The Member, supporter or individual will be invited to appeal their sanction remotely or in person. Members, supporters and individuals under the age of eighteen (18) must be accompanied by their parent/legal guardian who may speak on their behalf. The Club will not pay any costs (including for the avoidance of doubt any travel, accommodation and all other costs and expenses) associated with anyone attending an appeal.

Sanctioning Officer's Decisions

The Sanctioning Officer may withdraw, reduce, maintain or increase the original sanction and will be considered final. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and kept on file with details shared with relevant departments within the Club.

In accordance with the Sanction Conditions in Part 3, there will be no refund of any monies paid for periods of ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction unless and only to the extent that such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction is overturned by the Club's Sanctioning Officer. To the extent such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction is overturned by the Sanctioning Officer, the Club will refund the cost of any Matches and/or Events paid for and missed as a result of such ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction.

The Club does not assume any liability by virtue of this Policy or otherwise for any other direct, indirect or consequential losses arising in connection with the ejection, suspension, ban or other sanction.

If a Member or an individual is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they will be advised that they can take their case to the Independent Football Ombudsman.

PART 5: EDUCATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Discriminatory Language or Behaviour and Education Sessions

The Club may direct any Member, supporter or individual found to have used discriminatory language or behaviour attend an education session with an independent equality and diversity specialist before their full sanction is determined. A failure to agree to attend such a session will result in a maximum sanction.

Restorative Conversation

The Club may direct that as a condition of returning to any of the Premises, any Member, supporter or individual found to have used violent, threatening and/or abusive language or behaviour towards other Members, supporters, event attendees and/or members of Club staff will enter a restorative conversation process with a Club representative at the Club's offices. Such conversation may include an educational session on the Ground Regulations and the contents of this Policy before their sanction is served.