



Plymouth Argyle Football Club Standards Panel Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the processes of the club's Standards Panel.

The Standards Panel exists to ensure that all complaints with regards to incidents of supporter misconduct are properly investigated, and the panel are authorised to impose appropriate sanctions proportionate to the seriousness of the incident.

These sanctions might include a stadium/premises suspension of any period, the cancellation of any season tickets, or the prevention of any interaction with our social media channels.

The panel works on a burden of proof of 'balance of probabilities' i.e., is the alleged incident more likely to have happened, or not.

The panel is comprised of club senior management.

Reporting Procedure

Any incident of concern, or complaint related to an individual's misconduct, can be made/reported to the club at any time.

Should any individual wish to bring an incident to the club's attention, they can do so by:

- Reporting this verbally to a club member of staff
- Telephoning the club on 01752 562561
- Emailing the club via argyle@paafc.co.uk
- Discreetly using our matchday reporting service, by texting the word "ARGYLE" + your message to 66777

The club may follow up to obtain more information if necessary.

Following receipt of a report of supporter misconduct, the club will investigate. If appropriate, the club may then refer the matter to the Standards Panel.

Timeframes

The exact length of time a case can take to resolve can vary due to a range of factors, such as the availability of the panel to meet/review cases, variations in the time required to investigate a case or gather evidence, requiring input from external authorities or awaiting the conclusion of legal proceedings (if relevant), or other club operations.

The panel will in all cases endeavour to resolve all cases in as timely a manner as possible.

Banned Supporters

Supporters who have received a ban or suspension by the Standards Panel are not entitled to any refunds for any purchases relating to matches/events which take place during their suspension period. This applies to suspensions with a defined end date, indefinite suspensions and interim suspensions that may be imposed while an incident is ongoing or under investigation.



Standards Panel Process

Once a matter has been referred to the Standards Panel, the following steps will be taken:

1. The alleged offender will be written to (via post and email), informing them of the allegations and inviting them to provide a statement of events from their perspective.

The individual will have 7 days (from the date of the letter) by which to respond and submit their statement. If no reply is received by this time, it will be assumed that the individual does not wish to submit a statement and the panel will consider the case without this.

2. Club staff will investigate the matter and gather any other relevant and available evidence pertaining to the incident in question. This will be submitted to the panel, along with the alleged offender's statement, for review.
3. The panel will meet to review the case and all available evidence. A decision will be made as to whether any action is to be taken. Sanctions/outcomes may include, but are not limited to:
 - No further action
 - Written warning
 - Recommendation to engage with educational rehabilitation programmes
 - Stadium/premises suspension of any length
4. Individual(s) are written to, informing them of the outcome and whether any sanctions are being imposed.
5. If a sanction has been imposed, the individual has 7 days (from the date of the letter informing the individual of the outcome of the Standards Panel meeting) in which to submit a written appeal.

Should no reply be received by this time, it will be assumed the individual does not wish to submit an appeal, and the sanction initially imposed by the panel will stand.

Should the individual choose to appeal, the appeal will be heard by the club's Chief Executive, who does not sit on the Standards Panel and therefore acts as an adjudicator independent to the panel. They will review the alleged offender's appeal statement plus all available evidence and make a final decision on whether to uphold the panel's initial decision or to amend or remove the sanction.

6. Affected individuals are then written to, informing them of the outcome of the appeal hearing. The hearing of an appeal by the Chief Executive represents the final stage in the Standards Panel process and as such, the decision made at this stage is final and there are no further avenues of appeal.