



Code of Conduct

2020 Edition





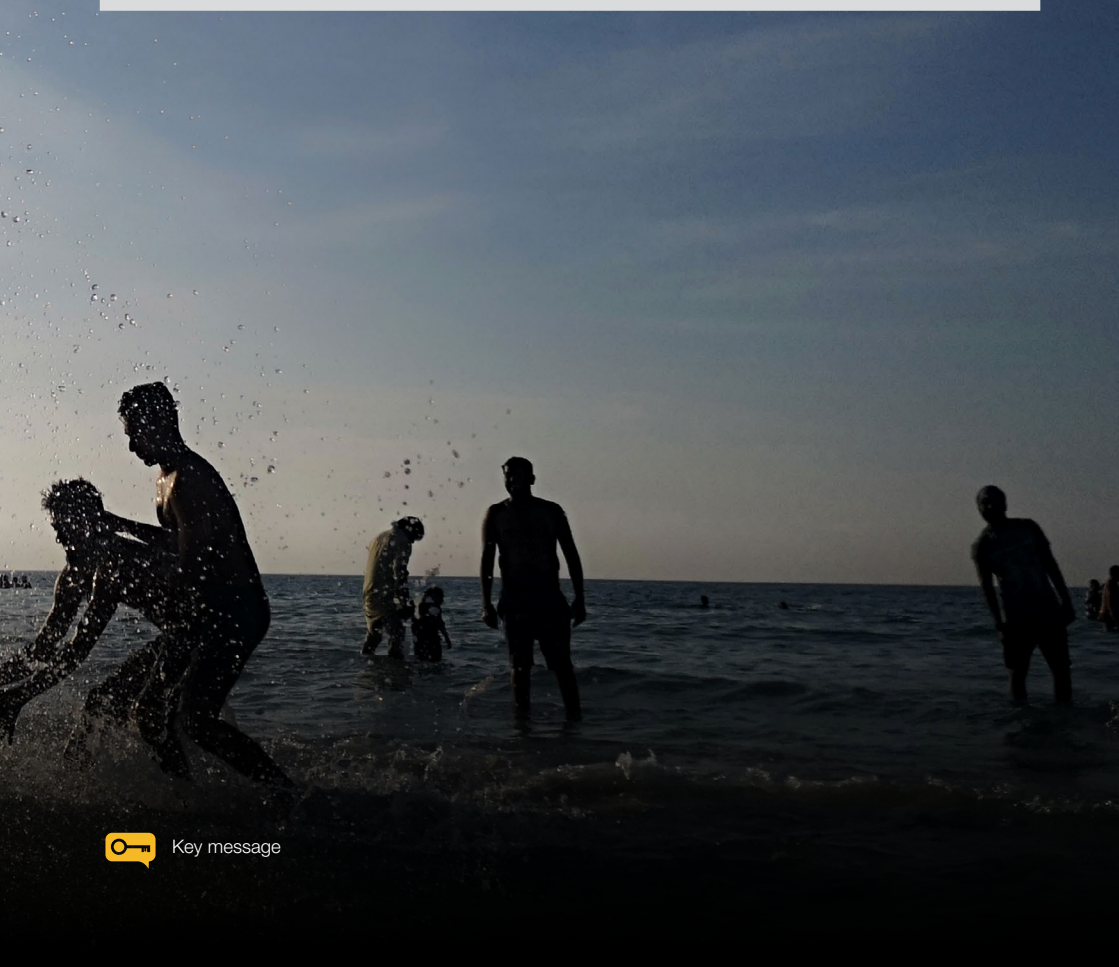
Code of Conduct

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Key message



INTRODUCTION BY THE AFC PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

This Code of Conduct is one of the ways in which we put into practice the key values that underpin the game of football on the pitch into our activities off the pitch. It aims to assist the AFC in reflecting such principles in the everyday work of the organisation. The notions of respect, fair play and teamwork must flow through all that we do in our administrative and other activities, just as we expect to see them displayed by the players on the field of play.

The principles set out in this document are built on the idea that everything we do in connection with our work for the AFC will be, and should be, measured against the highest possible standards of ethical conduct and integrity.

As the leaders of Asia's football family, we must set the bar high.

Our commitment to demonstrating the highest standards will help us set a positive example for football administrators and participants at all levels of the game

across the Continent, among our Member Associations, their leagues, clubs and players, and down to the grassroots.

Furthermore, our positive behaviour and integrity will help the AFC to hire and retain committed people, to deliver top level competitions, and to attract fans and players to the game.

Respect for ourselves and our colleagues is key to fostering respect for the game of football, and for those who participate in and contribute to it.

I encourage you to read this Code of Conduct and to uphold the AFC's values.

We all have a personal responsibility to adhere to it and to encourage others to do the same.

Thank you.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President



CODE OF CONDUCT

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The following persons are subject to and bound by this Code of Conduct:

- AFC employees: All persons engaged in full or part-time service with the AFC under a contract of employment (whether on a permanent, fixed-term or other basis). This includes, without limitation, the AFC General Secretary, AFC Directors, Heads of Unit and all other AFC staff members.
- All persons who are elected, appointed, authorised and/or assigned by the AFC to carry out a function and/or who otherwise represent the AFC in an official capacity. This includes, without limitation, the AFC President, the members of the AFC Executive Committee and other AFC Committees, all persons appointed to exercise an official function for, or on behalf of, the AFC at any match, competition, function, course or other events organised by the AFC, and any volunteers engaged by the AFC in connection with its events and competitions.



In recognition of the collaborative nature of the AFC's relationship with its staff, representatives and all football stakeholders in the region, the various persons who are subject to and bound by this Code of Conduct are referred to collectively as the **"AFC family"** throughout this document.

Furthermore, while this Code of Conduct is specifically written for the abovementioned persons, the AFC also expects all contractors, consultants, service providers and others who may be temporarily engaged in the performance of work or services for the AFC to follow the Code of Conduct in connection with their work for the AFC. Any failure of an AFC contractor, consultant or other service provider to follow this Code of Conduct may result in the termination of their relationship with the AFC.

3. PURPOSE OF THE AFC CODE OF CONDUCT

The observance of the principles set out in this Code of Conduct is essential to the AFC and its objectives, in particular the delivery and realisation of its Vision and Mission.



The AFC takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of illegal, immoral or unethical behaviour by its employees and other representatives.

The AFC's employees and other representatives play a key role in the protection, promotion and improvement of football in Asia, and must show a commitment to the unifying, educational, cultural and humanitarian values that underpin the game, as well as the key concepts of fair play and integrity of conduct.

The core values of unity, professionalism and leading by positive example should be reflected by all those acting for, or on behalf of, the AFC in all that we do in order to ensure that the AFC's competitions, matches and the conduct of its people conform to the highest ethical and sporting standards.

4. DUTY TO REPORT

Members of the AFC family must immediately report any conduct or behaviour which is or which might be considered to be a violation or potential violation of this Code of Conduct or any other AFC rules or regulations. An omission to report any such violation shall be considered to be a violation or potential violation of this Code of Conduct.



The AFC does not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who report violations of this Code of Conduct.

Reports can be made directly via email to the following email address [integrity@the-afc.com] or using the AFC

Integrity App (which is available online at both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store).

In case of any doubt as to whether a report should be made or to whom a report should be made, individuals are encouraged to seek guidance from the AFC's Head of Integrity.

The AFC handles all reports of misconduct confidentially (to the extent practically and legally possible).

5. CORE PRINCIPLES FOR BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT


All persons bound by this Code of Conduct shall comply with the following principles at all times:

5.1. Integrity and ethical behaviour

Members of the AFC family must behave ethically and act with integrity.

You must keep in mind that the AFC should lead by example, and that fostering a reputation for integrity is of the utmost importance in order for the AFC to successfully pursue its objectives.

You must also be mindful that your words and actions reflect on the AFC and on football generally. Therefore, anything you say or do must be consistent with the highest ethical standards.

 To act with integrity means to act honestly, showing a consistent adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.

5.2 Respect, dignity and fair play

Members of the AFC family must treat everyone with respect in order to create a positive work environment.

This involves showing due regard for the personal dignity, privacy and personal rights of all colleagues and football stakeholders. You have a duty to act with dignity and decorum at all times when carrying out your duties and functions.



Showing respect involves an acceptance that other customs and cultures are different from your own, and behaving towards colleagues in a way that does not cause offence.

The AFC also believes in the importance of fair play and the AFC family should be guided by this principle at all times.

5.3 Zero tolerance of discrimination and harassment

The AFC is a diverse organisation, with employees, representatives, Member Associations and other stakeholders from across the continent of Asia and beyond. The AFC promotes inclusiveness and diversity.



Discrimination involves treating a person or group of persons unfairly, especially on the grounds of race, age, disability, religion or gender.

This diversity is a strength and, as a member of the AFC family, you must not commit, support or tolerate discrimination, harassment or abuse of any kind. Turning a blind eye to instances of discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

5.4 Safeguarding children and young people

The AFC is fully committed to protecting children and young people from any kind of harm and promoting their wellbeing. Accordingly, the AFC seeks to ensure a safe, enjoyable and inclusive environment for the millions of children and young people who regularly play, coach and referee football across Asia, as well as those who volunteer in support of the AFC's activities and attend the AFC's competitions as fans.



Any facts or suspicions relating to the mental, physical and/or sexual abuse of children and young people must be immediately reported.

In this regard, members of the AFC family must comply with all AFC policies and rules relating to safeguarding at all times. Special consideration should be given to the (actual and potential) involvement of children and young people when implementing projects in order that appropriate safeguards can be put in place.

5.5 Team mentality

Teamwork is essential, both on and off the pitch. Creating a team mentality and a positive working environment is the responsibility of all members of the AFC family.

Being part of a family also involves tolerance, as well as the provision of support to colleagues. As mentioned above, members of the AFC family are encouraged to report any disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour in order that appropriate action can be taken.

Members of the AFC family should have a positive attitude when performing their duties, and should look to provide help and encouragement to colleagues when needed. Trusting in and cooperating with colleagues will contribute to a happy and productive work environment which blends each other's strengths.



The AFC strongly encourages its staff and representatives to come forward with any concerns and problems, and pledges to support its employees regarding any physical and mental health issues.

5.6 Political neutrality

The AFC is neutral in matters of politics and religion. The use of AFC funds and resources for political activities is strictly prohibited.

Accordingly, members of the AFC family must be apolitical when carrying out their duties and functions, particularly when carrying out duties on the territory of an AFC Member Association, and at AFC events and Congresses.



Members of the AFC family must be careful as regards their personal political activities and statements, ensuring that these cannot be misinterpreted as reflecting the AFC's policy or stance on any particular issue.

5.7 Compliance with laws and regulations

Members of the AFC family must adhere to all AFC rules and regulations when carrying out their duties and functions, as well as all applicable laws and international standards under which the AFC operates (in particular as regards money laundering, corruption, the financing of terrorism, customs and taxation, data protection and human rights).



Money laundering involves the concealment of the origins of illegally obtained money. You should be wary in cases where you are asked to make cash payments or to carry out unusual money transfers.

You must be on guard to spot signs of potential illegal activity and report any such activities immediately.

5.8 Zero tolerance of bribery and corruption

The AFC rejects and condemns all forms of bribery and corruption.

Members of the AFC family shall not offer or accept gifts in exchange for improper business or personal advantages, or to influence official decisions.



Corruption involves dishonest and/or fraudulent conduct (typically involving financial or other benefits, and often some form of bribery). Bribery means the offer of anything of value with the intent to obtain or retain an improper business or personal advantage.

Gifts of a reasonable value may be accepted under certain circumstances in the ordinary course of business. In case of any doubt, you should contact integrity@the-afc.com for clarification.

5.9 Acting in the best interests of the AFC and avoiding conflicts of interest

Members of the AFC family must always act in the best interests of the AFC and it is the personal responsibility of each member of the AFC family to avoid conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest is any situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity. No

member of the AFC family should use their position for improper personal gain.

You may have a conflict of interest if you, or a close relative, has a financial interest in an AFC business partner, or in circumstances where you supervise or are supervised by a relative, or if you are considering hiring a relative as an employee. In case of any doubt, you should contact [integrity@the-afc.com] for clarification. Disclosing potential conflicts of interest in advance is best practice.

This duty to act in the best interests of the AFC also includes the need to safeguard and protect the AFC's assets. The AFC's assets can be physical (e.g. office furniture, the AFC HQ buildings and any work documents), but also include the AFC's intellectual property (e.g. trademarks, brands and logos, copyright, designs and ideas).

This duty also involves keeping all business information strictly confidential (e.g. strategic plans, contract terms and rates, fees and other financial information, and details of internal procedures).

5.10 Transparency and responsible communication

Transparency is a key component of good governance. Accordingly, the AFC strives to maintain transparency in how it governs the game of football in Asia and when dealing with its stakeholders.

Members of the AFC family play a key role in this important area by ensuring that their business communications



Confidential information should only ever be shared in exceptional circumstances and on a need-to-know basis, even among the AFC family, and nothing should ever be shared outside of the organisation without the appropriate approval(s) being sought in advance.



You should remember that only specifically authorised persons may use social media to speak on the AFC's behalf. Similarly, requests for information from third parties (in particular, the media) should always be referred to the AFC Communications Department using [media@the-afc.com].

and internal documents are clear, truthful and accurate, by avoiding misleading and inaccurate statements, and by avoiding the implementation of difficult to understand practices and policies.

Openness in communication is to be encouraged, however, members of the AFC family must ensure that all external communications (including on social media) are consistent with the AFC's position, and its practices and procedures.

Please note that what AFC family members publish externally reflects on the entire organisation and anything posted on social media, even in a private capacity, must be consistent with this Code of Conduct and the AFC's official position.

5.11 Social and environmental responsibility

The AFC is committed to taking its social and environmental responsibilities seriously, particularly with regard to sustainability. The AFC family should contribute to positive social change through football and aim to minimise the negative impact of all of the organisation's activities on the environment, promoting sustainability within our sphere of influence.



The AFC family must be mindful of the broader social and environmental context within which the AFC operates. When carrying out your duties, this includes taking a responsible attitude to the use of air conditioning, the use of reusable drinking vessels ahead of disposable bottles and cups, and avoiding unnecessary printing.

5.12 The use of drugs and other forms of substance abuse

In line with the key role that the AFC plays in the fight against drugs and doping in sport, the AFC takes a zero-tolerance approach to substance abuse by members of the AFC family.



Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of chemical and other substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs.

5.13 No betting or match manipulation

The AFC strictly prohibits participation in, either directly or indirectly, betting, gambling, lotteries or similar events or transactions which are related to football.

Involvement in any form of manipulation or unlawful influencing of match results is strictly prohibited.



The AFC Integrity App is an important support tool for players, officials, management and anyone who might have information pertaining to suspicious behaviour, incidents or approaches related to potential match fixing and/or betting manipulation.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The AFC expects all persons who are subject to and bound by this Code of Conduct to know and follow the above-mentioned principles. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary and/or other action being taken against the relevant individual, including termination of contracts (subject to applicable laws). In appropriate cases, action may also be taken under the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code.

7. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

This Code of Conduct shall be issued in the two official languages of the AFC (English and Arabic). In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the different language texts of this Code of Conduct, the English text shall be authoritative.

8. ENFORCEMENT

This Code of Conduct was adopted by the AFC Executive Committee on 25 November 2020. It supersedes all previous texts and comes into force with immediate effect.

On behalf of the AFC Executive Committee:

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
President

Dato' Windsor John
General Secretary





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