

EJECTION POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the club's Crowd Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour Plan (Document 8.3).

Reading FC are committed to providing a positive atmosphere for all people attending matches and spectator events at the Select Car Leasing Stadium. Reading FC publish the English Football League Ground Regulations at all entrances to the ground, and at other strategic positions around the ground, and admission to the stadium will be taken as agreement to comply with the conditions included therein.

Any breach of ground regulations is something which could result in the offender being ejected from the ground. However, if Reading FC did this to all offenders it would very soon find itself in total conflict with the fans, and with a much lower attendance than normal. The Safety Officer will, therefore, expect the stewards to use discretion before exercising their power to eject without compromising on safety.

First time offenders should be monitored to see if they continue to breach the regulations. If they are seen to do so, then the control room should be contacted for the CCTV to be focused on the individual before giving a warning. This assists with capturing evidence to support any ejections and negates any subsequent appeals relating to club bans as well as for intelligence gathering.

In all but the most serious cases the individual will be warned about their behaviour and told that a repeat would result in them being ejected from the ground. It is helpful to point out to the individual that they are being monitored on CCTV.

If the person continues to breach the regulations, then stewards should consider ejection. This will be done with consultation through match control unless time or the actions of the miscreant precludes this. Before being given permission to eject the Safety Officer (Match Commander may be consulted in policed games) will consider the impact of an immediate ejections rather than waiting to deal with the individual at half time, full time or when the offender leaves the area and presents themselves in an environment which allows for their safe ejection.

When permission has been granted a team of 3 response stewards should be considered to conduct the ejection due to their expertise. Two of these will play a hands-on role, while the third monitors and observes the nearby crowd, providing radio coms with control.

The ejected person will be removed from public view and will be taken to the nearest exit. En-route if possible, they should pause at a camera point and request a photo be

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taken of the ejected person and the steward removing him/her.

All ejections will be recorded in a steward's pocket notebook and on the member of staff's body worn camera if they are wearing one. The details will be passed on to the Safety Officer post-match to decide on further action. Every attempt should be made to get the individual's name, address and date of birth, together with their seat number / ticket. Also, the reasons for the ejection and the name of the steward(s) taking the action need to be recorded. If personal details are refused, then a full personal description to be recorded once the ejection has taken place.

If present, police will receive ejected people when they leave the ground in order to assist with identification etc., although the Safety Officer does not expect stewards to have to physically detain the person for an extended period in this case. In policed matches handover will be straightforward. In non-policed games if the delay is to be significant then the ejected person will be released at the gate.

In more serious cases including incidents of assault or racial chanting, the detail of the offence must be reported to control before any action is taken. Again, consideration will be given to the best approach, however, an early, rather than a delayed ejection should be the norm.

If the breach of regulations is a criminal offence, then the police will be called to deal with the offender once they have been removed from the stand.

If the police are present inside the ground because of the match categorisation then their role will be to observe the stewards conducting the ejection, rather than to lay hands on in the first instance unless their assistance is required.

Remember all activity is recorded on CCTV so it will be possible to build up an accurate picture of an offender if his/her behaviour is drawn to match day staff's attention at an early stage.

Approaches to specific offences:

Standing - Challenge those who persistently stand in front of others in seated areas, preferably in a way that makes it clear that the steward is only trying to help other supporters enjoy the game. Co-ordinate any challenges to standing in seated areas through control so that a corporate approach is seen to be taken by all fans. Those who continue to fail to comply will be warned, filmed during the play and can then be removed at half time, or appropriate time when safe to do so, after Safety Officer approval.

Swearing – Challenge repeat offenders, especially in the family areas. Again, warn in a way that points out the impact the behaviour is having on supporters around them. Those who continue will be warned, filmed during play and can then be removed after Safety Officer approval. Hate crime would be an immediate ejection when safe to do so.

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Smoking (including e cigarettes) – Challenge the behaviour, invite the individual from the stand and explain the breach of ground regulations. Given the opportunity to stop the behaviour and return to the stand or leave the ground voluntarily.

Drinking – Police and the club are anxious that supporters comply with the no alcohol in sight of the pitch rules. Anyone caught breaching this rule will be taken from the stand and ejected if they fail to take note of any warnings given by stewards.

Gestures – as per swearing.

With these matters, stewards ensure that their challenge is firm but polite and explain that the behaviour is a breach of regulations and will result in an ejection if it continues.

Stewards are aware that they must not get drawn into lengthy arguments with either offenders, or those surrounding them, but must have the confidence to explain the action being taken.

If unsure what action to take the staff seek advice from match control via the stand supervisors.

The power to eject:

Comes from the ground regulations;

Any authorised steward may refuse entry to (or eject from) the Ground any person:

- 1.1 that fails (or in the Club's reasonable opinion is likely to fail) to comply with these Ground Regulations or any reasonable instruction issued by a police officer or authorised steward; and/or
- 1.2 whose presence within the Ground is, or could (in the Club's reasonable opinion), constitute a source of danger, nuisance or annoyance to any other person.

Your power to detain:

A person other than a constable may arrest without a warrant-

- (a) anyone who is (or who he reasonably suspect is) in the act of committing an indictable offence;
- (b) where an indictable offence has been committed,
 - anyone who is guilty of the offence;
 - anyone whom he has reasonable grounds for suspecting to be guilty of it.

The power may only be exercised if it appears to the person making the arrest that it is not reasonably practicable for a constable to make it instead.

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And it is necessary to arrest to prevent the person in question.

- (a) causing physical injury to himself or any other person;
- (b) suffering physical injury;
- (c) causing loss of or damage to property; or
- (d) making off before a constable can assume responsibility for him.

Banning and action by the Safety Officer after the match

Action taken against the people ejected will vary according to the nature of the offence for which they have been dealt with. For that reason, it is essential that full details are recorded and passed on to the Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer will be responsible for considering the information and determining the length of the club ban to be imposed together with the Director of Operations and the Supporter Liaison Officer.

Standard practice will be that ejected people will be banned from the next 1-5 home games.

Persons arrested by the police will normally be banned by the club until the conclusion of any proceedings, after which the club's position will be reviewed. Anyone caught with a pyrotechnic or deemed guilty of an offence relating to discrimination will receive a minimum ban of three years. If the offender attends a police officer or Kick It Out type of restorative justice process, then the length of the ban may be reduced to one year depending on their acceptance of the process.

The Safety Officer/Director of Operations/HR/Supporter Liaison Officer will write to the ejected person outlining details of the ban and including the action to be taken by the individual if they wish to resume watching Reading FC. The template for the banning letter is attached (APPENDIX A).

The Safety Officer will also ensure that details of persons ejected, and details of the club ban are exchanged with the Police.

At the end of the banning period re-admission to the ground will be dependent on signing an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC). This will be in force for 1 calendar year from the date of signature. Details of the ABC (Document 8.5) are outlined in the letter to the ejected person. A copy is attached (APPENDIX B).

People ejected for a second time during the season (which would mean while they are subject to an ABC) will have a season-long ban imposed by the club.

Use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in other circumstances

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In rare instances, there may be behaviour at a match which doesn't result in any action but gives cause for concern for the future. This could include persistent minor breaches of regulations observed by stewards, or activity that has come to light as the result of complaints or information from other spectators or other sources.

In such cases consideration will be given to dealing with the behaviour pattern that is emerging by way of ABC. The Safety Officer will make such decisions having considered all the facts surrounding the behaviour / individual.

Appeals

People who wish to appeal at any stage of the process may do so in writing to the Director of Operations/HR

This policy is in line, in so far as possible based on the resources available, with the EFL Supporter Sanctioning Guidance.

Signed:

Date:

Joe Jacobson CEO

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APPENDIX A – BANNING LETTER MASTER

Reading FC,
Junction 11,
M4,
Reading,
Berkshire,
RG2 0FL.

Telephone: 0118 **96813113**

[Name]
[Address]
[Post Code]

[Date]

Dear [Name]

Notice of Ban from the Reading Football Club Stadium,
Junction 11 M4 Reading RG2 0FL.

I am writing to you with regard to your ejection from the ground during the match against
.[opponents] on [date].

Entry into the ground is on the condition that spectators agree to comply with ground regulations and the directions of stewards. Your conduct at the game fell short of that requirement with the result that you had to be removed from the ground.

Reading FC are committed to maintaining the positive and friendly atmosphere within the stadium that encourages spectators to come to the ground and will deal firmly with people whose conduct interferes with that aim.

Breaches of Ground Regulations carry with them the potential for prosecution and, if dealt with by the police, a ban from all football grounds for a period of up to 3 seasons.

In this instance, the matter will be dealt with by the Club, and you are hereby notified that you are banned from attending the next [number] league matches, i.e. those against [opponents], plus and any cup ties that occur in that period. You will note that this period is considerably less than could have been applied in the circumstances. Your purchase record has been marked with details of this ban, and the police notified of the action.

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Should you enter the ground in breach of the ban you will be treated as a trespasser and subject to immediate removal and, possibly, arrest and further action. You should also avoid getting other people to purchase a ticket on your behalf as this may lead them to receiving a similar ban.

The next game you may purchase a ticket for is against [opponents] on [date], and then your ticket purchase ban will only be removed enabling you to re-enter the ground if you are prepared to sign an undertaking to be of good behaviour in the future. You can arrange to sign the undertaking and discuss the situation with me by contacting me at the ground between 10am and 12noon on any match day, or at another time by arrangement.

Should you be dealt with for any subsequent breach of ground regulations this season the penalty will be a ban for the rest of the season.

I trust you will be able to agree to moderate your conduct and that you will be able to resume supporting Reading in the future.

Yours Sincerely

David Parker
Safety Officer
For and on Behalf of Reading Football Club

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APPENDIX B – ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT

Reading Football Club

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT

This document is a formal agreement between David Parker, Safety Officer, on behalf of Reading Football Club and

..... (name), season ticket no. (if applicable).

I,(insert name) agree with to the following with regards to my attendance at the Reading Football Club Stadium:-

Following my recent temporary ban from attending matches at the Reading Football Club Stadium I understand that authority for me to return to the ground is dependent on my agreement to comply with the instructions of stewards and rules and regulations concerning football stadia.

Specifically

- I will not use foul and abusive comments, chants or gestures to any person whilst in the Stadium
- I will not behave in an offensive manner at any games involving Reading FC
- Other than using refreshment or toilet facilities I will remain in the Stand for which my ticket is allocated during the course of the game
- I will not act in any other manner which causes or is likely to cause a breach of the Ground Regulations or other legislation.

Breach of Agreement

I understand that this agreement remains in force for one calendar year from the date of signature, and that if I do anything in breach of the agreement or commit any other acts of unacceptable behaviour connected to the activities of the club, Reading Football Club will take positive action and that this may also include involvement of Thames Valley Police. In such circumstances, the action taken by the club is likely to include the imposition of a Club Banning Order for the remainder of the current season.

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DECLARATION

I understand the meaning of this agreement.

The consequences of breaking it have been explained to me.

SIGNED..... NAME _____

WITNESS SAFETY OFFICER

Time and Date of signature:..... / /

Notes: Both copies of the agreement to be signed. One copy to be filed by Safety Officer, copy to be given to person subject of agreement.

Statement regarding sharing of information with Thames Valley Police.

If you dealt with by the club in connection with a football related offence, we will notify Thames Valley Police. The information that we share may include your details, information about the offence or incident. We will use this to identify and prevent offences/incidents and to prevent disorder at matches. If you have any queries about this, contact The Safety Officer as above.

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