

**Football Federation SA Directive - Foul and Abusive Language**

The prevalence of swearing in Football is a problem that has escalated both on and off the field. Although there may have been an acceptance of such behaviour at a senior level, the use of foul and abusive language is rife within the junior ranks and it is a level of behaviour that is not being addressed.

The use of foul and abusive language may be reflective of what is happening in the wider community and what is appropriate to one person may be inappropriate to another, however it is very clear in the Laws of the Game, the use of foul, abusive and/or insulting language is not to be tolerated.

Everyone involved in the game has a responsibility to reduce/eliminate the occurrence of such behaviour. It certainly is not a good look for the sport where young players are consistently using foul and abusive language throughout the game and it does not promote a family friendly environment.

As a consequence, Football Federation SA is issuing a directive to everyone involved in the game that foul and abusive language has NO place on the football field and as such Referees will be implementing the Laws of the Game to address this growing problem.

In summary if foul and abusive language is used by a player and is not audible or directed to anyone else then the referee has discretionary powers to speak to the player, caution or red card the player (repeat offenders may be sent off). If foul and abusive language is used by a player and is heard and is directed at someone, the player is to be dismissed from the field.

This policy is intended to have a twofold affect. Firstly, to minimise the use of foul and abusive language and secondly, to ensure that all players, spectators and officials enjoy the game of football. This requires a whole of sport approach with clubs and parents required to take a lead role. The use of foul and abusive language is not only occurring on the field but also on the sidelines, with many adults role modelling the inappropriate behaviour.

The link below can be used by clubs and associations to assist in developing positive sideline behaviour.

<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/sideline-behaviour>