

Anti-social Behaviour and 'Adoptions' Policy

Background

There have been a number of concerns raised in recent years regarding the safety of Club 'Initiations'. This has led to increasing pressure on Students' Unions across the country to place an outright ban on initiation ceremonies amongst their student groups. We believe that for some, negative inferences are assumed because of the name 'Initiations'. It is also recognised that these negative connotations can also affect people's actions and organisation of these events. This is why the name was changed to 'Club Adoptions'.

It is worth highlighting that for many clubs 'adoptions' can be a great experience and a credit to The Students' Union. The majority of Club Executives respect the self-government they are allowed, and are fully aware of their duty of care towards their members. This policy outlines some rules that our clubs must follow in order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants.

In October 2011 it was agreed that all BUCS members would be required adhere to the BUCS Anti-social behaviour policy and from September 2013 provide / give access to BUCS their code of conduct in relation to initiations.

Significant numbers of Universities in the UK now have a complete ban on club adoptions. However in some universities initiations do still occur and there have been several high profile cases in the media over the past few years where welcome parties or initiations have taken place and the media has got involved.

The Purpose of a 'Club Adoption':

The Students' Union recognises that the main purpose of 'Club Adoptions' is to greet new members. 'Club Adoptions' should be fun but above all inclusive, non-threatening and safe. Clubs should plan 'Club Adoptions' with the aim of including and accepting all their members.

Objectives of a 'Club Adoption'

The Students' Union recognises that 'Club Adoptions' act as a team building exercise, whereby new club members can meet and socialise with other members. Therefore the following should be taken into account:

- It is each club's aim that every member of the club has an enjoyable time. It should be appreciated that each member will have a different response to activities, and that no pressure (intended or not) should be placed on any member to do anything that they may not enjoy.
- The Executive of each club is responsible for the welfare of all club members and must take necessary measures to ensure that an adequate level of safety is maintained.

- All members of Sports Clubs must show respect towards members of the public and the University community at all times, in the knowledge that they are representing sport at Warwick.
- It is each individual's choice whether or not they attend a 'Club Adoption', or whether they take part in certain elements of it. Non – attendance should not be a barrier to full participation in other club activities.

Responsibilities of the Students' Union and its Clubs

The Students' Union recognises the value of organised social activity in sport. A club's social programme should complement the overall objectives of the Club and thus contribute to the 'student experience'.

The Students' Union has a duty to ensure that members can participate in club activities in a safe, non-threatening and enjoyable environment.

All sport activities reflects upon the reputation of the Students' Union, Warwick Sport, the University and all students.

Thus, it is the Students' Union responsibility to ensure that all clubs are clear about what a 'Club Adoption' can consist of. The Sports Officer and the Sports Committee must strive to enforce this understanding throughout all sports clubs.

Club Executives must take account of their duty of care towards their club members. As officials of their club, any activity they organise must consider the safety and enjoyment of all of their members. Club Executives must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that could harm their members or any other persons. Club Executives must also ensure that the reputation of the University of Warwick, Warwick Sport and the Students' Union is upheld throughout all of their activities.

Policy on Social Events & Initiations

The Students' Union has a duty to ensure that the following regulations are upheld:

- It is the responsibility of Club Executives to organise and supervise any 'Club Adoptions' organised.
- It is the responsibility of each Club Executive to notify the Sports Officer (Sports Committee Chair as a reserve) at least seven days before any planned adoption. The Club Executives should submit the planned date, time, venue and content of their 'Club Adoption' via the online form. In this plan they should also state how many supervisors they plan to have, who they will be and how many attendees they expect.
- It is essential that every 'Club Adoption' has an appropriate number of supervisors, depending on the number of members attending and the nature of the activities. Supervisors should be members of the Club Executive, but can also be returning students. Supervisors must remain in control and sober throughout the event.
- The Sports Officer must ratify the provision of supervisors.
- The Sports Officer will inform all venue managers and safety officers of the planned events.
- If the 'Club Adoption' is deemed inappropriate then the Club Executive will be asked to re-submit their plans with suitable alterations.
- No 'Club Adoption' should take place without following these regulations.
- Written records will be held of all planned 'Club Adoptions' that have been submitted.

The Students' Union:

- Discourage the forced consumption of food and alcohol.
- Discourage the excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Expect that no activity will take place that causes undue risks or damage to the physical or psychological health of our members or the general public.
- Insist that no individual or group be forced to sign a disclaimer; especially if the act they are being committed to may put them in danger.
- Recommend that all Sports Clubs should hold their trials for selection of squads before 'Club Adoptions' take place, to ensure that members do not feel pressured into attending or taking part in any activity.

- Strongly recommend, where possible, that all 'Club Adoptions' should be based in a safe environment and should not impact upon the use of University residences and facilities for other users.

The Students' Union is governed by the above principles. All club members should respect and adhere to them. They are designed to ensure the safety and inclusion of all members and not to stop members from having fun.

Penalties, Monitoring and Enforcement of this Policy

All sports clubs must adhere to this policy. If any member of a club or any other person feels that these regulations have been breached, it is their responsibility to inform the Sports Officer and/or any other Sabbatical Officer. If any member of a club executive is aware of a breach of these regulations they are obliged to inform the Sports Officer and/or any other Sabbatical Officer. The violation of these regulations will lead to disciplinary action by the Students' Union and/or the University.

If the Sports Officer and the Sports Committee feels these regulations have been breached they have the power to:

- Bring individual members of Club Executives, and/or entire Club Executives, to account in the form of a disciplinary. The outcome of the disciplinary could lead to them being removed from their posts and/or being banned from the Union and Warwick Sport. The Students' Union reserves the right to report individual cases to the University and the police.
- Require particular or all Club Executive members to attend specialised training courses.
- Impose fines which would be payable from clubs' 'own money accounts'.
- Freeze club accounts.
- Limit club or individual activity, either sporting and/or, social.
- Close a club down in extreme cases or where there is persistent violation of the regulations.
- The Sport Committee and Sabbatical team reserves the right to observe any 'Club Adoption' to ensure that this policy is being upheld.
- This does not in any way detract from or over-ride the legal responsibilities of the Licensee who will take action as required under the terms of UK Licensing Law, where appropriate.

Accountability of Sport Clubs

- Each Sport Club is accountable to the Student Activities Team, the Sports Officer and the Sports Committee.
- Decisions made by the Sports Officer and the Sports Committee are accountable to Union Council and the Executive Committee.