



COULSDON ATHLETIC

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

It is good practice for football clubs to have an effective system in place to identify, receive, handle and respond appropriately to complaints and comments made by users, or persons acting on their behalf.

In order to meet and maintain good practice the club will :-

1. bring the complaints system to the attention of users and people acting on their behalf in a suitable manner and format
2. facilitate the making of complaints when one is being made
3. fully investigate all complaints and (where relevant) work with other partners where the complaint is of a joint nature to address the issues raised

The club works on the principle that if a user, or anyone who acts in their best interests, wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is the club's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide a better environment for players. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are taken seriously and are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner whilst providing the child, parent, carer with the necessary support.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, consider the possibility of negligence or provide compensation. It is not the same as the club's disciplinary policy. However, the club understands that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints could lead to an aggravation of problems, user dissatisfaction and possible litigation.

The club supports the principle that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be resolved at a local level between the complainant and the relevant coach or manager. If this fails due to the complainant being dissatisfied with the result, the club respects the right of the complainant to take the complaint to the next stage by raising it with the Chairperson and/or committee as a whole.

The aim is always to make sure that the complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that users feel confident that their complaints and concerns are listened to and acted upon promptly, fairly and impartially.

SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

In the event of the complaint involving alleged abuse or a suspicion that abuse has occurred, the club refers the matter immediately to the appropriate local safeguarding authority and the Surrey FA. The club will work closely with such authorities and act promptly to prevent the risk of further incidents.



THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Players, parents or their representatives should be provided with clear information about how to complain and the Club should offer easy-to-use opportunities for people to register their complaint.

- ⚽ Complaints can be made to any member of the committee.
- ⚽ For each complaint, a named person will be identified as the point of contact for the complainant and will take ownership of the complaint and will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- ⚽ If complaints are raised verbally, that named person will firstly liaise with the complainant to compile an agreed statement of complain for the club to respond to.
- ⚽ Receipt of a written complaint should be acknowledged within three working days.
- ⚽ Investigations into written complaints should be concluded and the substantive response provided to the complainant within 20 working days.
- ⚽ All formal complaints should be responded to in writing by the club.
- ⚽ Complaints should be dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause both to users and those against whom the complaint has been made.

PRINCIPLES OF OUR COMPLAINT HANDLING

The club works on the basis that wherever possible, complaints are most effectively dealt with when addressed directly with the relevant coach or manager. If the user or their representative is not satisfied with the outcome from the coach or manager or feel unable to approach the coach or manager they can raise the matter with a member of the Committee.

The complaints policy does not replace the clubs safeguarding policy and if there are any concerns of harm towards a user the Child Welfare Officer should be advised immediately.

VERBAL COMPLAINTS

The club adopts the following procedure for responding to complaints and concerns made verbally to coaches, managers or committee members.

- ⚽ All verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, are taken seriously.
- ⚽ Coaches and Managers who receive a verbal complaint are expected to address the problem straight away.
- ⚽ If coaches and managers cannot resolve complaints immediately they should offer to get a member of the Committee to deal with the problem.
- ⚽ All contact with the complainant must be polite, courteous and considerate.



- ⚽ Coaches, managers or committee members should refrain from adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- ⚽ At all times coaches, managers and committee members should remain calm and respectful.
- ⚽ If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the coach or manager will ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing and refer them to the club's complaints procedure.
- ⚽ Details of all verbal complaints are recorded.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

The club adopts the following procedures for responding to written complaints.

Preliminary steps

When a complaint is received in writing it shall be passed to the Committee as soon as possible who will record it, send an acknowledgment letter within two working days, which describes the procedure to be followed, and allocate a member of the Committee to lead on the response.

Investigation of the Complaint

On receipt of a written complaint the allocated person will commence an investigation and aim within 20 working days to provide a full response to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individual/s concerned.

If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 20 working days, the complainant will be informed of any delay and the reason for the delay. The complainant will be provided with timely updates of the progression of the investigation.

Meeting

At the discretion of the allocated person, a meeting may be arranged with the complainant at which a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation can be given and, where appropriate, an apology may be offered. It should be noted that apologising for what has happened is not an admission of fault. Such a meeting may give the club the opportunity to reassure the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.

Follow-up action

After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation shall be sent to the complainant. The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting are recorded and any shortcomings in procedures are identified and acted upon. The club's decision whether to uphold any complaint or not is final. The committee will review all complaints to determine what can be learned from them. It will keep the complaints procedure under review to make sure it is working properly and is in line with FA guidelines.