Longford Youth Football Club
Complaints Policy

If any player, Parent/Carer, Club Official or Manager/Coach feels that they have suffered discrimination, experienced, or witnessed something of concern, or feel that the Club's Policies, Rules, or Code of Conduct have been broken they should bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate person/s.

Note: Safeguarding concerns which do not require a formal complaint under this procedure should be sent directly to the Youth Welfare officer. Separate Guidance is given to the managing of direct Safeguarding complaints.

Below we detail the levels of concern/or complaint and the action which should be taken.

Less Serious Matters/Matters you consider as minor, however need to be raised.

For issues that are deemed less serious and might be easily resolved, a private word to the team coach or other club official might remedy the issue or concern that has arisen. This is not to undervalue minor concerns, rather that in some instances a remedy can be decided upon quickly and to the satisfaction of all (an apology, explanation, or other action). For example, it may be that some aspect of a club policy has not been fully understood by a parent, or incorrectly applied by a coach, or that the club policy itself is unclear or contradictory. A private word with the appropriate person (e.g. Coach) might be the obvious and simplest approach to take.

The matter will not be recoded but either the complainant or coach/official may highlight to the Club Secretary potential deficiencies in club policy.

The Club would expect the issue to be resolved within one week and if not satisfactorily resolved to be escalated to the Club Secretary for recording and necessary actions/responses/reviews.

MORE SERIOUS CONCERNS/CONCERNS THAT CANNO BE ADDRESSED AT TEAM LEVEL.

There is always the potential for more serious concerns to arise that require a more significant intervention. In these instances, a more formal process is required so that the club can both record and address the issue or concern. Where a more series concern arises, it should be reported to the Club Secretary in the first instance.

The concern should be raised by email, alternatively a call to the Club Secretary may proceed the email.

The Club Secretary will make direct contact with the complainant to further understand the concern and desired outcome and to set out how the concern will be managed.

The Club Secretary will remain in contact with the Complainant and deal with the complaint constructively and in a timely manner. An initial response confirming receipt of the complaint should be made within 3 working days.

When the matter is concluded the Club Secretary will write up the outcome and provide the outcome to all relevant persons.

Whilst such complaints will remain confidential in terms of need-to-know basis. An outline of the complaint minus named persons will be discussed in a closed section of the next Executive meeting, meaning details will not be included in the minutes.

Where appropriate club policy will be reviewed considering any learning outcomes.

Formal complaints which may need further/wider investigation up to but not excluding a hearing chaired by the Club Chair and heard by two/three additional Executive Officers/co-opted club officials.

This may include:

- Serious breaches of Codes of Conduct and/or Respect policy.
- Serious breaches of club rules with the potential to do harm or cause distress to others.
- Actions which have the potential to bring the club into disrepute.
- Fraudulent use of club funds
- Deliberate damage of club equipment.

Considerations:

All official complaints of this nature will be deemed confidential. Sharing the content of the complaint should be with the express permission of the complainant who will be told who it will be shared with and for what purpose.

If the complainant declines to allow sharing with the person/s being complained about no formal process will be followed, however that will not prevent an informal process taking place if the Chairperson concludes this is necessary to safeguard the reputation of the club.

Whilst the matter may not be a Safeguarding issue consideration should be given to informing the Youth Welfare Officer of the nature of the complaint to determine if a form on ongoing support may be needed. It should be noted that the Youth Welfare Officer is unable to support the needs of adults.

It is acknowledged no-one enters into such a process lightly, it can be emotionally draining, and it is important that the Club deals with the matter sensitively, respectful and in a timely manner for all concerned.

Unless extenuating circumstances exist, we would look to conclude the investigation within 30 days either with a proposed resolution or further actions to be taken.

Process:

- The action being complained about must have occurred with the last three months, we are not able to look into historic matters.
- Internal or external complaints of this nature should be documented in writing to the Club Secretary.
- This should be framed in such way the person/s complained about is reasonably able to respond.
- Where possible it should include dates and circumstances leading to the complaint, together with any previous incidents which had not been previously brought to the attention of the club.
- Where others have witnessed the assertions being made this should also be stated.
- The Club Secretary will respond in writing within 5 days acknowledging receipt and outlining initial action to be taken.

Any subsequent telephone conversations/actions relating to the complaint will be documented in chronological order.

If a formal investigation is to taken place the person/s complained about will be given an outline if the key issues in the complaint which are to be formally investigated. They will then have a maximum of 14 days (depending on time of year and holidays etc) to respond in writing to the complaint.

In receiving the response, a decision will be made as to whether a full hearing should be convened, and the individuals involved will be advised who will hear the case.

The Chairperson will Chair the meeting and have the final decision.

The Club will also assess whether someone has suffered any injustice, and what remedy would be fair and proportionate in the circumstances.

The Club will consider whether to consult or inform The FA in relation to any breach of FA rules or guidelines. Where the complaint indicates a law may have been broken, the Club will inform the relevant statutory authority.

The Club’s Executive Committee will have the power to:

a) Remove from membership any person found to have broken the Club’s Policies or Code of Conduct.

b) Suspend from membership
c) Warn about future conduct
d) Take any other measures they feel are appropriate

The decision of the Club's Executive Committee shall be final and there will be no right of appeal/challenge.

Within 7 days after the hearing, written reasons for the decision with actions to be taken will be sent to the complainant and the individual/s complained about.