



**Respect**



## Club Complaints Policy

Whilst every effort is made by Winchester Youth FC to ensure that a youth football experience is trouble free, fun and enjoyable, there may be times when problems occur. In the event that any Member feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way, or that the Club Constitution, Rules, Policies, Procedures or Codes of Conduct have been broken, they should follow the procedures set out below:

### 1. Reporting a Complaint

Personal complaints and grievances are sometimes best resolved informally with the respective Team Manager and you may wish to try this before initiating a formal grievance. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal investigation, then Members are able to follow the official Complaints Procedure set out below (also in a separate more concise document). These procedures apply to all Club Members, Officials and Players as soon as they join the football Club and coincides with the respective Codes of Conduct.

Any Member that has a complaint should report the matter to the Club Welfare Officer (CWO), the Club Secretary or any other member of the Committee. The report should include the following.

- Details of what, when and where the occurrence took place.
- Any witness statements and/or names of other people involved.
- Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way.
- Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made.
- A preference for a solution to the incident.

### Complaints involving Child Safety/Welfare

- If, at any time, any person involved with the Club has a concern regarding the safety of any child, they are encouraged to speak confidentially to the Club Welfare Officer.

Complaints of this nature will be dealt with under the direction of the Club Welfare Officer who may, if required, consult with senior Management Committee Officials.

- Complaints of a sensitive nature involving allegations of Child Abuse, Child Safety or any child concerns must be brought to the attention of the Child Welfare Officer in the most confidential manner by either a verbal or written communication. Verbal communications must be followed up in writing within 48 hours. No other Club members or Committee Members are to be informed, unless deemed absolutely necessary. The Club Welfare Officer will decide what action is to be taken based on the information received by the complainant.

### Parent / Player Complaints

- Any complaint raised by either a parent or a player regarding another parent, player, coach or Club Management Official should normally be addressed to the Team Manager in the first instance.
- If the Manager does not feel able to deal with the complaint internally, then the complaint will be dealt with by a member of the Club Management Committee.
- If the complaint concerns the Manager themselves, then the complaint should be made, in writing, to an appropriate Club Management Official (Club Welfare Officer, in the first instance).
- In some circumstances where the complaint is of a serious nature, advice will be sought from a League Official, or from the Hampshire FA Office.

### Manager's Complaint

- If the Manager has an issue with a Player which they have been unable to resolve through discussion between themselves, then that player's parents will be informed.
- Any formal complaint regarding an opposing team must be immediately reported by a

member of the Management Committee (Club Secretary if perceived misconduct or Club Welfare Officer if deemed a Safeguarding or Welfare matter) who will discuss it and, if they feel it is appropriate, forward this matter to the League or the Hampshire FA.

### **Committee Complaint**

- If at any time, a complaint is made against a Committee Member then the Chairman must deal with this matter.
- In some cases, if the Chairman feels that the complaint is of a serious nature, then advice will be sought from other key Committee Members, a League Official or the Hampshire FA.
- If the complaint is against the Chairman, then the rest of the Management Committee will deal with the complaint.

### **Other Party Complaint**

- If any complaint is received from persons who are not Club Members (League Officials, Opposing Teams, Members of the Public etc) then it will be referred to the Club Welfare Officer who will refer to the individual concerned for an explanation of events leading to the complaint.
- The person heading up the investigation will convene an Emergency Meeting of the Committee to ensure that the Club is able to respond to the complaint within the necessary time scale required by the League or the complainant.

## **2. Dealing with a Complaint**

The Club Welfare Officer has the authority to deal with any complaints raised by Members of the Club. If the complaint is specific to the administration, finance or governance of the Club then the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer or Secretary are also authorised to deal with complaints, specific to the area they manage.

The Club has authority to deal with complaints raised about non-Members (i.e. individuals who have not registered with the Club for whatever reason).

### **Receipt of a Complaint**

The Complainant – Upon receipt of a complaint or grievance the case handler will normally write an acknowledgement to the complainant, and if necessary offer an apology. If an apology has already been offered by a Member of the Club then this can be reemphasised if necessary. The complainant may then be invited, within 14 days of presenting the complaint, to attend an

‘investigation meeting’ to discuss it. The Complainant must take reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The Club is not at liberty to divulge to the accused who has complained. The Case handler may also not wish to attribute information specific gained during a complaint handling investigation to any particular individual. The Club will respect the wishes of complainants requesting to remain anonymous.

The Club is not at liberty to communicate to the Complainant the outcome of the complaint, the disciplinary procedure will also, in most cases, be kept confidential to the Complainant.

The Accused – Upon receipt of a complaint or grievance it may be necessary to find out who the individual involved is. This will be done by the Case Handler or another member of the Club Committee, and may involve communication with the managers or coaches or a particular age group.

### **Complaint Investigation**

The first stage of complaint investigation will involve an initial discussion or written communication with the accused outlining the nature of the complaint and requesting a written response from the accused within a certain time frame.

Following receipt of a written response from the accused, an investigation by the Case Handler will follow. This may involve gaining information from other Members of the Club to gain further insight into incidents that have occurred.

When investigating a complaint or grievance the Case Handler will be required to consider the type of misconduct that has occurred, as set out below.

### **Types of Misconduct**

Misconduct: This means any infringement of established standards of conduct or behaviour and includes breaches of Club Rules, Associated League, National FA, Hampshire FA Rules, inadequate performance of Club duties, lateness, absenteeism, poor attitude towards the Club, it’s officials or its members.

Gross Misconduct: Acts of gross misconduct or gross negligence whereby the person will be liable to be expelled from the Club and banned from any of its activities without notice or recall. The following list provides examples of offences that are normally regarded as gross misconduct. This list is not exhaustive.

- Abuse or maltreatment of a Club Official, Team Manager, Coach, Player, Member of the Public or member of an opposing team.
- Theft or attempted theft
- Bribery or corruption
- Malicious damage to Club Property
- Fighting with, or physically striking another person
- Fraudulent or dishonest behaviour
- Indecency
- Serious disregard of safety rules
- Unauthorised use of Club property or facilities
- Serious breaches of confidentiality
- Being under the influence of alcohol or solvents or illegal drugs whilst at Club matches or training activities
- Falsification of Club documents
- Any act of discrimination, victimisation or harassment that is not in line with the Club's Equality Policy

### 3. Disciplinary Procedure

No disciplinary action will be taken against an individual without an investigation of the facts. Should a 'disciplinary hearing' be deemed to be appropriate, the Club Welfare Officer, Chairman or Secretary will be appointed to conduct the hearing. The hearing will normally be conducted with a panel of at least two Management Committee members.

The Accused may be suspended from all or limited club activities whilst an investigation is being conducted. The Case Handler in agreement with another member of the Management Committee will give written notification of an individual's suspension and the timeframe to which it applies.

Following the completion of a Complaint investigation the Case Handler will meet with one or more of the Management Committee to determine an appropriate sanction. Conduct issues of a minor nature may be dealt with by disciplinary measures such as training, peer mentoring, dialogue, review and counselling. However, where the matter is more serious or cannot be resolved, the prescribed disciplinary process set out below will be followed. Note that the disciplinary action is listed in order of severity.

#### Disciplinary Process - Sanctions

##### Stage One – First Official Warning

This warning will be recorded on file by the Club Welfare Officer and will include details of the

complaints, any improvement required and the timescale for such improvement.

##### Stage Two – First Written Warning

This will give details of the complaint (which is likely to be more serious in nature, or a continued offence). It will warn that further action will be considered if there is further misconduct or a failure to satisfactorily improve performance, conduct or behaviour.

##### Stage Three – Final Written Warning

A step further than the first written warning, where there has been evidence of further misconduct or a failure to improve performance, conduct or behaviour. This may also apply to a more serious offence.

##### Stage Four – Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action can be taken in cases of gross misconduct, or following further misconduct following a written warning. Expulsion for gross misconduct will be without notice. The Club Committee has the power to expel a member when, in their opinion, it would not be in the interests of the Club for them to remain a Member. Decisions taken by the Management Appeal Committee will be final and not open to further appeals from within the Club. Long term or self-imposed suspension from the Club may sometimes be used as an alternative to expulsion.

The Club takes the process of dealing with complaints very seriously, and are dedicated to ensuring that appropriate actions are taken when it is proven that inappropriate behaviour has occurred.

Signed

Ken Raisbeck  
Chairman  
Winchester Youth FC

#### Useful Contacts:

Ali Henderson  
Club Welfare Officer  
Winchester Youth FC  
[alihendo@me.com](mailto:alihendo@me.com)  
07802 432796