Alvechurch FC
Community CIO Foundation.

Complaints Policy and Procedures
Approved by: Trustee Board
Date Approved: 27th April 2026
Review Date: 27th April 2027

1. Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear and fair process for dealing with complaints.
- Ensure concerns are handled promptly, consistently, and confidentially.
- Protect the welfare of players, volunteers, and members.
- Ensure the Trustee Board fulfils its governance responsibilities.

This policy applies to all players, parents/guardians, coaches, volunteers, trustees, and members of the Foundation.

2. Principles
The Foundation is committed to:

- Treating all complaints seriously and respectfully.
- Acting in the best interests of children and young people.
- Ensuring fairness and impartiality.
- Maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.
- Ensuring no one suffers disadvantage for raising a genuine concern.
- Resolving issues at the lowest appropriate level wherever possible

3. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- Coaching decisions or behaviour
- Conduct of players, parents, or volunteers
- Safeguarding concerns (see Section 4)
- Breach of Club codes of conduct
- Governance or Trustee decisions
- Discrimination, bullying, or harassment
- Club administration or operations

This policy does not cover:

- Team selection decisions (unless involving misconduct or discrimination)
- Issues dealt with under disciplinary procedures
- Safeguarding concerns requiring immediate referral (see below)

4. Safeguarding Concerns (Children's Welfare)

If a complaint involves the welfare of a child, it must be treated as a safeguarding matter.

The Club Welfare Officer must be informed immediately. Where appropriate, concerns must be referred to:

- The relevant County FA Safeguarding Team
- The Police
- Local Children's Services

Safeguarding concerns will be handled in line with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and relevant FA guidance.

5. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made by:
- Parents or guardians
- Players
- Coaches or volunteers
- Trustees

Complaints should normally be made within 30 days of the incident.

6. Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised informally with:
- The Team Manager or Coach
- The Head of Youth.
- The Club Welfare Officer (for welfare issues)

Many issues can be resolved quickly through open and respectful discussion. If the matter is not resolved informally, a formal complaint may be made.

7. Formal Complaints Procedure (Stage 2)

7.1 Submitting a Formal Complaint
A formal complaint must:
- Be submitted in writing (email or letter)
- Include the complainant's name and contact details
- Clearly describe the issue
- Include relevant dates, times, and witnesses (if known)

The complaint should be sent to the Head of Youth or Trustee responsible for operations. Anonymous complaints will only be considered where serious welfare or safeguarding concerns are raised.

7.2 Acknowledgement
The Club will:
- Acknowledge receipt within 7 days
- Confirm the process and expected timescales

7.3 Investigation
The Trustee Board (or a delegated Complaints Panel of at least 2 trustees not involved in the matter) will:
- Review the complaint
- Gather relevant evidence
- Interview relevant individuals
- Ensure fairness to all parties

The person subject to the complaint will:
- Be informed of the complaint
- Be given the opportunity to respond
- Be treated fairly and without prejudice

Investigations should normally be completed within 28 days.

7.4 Outcome
The complainant will receive a written response outlining:
- The findings
- Any action taken
- Any recommendations

Possible outcomes may include:
- No further action
- Mediation
- Warning (verbal or written)
- Removal from role
- Referral to County FA or relevant governing body
- Referral to external authorities (if appropriate)

8. Appeal Process (Stage 3)
If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving the decision.

The appeal will be considered by:
- Trustees not involved in the original investigation, or
- An independent panel if appropriate

The appeal decision will be final within the Club's internal process.

9. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

If a complaint is found to be deliberately false or malicious, the Club may take disciplinary action against the complainant.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Complaints will be handled confidentially where possible.
- Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Records will be stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation.
- Records will normally be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

11. Trustee Responsibilities

The Trustee Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly.
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are prioritised.
- Monitoring patterns of complaints.
- Reviewing this policy annually.
- Acting in the best interests of the Club and its beneficiaries (the children).

Trustees must declare conflicts of interest and withdraw from any complaint process where they have personal involvement.

12. External Escalation

Where appropriate, complaints may be referred to:

- The relevant County FA
- The national governing body
- The Charity Commission (for governance concerns if applicable)
- External authorities (Police, Local Authority)

13. Communication

This policy will be:

- Published on Team Fee Pay
- Shared with volunteers and coaches annually

Appendix A – Complaints Flow Summary

1. Informal discussion
2. Written complaint submitted
3. Acknowledgement (within 7 days)
4. Investigation (normally within 28 days)
5. Written outcome issued
6. Appeal (within 14 days, if required)

Alvechurch Foundation – Policies Available on Request

Alvechurch Foundation Community Organisation maintains a comprehensive suite of policies to support safe, fair, and effective operations. The following policies are available upon request:

- Finance Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Alvechurch Foundation also holds a wider range of safeguarding, welfare, conduct, and operational policies that can be provided on request to ensure full transparency and compliance with organisational standards.