Ottershaw Junior Football Club – Complaints Procedure

Ottershaw Junior Football Club is committed to providing a safe, positive and respectful environment for all players, parents, coaches and volunteers. We recognise that concerns or complaints may arise, and we aim to resolve them fairly, promptly and in line with FA safeguarding and club standards.

This procedure explains how to raise a concern and how the club will respond.

1. Principles

Our complaints process is based on the following principles:

- **Respect** – all complaints will be handled calmly, professionally and without judgement.
- **Fairness** – every concern will be considered objectively and without bias.
- **Confidentiality** – information will only be shared with those who need to know.
- **Safety** – safeguarding concerns will always be prioritised and escalated appropriately.
- **Timeliness** – complaints will be acknowledged and addressed promptly.
- **Resolution** – we aim to resolve issues informally wherever possible.

2. What This Procedure Covers

This procedure applies to complaints relating to:

- Behaviour of players, parents, coaches or volunteers
- Matchday or training incidents
- Communication or conduct concerns
- Club processes or decisions
- Breaches of Codes of Conduct
- General dissatisfaction with club operations

Safeguarding concerns follow a separate FA-mandated process and must be reported immediately to the **Club Welfare Officer**.

3. How to Raise a Complaint

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised informally with:

- The **team coach** or manager (for team-specific issues)

- The **Club Secretary** (for administrative issues)
- The **Club Welfare Officer** (for behaviour or welfare concerns)

Many issues can be resolved quickly through conversation and clarification.

The club encourages respectful, calm communication at all times.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or is more serious, a formal complaint should be submitted.

A formal complaint must include:

- Your name and contact details
- The name(s) of anyone involved
- A clear description of the issue
- Dates, times and any relevant evidence
- What outcome you are seeking

Formal complaints should be sent to:

Club Secretary: Laura Barton-Wright **Club Welfare Officer:** Stuart Moore

You will receive an acknowledgement within **7 days**.

4. How the Club Will Respond

Initial Review

The Club Secretary and/or Welfare Officer will:

- Review the complaint
- Decide who should handle it
- Determine whether it is a safeguarding matter
- Contact you if further information is needed

Investigation

The club may:

- Speak to those involved
- Review messages, match reports or evidence
- Consult coaches or committee members

- Refer to FA guidance where relevant

Investigations will be conducted fairly, respectfully and confidentially.

Outcome

You will receive a written response within **21 days**, outlining:

- Findings
- Any actions taken
- Any next steps or recommendations

Where appropriate, outcomes may include:

- Mediation or facilitated conversation
- Reminder or warning
- Temporary or permanent removal from club activities
- Referral to Surrey FA or The FA (for serious breaches)

5. Safeguarding Concerns

Any complaint involving:

- Child safety
- Welfare concerns
- Behaviour of adults towards children
- Possible breaches of FA safeguarding policy

must be reported **immediately** to the **Club Welfare Officer**.

Safeguarding concerns follow FA procedures and may be escalated to:

- Surrey FA Safeguarding Team
- The FA
- Police or Children's Services (if required)

6. Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request an appeal within **14 days** of receiving the decision.

Appeals will be reviewed by a different committee member or panel not involved in the original investigation.

The appeal decision is final within the club.

7. External Escalation

If you believe the club has not handled your complaint appropriately, you may contact:

Surrey FA Safeguarding Team safeguarding@surreyfa.com

8. Confidentiality & Record Keeping

All complaints will be:

- Logged securely
- Stored in line with the Club's Data Protection Policy
- Kept confidential
- Retained only as long as necessary

9. Our Commitment

Ottershaw Junior Football Club is committed to:

- Listening to concerns
- Acting fairly and consistently
- Upholding FA standards
- Protecting children
- Supporting volunteers
- Maintaining a positive football environment for all