



# Hereford Development Centre



## Complaints Policy

### The Aim of our Policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at Hereford Development Centre (HDC) Club knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

In the event that any player, parent/carer, Club or FA Official or Coach feels that they have suffered discrimination, experienced or witnessed something of concern or that the Club's Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken they should report the matter to The Club.

### **Frontline Resolution**

For issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation, a discussion with the Team Coach might remedy the issue or concern that has arisen.

This is not to undervalue minor concerns, rather 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 some aspect of Club Policy has not been fully understood by a parent, or incorrectly applied by a Coach, or The Club policy itself is unclear or contradictory.

A discussion with the 'frontline' person (e.g. Coach) might be the obvious and simplest approach to take. The Club would expect the issue to be resolved within one week and the Coach is required to report to the Chairman and Club Welfare Officer the concern and resolution offered so that this can be agreed and recorded in The Club minutes.

### **More Serious Concerns**

There is always the potential for more serious concerns to arise that require a more significant intervention. If this happens, a more formal process is required so that the club can both record and address the issue or concern.

Where a serious concern arises, this should be reported to any member of the Coaching Staff or Committee who is then required to pass this concern onto both the Chairman and Club Welfare Officer.

Once reported, the Chairman and Club Welfare Officer are responsible for the investigation of the concern and for applying the following guiding principles:

- The Complainant should be asked to make their complaint in writing to either the Chairman or Club Welfare Officer detailing their complaint, and how they can be contacted so The Club can keep them informed of progress of their complaint;
- That The Club will remain in contact with the Complainant and deal with the complaint constructively;
- The Complainant will receive timely confirmation by phone or email that The Club has received and is dealing with their complaint and that this should not be more than 5 days from receiving the complaint;
- That The Club will investigate the complaint and respond to the complaint within 20 days of receipt (either with a proposed resolution, or details of further actions to be taken);
- That The Club will investigate the complaint by looking at what might have gone wrong and/or what needs to be done to rectify the cause of the complaint. 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.
- Complaints that have a general significance across the Club might necessitate wider consultation, (e.g., selection process for matches) which might have implications for the interests of players, parents/carers and Coaches but from different perspectives, and therefore involve wider consultation and may be brought up for discussion by The Club Committee.

- Sensitive complaints may need to be dealt with confidentially (e.g., that involve a Safeguarding context) and may require guidance from The FA.
- That learning from something that has gone, or is going wrong, and putting right mistakes, is paramount. Seeking to hide mistakes is counter to the wider interests of The Club, its players and volunteers and therefore any investigation should be open, fair and respectful to all concerned.
- The Club will refer any child protection concern, allegation or disclosure, regardless of the timescale of receipt of the information to the relevant agencies within or outside of football.

### **Complaint Resolution**

HDC will explore all ways to resolve a complaint. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently
- An assurance that the event complained of will not happen again
- An explanation of the steps that have or are to be taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review club policies in light of the complaint

On behalf of Hereford Development Centre Committee:

Simon Measor  
HDC Chairman

Jo Measor  
HDC Secretary

Danny Moon  
Operations Director

James Edmonds  
Head coach

Katrina Williams  
Welfare Officer

Emma Walton  
Treasurer

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