

Concerns & Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines how the Club will handle concerns and complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner, in line with The Football Association's rules and regulations.

2. Scope

If any player, parent/carer, coach, volunteer, spectator, or other stakeholder connected with the club believes they, or someone else connected with the club, have suffered discrimination or been treated unfairly in any way, or that the Club's Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been breached, the following procedures should be followed.

Anyone with such a concern is encouraged in the first instance to discuss it privately with an appropriate club official. Parents/carers, for example, are encouraged to discuss their concern with the Team Manager or Coach or, alternatively, with the Club Welfare Officer, Club Secretary, or any other member of the Committee. Where a resolution cannot be found through this informal route a formal complaint should then be raised.

This procedure applies to all concerns and complaints submitted to the club.

3. Submitting a Complaint

All formal complaints must be submitted in writing (by email or letter) to the Club Welfare Officer or Club Secretary.

The complaint should include:

- the name and contact details of the complainant
- details of the complaint
- the date(s) and location(s) of the incident(s) concerned
- the names of any individuals involved
- any additional supporting evidence

Anonymous complaints will be considered at the club's discretion.

4. Acknowledgement of Complaint

The club will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. This acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint has been received and an internal investigation will be conducted.

5. Investigation Process

The club will:

- appoint an appropriate individual(s) to investigate the complaint
- ensure the process is impartial and confidential
- gather relevant information and statements from all parties involved
- keep appropriate records of the investigation
- where necessary, seek guidance from the Lancashire Football Association.

6. Outcome

Upon completion of the investigation, the club will:

- provide the complainant with a written outcome
- confirm whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
- outline any actions taken or recommendations made

Under normal circumstances, a written response will be provided within 20 working days of the acknowledgement. If additional time is required, the complainant will be informed.

7. Right of Appeal

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request an appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. An appeal will be conducted in accordance with FA rules and regulations and may involve escalation to the Lancashire Football Association where appropriate.

8. Escalation

Once the club's complaints and appeal process has been exhausted, the complainant has the right to escalate the matter to the Lancashire Football Association in line with FA safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

The Lancashire Football Association will not become involved in matters considered to be internal club management issues which should be dealt with through the club's own complaints and disciplinary processes.

In line with FA safeguarding regulations and thresholds, the Lancashire Football Association will only consider intervention where there is a potential breach of FA Rules or a serious safeguarding concern. This includes, but is not limited to:

- concerns involving children or adults at risk
- allegations or disclosures of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect)
- concerns relating to discrimination or harassment (including on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic)

Where such concerns are identified, matters may be referred to the Lancashire Football Association Safeguarding Team and/or managed in accordance with FA disciplinary procedures.

9. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with data protection requirements.

10. Record Keeping

The club will maintain secure records of all complaints, investigations, and outcomes in accordance with FA guidance and data protection legislation.

Last Reviewed: 2/4/26