



# CLUB COMPLAINTS PROCEEDURE

Version 1.0

Approved by the Committee: Jun 2024

**NOTE: Complaints resulting from Safeguarding concerns should be submitted as per the procedure here <https://www.niddunited.co.uk/safeguarding> and the FA's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for handling such complaints will take precedent over this policy.**

## Introduction

If any member feels that he/she/they have suffered discrimination in any way or that Nidd United JFC Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken, they should follow the procedures below. This may include any offence or poor practice ([see annex A](#)), either within football activities or outside, which might bring the Club into disrepute.

## 1. Principles

- 1.1. In any football club, differences and misunderstandings may arise. Successful resolution of differences depend on the willingness of the parties involved to communicate with one another. Where possible, the Club will look to resolve complaints informally at a committee level.
- 1.2. Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be made in writing, via email, to the Club Secretary. Formal complaints will be investigated by an individual or panel appointed by the Club's Committee.
- 1.3. It is intended that complaints procedures should;
  - 1.3.1. be easily accessible
  - 1.3.2. ensure that all complaints are fully and fairly investigated
  - 1.3.3. ensure that the complaints process supplies an effective response
  - 1.3.4. ensure that proper redress is made
- 1.4. The Club will respect a complainants' desire for confidentiality wherever possible
- 1.5. The Club will use the feedback provided by both informal and formal complaints to ensure that its systems and services are improved.



## 2. What is a Complaint?

- 2.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the club, its committee(s), coaches, volunteer officers, players, or with alleged unfair practice in connection with the club.
- 2.2. Grounds for a complaint shall include, but shall not be limited, to the following:
  - 2.2.1. if the conduct of any individual, body, or organisation brings or is likely to bring the club into disrepute
  - 2.2.2. the violation of the Club's Constitution or Procedures.
- 2.3. A Complaint may be made by:
  - 2.3.1. a member of the Club where the complaint concerns the Club
  - 2.3.2. the parent of or other person with parental responsibility for a member of the Club under the age of 18 years on his/her behalf
  - 2.3.3. any third party where the complaint concerns the Club
- 2.4. No complaints may be made under this policy about decisions made by referees at competitions held under the authority of the Club. Appeals procedures exist in respect of these matters.

## 3. Informal Complaint

- 3.1. It is clearly desirable for any complaint to be resolved informally where possible and it is hoped that every attempt will be made to achieve this. An informal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing to the committee member or the committee of the Club directly. Every effort will be made to resolve informal complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant. Where it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally, the Formal Complaints Procedure should be invoked. The request should be made in writing to the Club Secretary. If the complaint concerns the Club Secretary, the complaint should be made to the club's Chair. Thereafter, if a conflict of interest exists, the complaint should be made to an independent member of the Club Committee or the West Riding FA.



## 4. Formal Complaint

- 4.1. A formal complaint should be made in writing to the Club Secretary where a complaint has not been resolved informally or where the matter is of a serious nature. Complaints of a serious nature would include gross misconduct, negligence or matters concerning the protection of young people or vulnerable adults. Verbal and anonymous complaints shall be reviewed for general improvement purposes but will not be investigated through the formal complaint's procedure.
- 4.2. A complaint must normally reach the Club Secretary no later than thirty days after the alleged incident that gave rise to it.
- 4.3. Complaints that fall outside the authority of the Club may be referred to West Riding FA.
- 4.4. Complaints about the protection of children or vulnerable adults may be referred to West Riding FA, The FA, the Police or Social Services.
- 4.5. Complaints alleging criminal activity may be referred to the Police.
- 4.6. The Club Committee will appoint an Investigating Officer(s) to investigate the allegation. The Investigating Officer(s) will be independent of the matter being investigated and will remain impartial.
- 4.7. The Investigating Officer(s) shall have the power and discretion to co-opt, from time to time, other persons with specific skills or experience to help in the carrying out of their duties.
- 4.8. If the Investigating Officer(s), to whom a complaint has been referred, is not satisfied that it meets the criteria for a complaint he/she/they may refuse to allow it to continue.
- 4.9. Where a complaint is lodged more than thirty days after an alleged incident giving rise to the complaint, and where the Investigating Officer(s) is satisfied that it is in the interest of the sport to do so, they may allow the complaint to continue. Before arriving at a decision, they may require an explanation of the delay in making the complaint.
- 4.10. The Investigating Officer(s) shall notify all interested persons and/or bodies at once of any decision by them, whether to allow a complaint to continue, setting out the reasons for the decision.
- 4.11. The parties to the complaint shall be entitled to appeal against any such decision of the Investigating Officer(s) to the Club's Committee provided that the notice of appeal, setting out the grounds for appeal, is lodged with the Club Secretary within 14 days of the date upon which the Investigating Officer(s) sends the written notification of the decision.
- 4.12. The Club's Committee shall consider the grounds of appeal. In the case of an appeal against a decision of the Investigating Officer(s) to allow a complaint to continue, they may invite a



written submission from the complainant. They may confirm or reverse the decision made by the Investigating Officer(s) and may grant or refuse permission to continue with the complaint. The decision of the Club's Committee shall be final.

- 4.13. If the Club's Committee allows an appeal against the refusal of the Investigating Officer(s) to allow a complaint to continue on the grounds of the lateness of the complaint, the party against whom the complaint has been made may raise the lateness of the complaint as an issue at the hearing.

## **5. Complaints Panels**

- 5.1. The Club's Management Committee shall appoint a panel of suitably qualified individuals to hear and decide on complaints hearings. The individuals appointed by the Club should not be conflicted and shall remain impartial.

## **6. Investigations**

- 6.1. Where a formal complaint has been received, the Club may appoint one or more individuals to investigate.
- 6.2. The Investigating Officer(s) may ask that other individuals take part and give evidence and/or that further written documents or other evidence be supplied by any or all of them.
- 6.3. Any improper contact, approach or try to influence or intimidate any Investigating Officer(s), witness or representative either in person, online, or through an intermediary must be at once reported to the Committee who may take such action as they consider appropriate. Such conduct may form the subject of a complaint.
- 6.4. It shall be for the complainant to prove the complaint on a balance of probabilities.

## **7. Decisions**

- 7.1. The Investigating Officer(s) shall report their findings to the Club's Committee, who make their decision on cases before it by majority.
- 7.2. The Club's Committee may make whatever order it considers, such action may include:
- 7.2.1. Warn as to future conduct
  - 7.2.2. Suspend from membership
  - 7.2.3. Remove from membership any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct.



- 7.3. The decision of the Club's Committee shall be final and binding. It will be communicated to the complainant in writing by the Club Secretary of the Club or another member of the Management Committee.

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1. As far as is practical, confidentiality shall be preserved in the investigation of a complaint. Such an approach is in the interest of both the complainant and any other person or persons involved. If, however, another person is named in a complaint, we believe that normally they should know what is said about them and who is making the complaint. The Club may also act if a complaint is found to be malicious.
- 8.2. The Investigating Officer(s) and Complaints Panel shall be responsible for conducting investigations into formal complaints, conducting hearings, where it has been found there is a case to answer. The Investigating Officer(s) and Complaints Panel may recommend provisional suspension of an individual, group or member whilst they are investigating or prior to a full hearing of the matter.

## **9. Arbitration**

- 9.1. The complainant and the Club agree to submit any dispute concerning any matter connected with or arising out of this complaints policy and procedure exclusively to binding arbitration to be conducted by an arbitrator (or panel) appointed by the West Riding FA.



## Annex A – Poor Practice Definitions

Poor practice concerns are behaviours which fall below the standard required by the club as [set out in our club rules here](#). Whilst these behaviours may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful it does set a poor example and if it were to continue, it might lead to harm or put a child in danger.

To allow poor practice concerns to continue unchallenged may result in an environment developing in which abuse may be able to take place. It normalises behaviour which is unacceptable and should not be condoned. It may also lead to other people having suspicions about an individual's motivations, even if there was no intention to harm.

### Examples of Poor Practice

1. Failure to provide effective supervision for coaching sessions which should be properly planned;
2. Putting performance over the wellbeing and safety of players;
3. Having a win at all costs mentality and failing to be gracious in defeat;
4. Lack of respect for other individuals, such as match officials, opposition coaches, players, managers and spectators and failing to accept a match official's decision (this may be dealt with by way of on field disciplinary proceedings but may fall short of being dealt with in this way)
5. Allowing rough and dangerous play, bullying, the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour by players;
6. Overtraining and exerting undue influence over players;
7. Condoning rule violations by players and not adhering to the laws and spirit of the game;
8. Not holding required FA coaching qualifications for the role being carried out;
9. Providing one to one coaching without any supervision or the presence of other adults;
10. Inappropriate use of social media;
11. Allowing children to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, gender, social class or lack of ability;
12. Engaging in, or tolerating, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour;
13. Failure to challenge poor practice in others;
14. Allowing allegations of abuse to go unchallenged or unrecorded and failing to report these.
15. First aid being administered without others being present other than in an emergency
16. Failing to address the additional needs of disabled players or other vulnerable groups;
17. Allowing confidential information to be shared inappropriately;
18. Failure to respect and listen to the opinions of children and consider the rights and responsibilities of children;
19. Failure to display and promote consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance;

The above list is not an exhaustive, but it should give an idea of the type of behaviour which constitutes poor practice.