

Upper Clatford Youth FC Complaint Procedure



Respect

Principles

The right to complain is considered to be very important at Upper Clatford Youth FC. Every complaint is a matter of concern to the club and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to try to prevent a recurrence of the problem. The club will not in general investigate anonymous complaints or allegations but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary. We will be forthright in dealing with vexatious, abusive, malicious and anonymous complaints.

Purpose

The purpose of our complaint procedure is to ensure that:

- The players, parents, carers, coaches, managers, referees, visitors or community member complaining has an easy, accessible, straightforward means of making representations to us, which offers prompt action and a speedy resolution.
- All complainants are confident that their complaint is being dealt with effectively and fairly, and with appropriate discretion and confidentiality, even if the outcome is not to their satisfaction.
- We use complaints positively and take subsequent action to maintain and improve service quality and responsiveness.

A Staged Approach for dealing with complaints

Preliminary Stage – an informal approach

- In the first instance we hope that parents and others who have concerns will contact their team manager to discuss the issues informally. In the event the complaint is about the team manager and you do not wish to raise the issues directly with them, then it should be raised with the Club Secretary or another Committee Member.
- All complaints may be made personally, by telephone or in writing.
- The Club Secretary or another Committee Member will attempt to address the issue immediately if that is at all possible.
- A complainant will be kept informed of progress regarding their complaint and every attempt will be made to resolve the issue within 5 working days. A complainant can expect a telephone call or holding letter from the club regarding their complaint within 2 working days.
- If an in-depth investigation is necessary every attempt will be made to respond within 20 working days.
- Most concerns are dealt with informally to everyone's satisfaction. However, failing this, the next stages of the procedure may be used.

Stage 1

In the event that the informal approach has not been satisfactory, the complainant should:

- Write to the Club Secretary and include the following information:
 - a) Details of what, when and where the occurrence took place
 - b) Names and addresses of any witnesses and their statements

Upper Clatford Youth FC Complaint Procedure



Respect

- c) Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way
- d) Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made
- e) What you would like the outcome to be.

- A response from the Club Secretary will be made within 5 working days.
- If an in-depth investigation is necessary every attempt will be made to respond within 20 working days.
- If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the final response from the Club Secretary then Stage 2 of the practice will be used.

Stage 2

- The complainant should write to the Chairman, outlining their complaint, explaining their reasons for pursuing it beyond the Club Secretary's response and enclosing any relevant paperwork.
- Response times will be the same as those outlined previously.
- Discussions between the Chairman and the Club Secretary will aim to resolve the complaint and agree a way forward at this stage.
- If this does not happen the next step will require the Chairman to make a decision about who is responsible for the issues involved.
- The Chairman may look at the whole issue afresh and ask for any new information to be considered by the Club Secretary.
- In the rare circumstance that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome, the Chairman may offer a right of appeal to a Complaints Panel.

Stage 3

- Complainant's should describe the issues in detail and say why they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the previous stages.
- A panel of 3 club members with no prior involvement will be convened to reconsider the complaint

Complainants should not:

- write to all committee members individually, or
- take their complaint to social media

As this may make it difficult to set up a panel who have had no prior involvement or knowledge about the complaint.

Reconsideration (considering afresh)

The panel can reconsider the matter afresh, with any new information that the Chairman or Club Secretary may not have been aware of at the time of the original response or action. In the light of additional information, the panel may decide to write and ask the Club Secretary to give the matter further consideration.

Upper Clatford Youth FC Complaint Procedure



Respect

Panel Meeting

The panel will consist of three members with no prior involvement in the matter and the Chair will be designated before the meeting. The meeting will be held in an informal atmosphere but should follow a formal agenda.

The complainant will be informed in writing of the panel's decision, preferably within two working days following the meeting. The letter should include:

- a summary of the issues
- an outline of the main points of discussion
- the reasons for the decision
- proposed actions or outcomes

The panel's letter may suggest that the complainant meets again to agree a way forward.

This is the final stage of the club's complaints procedure. If a parent believes that the club's actions have been unreasonable or the correct process has not been adhered to, the only recourse is to complain to the Test Valley Football League.

Vexatious Complaints

In rare circumstances a complainant might, having exhausted the complaints procedure, persist with the complaint.

Complaints become vexatious when they are:

- repeatedly and obsessively pursued; or
- unreasonable or seeking unrealistic outcomes; or
- reasonable but pursued in an unreasonable manner

The Club Secretary may need to decide whether all future contacts should be:

- Directed to, and only be dealt with, a named individual
- Restricted, for example, to letter only.
- If a conclusion has been reached about a complaint but the complainant continues to pursue it, the school may consider writing:
 - to reiterate that the matter is concluded and there will be no further correspondence
 - to say that, if correspondence continues, it will be read and filed but will receive no acknowledgment
 - to give a short response referring to previous documents that have already dealt with the matter

Abusive Complaints

Verbal aggression can be as intimidating as physical aggression. All parties have a right to be treated courteously and with respect. If Committee Members feel threatened, they should report their fears to the Club Secretary who will consider:

- writing to the complainant requesting that the behaviour cease
- setting restrictions for further contact with the Committee Members
- reporting the incident to the police

Upper Clatford Youth FC Complaint Procedure



Respect

If a telephone caller becomes aggressive or offensive, the person taking the call should explain that they will end the call if the behaviour persists. If they need to hang up, they should record this action and any further incidents.

Repeated abusive or aggressive contacts can be considered as harassment and Club Secretary will need to consider reporting them to police.

Anonymous Complaints

Generally, the club should not respond to anonymous complaints, nevertheless, the Club Secretary or Committee Member will need to consider whether:

- the issue and the fear of identification are genuine
- the issue is one of child protection