



COMPLAINTS PROCESS FOR GRASSROOTS CLUBS

No matter how well a club is run, there is always the possibility of having to deal with complaints and discipline issues within your Club.

Dealing with issues of poor practice or misconduct involving coaches or parents/spectators can seem somewhat daunting at first, however, by following a clear process as outlined below, such matters can be dealt with both efficiently and appropriately.

Outline of Action relating to Poor Practice and Misconduct

Where parents/carers, spectators, players, coaches or club officials are seen to have possibly acted inappropriately and a complaint is made, a Club will need to follow a clear process. The general process for dealing with a complaint and deciding what to do, which may include issuing a sanction, is as follows:-

Where a complaint is made to the club:

The person making the complaint must put their complaint in writing and send it to the Club Secretary, if the complaint relates to a poor practice case, or potential safeguarding issue then also copy in the Club Welfare Officer. *(Note - if the complaint is about the conduct of the Club Secretary, the letter should be sent to either the Chairman or Welfare Officer)*

Investigation

- To progress the matter, the club will need to forward the letter of complaint to the person involved. The Club must first ask the person complaining for their permission to share their letter of complaint with this person.
- A letter will then need to be sent by the Club to the person who is subject of the complaint, outlining the concerns that have been raised and include a copy of the complainant's letter **(please ensure all contact details of the complainant have been removed prior to forwarding on)**
- The Club letter should specify that it requires a written reply from the person who is the subject of the complaint, within seven days. If the matter can be subsequently closed following exchange of letters that is fine; however, if not, then the club should invite both parties to a meeting to deal with the matter.

- It may also be necessary to ask other individuals or witnesses for statements/observations relevant to the allegation, if this is a young person it must involve the Welfare Officer to conduct an interview, with parents/guardians present.
- Club letters to both the complainant and the person who is subject of the complaint should indicate the date/time/venue of the meeting and give at least 7 days' notice of it so that the parties concerned can make arrangements to attend should they wish to do so. The Club letter must also advise that if they do not attend the matter will be dealt with in their absence.
- The Committee dealing with the complaint would ideally consist of 3-5 Officials from the Club and they must NOT include anyone directly named or involved in the original complaint; or, who has a vested interest in the outcome.
- The Committee members will need copies of all relevant paperwork in advance of the hearing so that they can read it and be fully aware of the complaint and response.
- At the Committee Meeting a verbal outline of the complaint will be given through the Secretary and the Committee would then hear from the person who made the complaint and the person who is the subject of the complaint. The Chair of the committee would then ask any questions deemed appropriate to challenge or clarify what had been written or said. Any questions between the parties will be communicated through the Committee Chair.
- The person the complaint is about will be asked to sum up; and then the person who has made the complaint will do the same. They will then be asked to leave the room to allow the Committee to deliberate and reach a decision.
- After a decision is reached, both parties can either be asked back into the room and given the decision which will be binding (and followed up in writing); or alternatively, both parties would leave the meeting altogether after being informed that the club would advise of the decision in writing.

Sanctions

Where the Committee find that the complaint is upheld/proven there are a number of sanctions available for the club to impose and these sanctions are incorporated within the Respect Codes of Conduct, which all members at the club should have signed up to at the beginning of every season.

For less serious offences, we would advise that individuals are issued with a verbal warning for their first offence and then should further incidents arise escalate to a written warning, suspension etc.

If you are unsure of any process or need guidance or advice, please contact either Richard Pallot or Claire Summers-Evans at Cornwall FA who will be happy to assist you further.



Complaint received. Seek permission from the complainant to share their letter

Club to send a letter to the individual advising of the complaint and giving 7 days to reply in writing

If the complaint cannot be concluded following the response, invite all parties along with any witnesses to a committee meeting

3-5 Officials from the Club to attend the meeting and they must NOT include anyone directly named or involved in the complaint; or, who has a vested interest in the outcome.

Committee members to receive copies of paperwork in advance of the meeting

Outline of complaint to be given via the Secretary. Committee to hear from complainant & the person who is the subject of the complaint. Chair to ask questions.

Both parties to sum up & then asked to leave the room/meeting. The committee to reach a decision and advise in writing. All letters to be kept on file for patterns of poor behaviour.

Any sanctions issued to be in line with the Respect Code of Conduct and CCFA to be contacted if club is unsure

Set the standards for a great game.

Use your position to set a
positive example for the people
you're responsible for and lead
a better game for everyone.

Play Your Part (Code of Conduct)

Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials

Play your part and support
The FA's Code of Respect:

On and off the field, I will:

- Always show respect to everyone involved in the game
- Stick to the rules and celebrate the spirit of the game
- Encourage fair play and high standards of behaviour
- Always respect the Referee and encourage players to do the same
- Never enter the field of play without the Referee's permission
- Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive behaviour
- Be aware of the potential impact of bad language on others
- Be gracious in victory and defeat
- Respect the facilities home and away



Building society with mutual respect

*We ONLY
do
Positive.*



When working with players, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything
- Never tolerate any form of bullying
- Ensure all activities are suited for the players' ability and age
- Work with others (e.g. officials, doctors, welfare officers, physiotherapists) for each player's best interests
- I will make myself familiar with safeguarding practices & review guidance on **physical contact (5.6)** & **Acceptable Behaviours When Working With Young People (5.7)** documents on the safeguarding section of EnglandFootball.com

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may be:

- Required to meet with the club committee, league or CFA Welfare Officer
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave, lose my position and/or have my license withdrawn

*If we behave positively
during practice and matches,
our children will too.*

*By setting a good example, we'll help
build a supportive environment in which
everyone can enjoy themselves.*



Play Your Part (Code of Conduct)

Spectators and Parents/Carers

**Play your part and support
The FA's Code of Respect:**

I will:

- Have fun; it's what we're all here for!
- Celebrate effort and good play from both sides
- Always respect the Referee and coaches and encourage players to do the same
- Stay behind the touchline and within the Designated Spectators' Area (where provided)
- When players make mistakes, offer them encouragement to try again next time
- Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- I will make myself familiar with safeguarding practices & review guidance on **physical contact** (5.6) & **Acceptable Behaviours When Working With Young People** (5.7) documents on the safeguarding section of EnglandFootball.com

**I understand that if I do not follow the Code,
I may be:**

- Issued with a verbal warning or asked to leave
- Required to meet with the club committee, league or CFA Welfare Officer
- Obligated to undertake an FA education course
- Requested not to attend future games, be suspended or have my membership removed
- Required to leave the club along with any dependents and/or Issued a fine



Building society with mutual respect

*We ONLY
do
Positive.*

Play your best. Be your best.

Make sure you and everyone
around you has a good time
on and off the pitch.

Play Your Part (Code of Conduct)

Young Players

Play your part and support
The FA's Code of Respect:

When playing football, I will:

- Always play my best for the benefit of the team
- Play fairly and be friendly
- Play by the rules and respect the Referee
- Shake hands with the other team - win or lose
- Listen carefully to what my coach tells me
- Understand that a coach has to do what's best for the team
- Talk to someone I trust or the club welfare officer if I'm unhappy about anything at my club
- Encourage my team mates
- Respect the facilities home & away

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may:

- Be asked to apologise to whoever I've upset
- Receive a formal warning
- Be dropped, substituted or suspended from training



Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY
do
Positive.



Whether you win or lose,
make it a better game.

Treat your team, other players
and Match Officials with
respect so that everyone
has a more enjoyable time,
on and off the pitch.



Play Your Part (Code of Conduct)

Adult Players

Play your part and support
The FA's Code of Respect:

On and off the field, I will:

- Stick to the rules and celebrate the spirit of the game
- Always show respect to everyone involved in the game
- Never engage in public criticism of the Match Officials and abide by their final decisions
- Win or lose with dignity. Shake hands at the end of every game
- Be aware of the potential impact of bad language on others
- Never engage in abusive language, bullying or intimidating behaviour

I understand that if I do not follow the Code,
I may:

- Be asked to apologise to whoever I've upset
- Receive a formal warning
- Be required to attend a FA education course
- Be dropped, substituted or suspended from training
- Not be selected for the team
- Be asked to leave the club and/or issued a fine



Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY
do
Positive.