

Club Complaints Procedure

Policy owner: Southside Star Youth FC Committee

Applies to: Players, parents/carers, coaches, volunteers, spectators and club members

Review date: 30/06/2027 and annually thereafter

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

Southside Star Youth FC aims to provide a positive, safe and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the club.

We recognise that concerns or complaints may occasionally arise. This procedure explains how complaints should be raised and how the club will deal with them fairly, consistently and appropriately.

2. What This Procedure Covers

This procedure may be used where someone believes that:

- Club rules, policies or codes of conduct have been broken.
- They or their child have been treated unfairly.
- There has been bullying, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour.
- A coach, volunteer, parent, player or spectator has acted inappropriately.
- A concern has not been resolved informally.
- The club has failed to follow its own policies or procedures.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the Club Welfare Officer and may be handled outside this complaints process where required.

3. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, the club encourages concerns to be resolved informally first.

This may involve a calm conversation with the team manager, coach or relevant committee member.

Concerns should not be raised in front of children, during matches, in parent WhatsApp groups or on social media.

For non-urgent match-related concerns, parents and carers are encouraged to wait 24 hours before raising the issue, unless the matter relates to safety, safeguarding or serious misconduct.

4. Making a Formal Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if it is serious, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary, Chairperson, Club Welfare Officer or another member of the Committee.

- The complaint should include:
- The name of the person making the complaint.
- The name of the player, if relevant.
- Details of what happened.
- When and where it happened.
- Who was involved.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Any previous steps taken to resolve the issue.
- Copies of any relevant messages, screenshots or evidence.
- The outcome or resolution being requested.

Anonymous complaints may be difficult to investigate, but the club may still consider them where there are safeguarding, welfare or serious conduct concerns.

5. Initial Review

Once a complaint is received, the club will review it and decide how it should be handled.

The club may:

- Ask for further information.
- Speak to the people involved.
- Request witness statements.
- Refer the matter to the Club Welfare Officer.
- Refer the matter to the league, County FA, The FA or another authority where appropriate.
- Decide that no further action is required.
- Arrange a meeting or hearing if needed.

6. Complaints Involving Safeguarding

If a complaint involves the safety or welfare of a child, the Club Welfare Officer must be informed as soon as possible.

The club will follow safeguarding procedures and may need to refer the matter to the County FA, The FA, children's services, police or other relevant organisations.

Safeguarding matters may take priority over the standard complaints process.

7. Complaints Involving the Committee

If the complaint relates to a member of the Committee, that person should not be involved in reviewing or deciding the outcome of the complaint.

If the complaint relates to the Committee as a whole, the complainant may refer the matter to the relevant County FA.

8. Possible Outcomes

Depending on the nature of the complaint, possible outcomes may include:

- No further action.
- Informal discussion or mediation.
- Reminder of club expectations.
- Verbal or written warning.
- Request for an apology.
- Behaviour agreement.
- Additional training or support.
- Temporary suspension from club activities.
- Removal from a role, team or membership.
- Referral to the league, County FA, The FA or external authorities.

The club will aim to ensure that any outcome is fair, proportionate and in the best interests of the children involved.

9. Communication of Outcome

The club will communicate the outcome to the person who raised the complaint, and to others involved where appropriate.

Due to confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection, the club may not always be able to share full details of any action taken.

10. Appeals

If a complainant or person subject to a complaint believes the outcome was unfair, they may appeal in writing within 7 days of the outcome being communicated.

The appeal should explain why they believe the decision was incorrect, unfair or disproportionate.

Where possible, the appeal will be reviewed by committee members who were not involved in the original decision. The appeal decision will be final within the club.

11. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.

Parents, players, coaches and volunteers should not discuss ongoing complaints publicly, on social media, or in team messaging groups.

12. Vexatious or Malicious Complaints

The club will take all genuine concerns seriously.

However, complaints that are found to be deliberately false, malicious, abusive or repeatedly unreasonable may result in action under the club's code of conduct.

13. Record Keeping

The club will keep appropriate records of formal complaints, investigations, decisions and outcomes.

Records will be stored securely and only accessed by those with a legitimate reason.

14. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually by the Southside Star Youth FC Committee, or sooner if required by changes to FA, County FA, league or safeguarding guidance.