

WOODLANDS FOOTBALL CLUB

COMPLAINTS POLICY

If any Member, Parent/Carer, Club or FA Official or Coach/Manager feels that he or she has suffered discrimination, experienced, or witnessed something of concern or that the Club's Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct has been broken they should report the matter to The Club Secretary or if more serious in nature, also to the Club Welfare Officer.

Any dispute between Woodlands Football Club officials arising out of a match-day situation that cannot be resolved between the participants should be raised to the club. Unless a club official was present when the incident took place and is therefore able to act as the official arbiter, the matter will be directly referred, by the club, to Derbyshire Football Association. The match official always has the option to refer any incident of poor behaviour or ill-discipline directly to Derbyshire Football Association.

For issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation, a private word to The Team Coach/Manager or other Club Official might remedy the issue or concern that has arisen. This is not to undervalue minor concerns, rather in some instances a remedy can be decided upon quickly and to the satisfaction of all (an apology, explanation or other action). For example, it may be some aspect of Club Policy has not been fully understood by a parent, or incorrectly applied by a Coach/Manager, or The Club policy itself is unclear or contradictory. A private word with the 'frontline' person (e.g. Coach/Manager) might be the obvious and simplest approach to take. The Club would expect the issue to be resolved within two weeks and The Coach/Manager or Club Official is required to report to The Chairman and Secretary the concern and resolution offered so this can be agreed and recorded by the club's officials.

There is always the potential for more serious concerns to arise that require a more significant intervention. In these instances, a more formal process is required so that the club can both record and address the issue or concern. Where a serious concern arises, this should be reported to any member of the Coaching Staff or Club Official who is required to pass this concern onto both The Secretary/Club Welfare Officer and The Chairman of The Club.

Once reported, The Chairman and Secretary/Child Welfare Officer are collectively responsible for the investigation of the major concern and for applying the following guiding principles:

- The Complainant should be asked to make their complaint in writing to either The Secretary/Club Welfare Officer or Chairman detailing their complaint, and how they can be contacted so The Club can keep them informed of progress of their complaint;
- That the Club will remain in contact with the Complainant and deal with the complaint constructively;
- The Complainant will receive timely confirmation by phone or email that The Club has received and is dealing with their complaint and that this should not be more than 14 days from receiving the complaint;
- That the Club will investigate the complaint and respond to the complaint within 21 days of receipt (either with a proposed resolution, or details of further actions to be taken);

- That the Club will investigate the complaint by looking at what might have gone wrong and/or what needs to be done to rectify the cause of the complaint. The Club will also assess whether someone has suffered any injustice, and what remedy would be fair and proportionate in the circumstances;

- The Club will consider whether to consult or inform Derbyshire Football Association in relation to any breach of FA rules or guidelines;

- Where the complaint indicates a law may have been broken, The Club will inform the relevant statutory authority;

- Complaints that have a general significance across the Club might necessitate wider consultation, (e.g. selection process for matches) which might have implications for the interests of Parents, Members and Coaches but from different perspectives, and therefore involve wider consultation and perhaps even discussion by The Club Committee;

- Sensitive complaints may need to be dealt with confidentially (e.g. that involve a Safeguarding context) and include guidance from specific Officers of The Club, e.g. Club Welfare Officer or from Derbyshire Football Association;

- That learning from something that has gone, or is going wrong, and putting right mistakes, is paramount. Seeking to hide mistakes is counter to the wider interests of The Club, Its Members and Volunteers and therefore any investigation should be open, fair, and respectful to all concerned.

The Club will put together a working party to address at any complaints. The working party should come from the Football Club Committee. If this is not possible other members will be co-opted. With any internal club complaints, the parties are likely to be known to the working party. Hopefully the complaint can be resolved but if it is more serious in nature and/or a working party can't be put together the Club will ask an independent organisation to deal with it such as Derbyshire Football Association.

The working party have the power to:

- 1) Warn as to future conduct
- 2) Suspend from membership
- 3) Remove from membership any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct