



THE WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

POLICY TITLE: COMPLAINTS POLICY
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1. Policy Statement

Walsall Football Club welcomes comments and complaints from all members of the Club's Community. We use this process to improve our commitment to the players and staff (including volunteers) so we can provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which people can develop.

Walsall Football Club is committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides. We recognise that, occasionally, mistakes will be made and this will not always meet the individual's requirements or expectations. For these reasons it is Club policy that all complaints should be:

- Received positively, treated seriously and in an open manner.
- Acknowledged immediately, preferably in writing.
- Investigated in full
- Resolved, whether that is reasonably practical, within no longer than 13 working weeks.
- A source of learning with feedback used to ensure continuous improvement of the environment which the Club offers.

No complainant bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably by any member of staff. If there is evidence to the contrary, the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all members of the Club, but does not replace the procedures for staff grievances and disciplinary action. Those procedures are contained in the Staff Handbook and should be used where appropriate. Any complaints or concerns raised which relate to an individual's conduct or behaviour and have potential safeguarding implications for any individual (Child or Adult) will be assessed initially by the Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM). Where appropriate, these concerns will then be managed through Walsall Football Club's Safeguarding Children Policy or Safeguarding Adults Policy and procedures.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 All Club Staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in advance with procedure set out below.
- 3.2 The Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer has a responsibility for resolving a complaint and leading or contributing to an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate.



- 3.3 The Academy Manager is responsible for resolving complaints which have not been resolved during the previous two stages. The decision made by the Academy Manager is final.
- 3.4 The Club Board is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy and procedure are operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Academy Manager.

4. Action to Implement and Develop Policy

4.1 Stage One

The Club expects complaints to be made informally to a member of staff in the first instance. These concerns should be recorded by the member of staff and advice sought immediately if any safeguarding concerns are suspected or apparent. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at this level and any agreed action is captured in a record that is agreed by all parties.

Where it is not possible to address issues informally with an appropriate manager or initial staff responses do not result in satisfactory resolutions, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Lee Fraser.

Contact Details

Email: lee.fraser@walsallfc.co.uk

Mobile: 07712467699

The Club usually expects complaints to be made by the person concerned. Walsall Football Club will, however, always consider complaint made by a parent or advocate as it is acknowledged that there are many reasons (including imbalances of power) that block people from making a complaint themselves.

It is very difficult to investigate anonymous complaints as there will always be information that cannot be gathered or clarified. Any complaints relating to potential safeguarding risks will however be taken seriously, including those which fall under the umbrella of the club's whistleblowing policy and procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer who will acknowledge receipt within one working week. The Designated Safeguarding Officer and Senior Safeguarding Manager will then ensure that an independent senior member of staff is identified to investigate the complaint who has neither been directly involved with the complaint or personal interest in the case member.



4.2 Stage Two

The allocated independent staff member will respond in writing within one working week explaining what has happened as a result of the complaint. Where this involves a member of staff, specific details of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that our employees are afforded appropriate confidentiality and respect for their dignity at work.

If the complaint requires further investigation that cannot be carried out within the week, the investigating staff member shall keep the complainant informed and indicate the expected timescale for a response to be provided.

4.3 Stage Three

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the relevant investigating staff member's response, then the complaint will be forwarded to a member of the Club's Senior Management to resolve.

The Senior Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and respond to the complainant within 8 working weeks to allow time for any further information gathering and investigations to be undertaken.

4.4 Stage Four

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they have the right to follow the English Football League (EFL) complaints procedure.

Complaints should be made in writing and may be submitted by post to:

The Independent Football Ombudsmen
Suite 49
33 Great George Street
Leeds
LS1 3AJ

Or by e-mail to: contact@theifo.co.uk or via the website: www.theifo.co.uk

4.5 Complaints against the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Senior Safeguarding Manager or Academy Manager

Complaints against the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Senior Safeguarding Manager or Academy Manager should be addressed to the Chair of the Club Board.



5. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Club will maintain a confidential record of all complaints, appeals and outcomes and consider the learning from issues raised in order to assess what action if any would create a more positive experience and environment for those involved in participating in or providing club activities and to promote a safer environment. Themes and issues arising during each season will be collated and fed back to the Board to inform planning and priorities for the following season.

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