

Academy Complaints Policy

Introduction

The procedure allows players and parents to formally raise concerns about practices, policies, or treatment by individuals or the Club. It aims to ensure issues are addressed promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

While informal communication is encouraged to resolve everyday concerns, this procedure applies to matters requiring formal resolution. The Club is committed to handling complaints objectively and constructively. This procedure is non-contractual and does not form part of a player's registration.

Scope

This procedure covers complaints related to conduct, policies, or treatment by individuals or the Club. Complaints regarding safeguarding concerns should be directed to the **Head of Safeguarding** and will follow a separate safeguarding process. If you feel it is a combination of both then use this process.

Confidentiality & Protection

All complaints will be treated confidentially as far as possible. However, information may need to be shared with relevant individuals to ensure a proper resolution.

No player or parent will face repercussions for raising a complaint in good faith. However, complaints found to be malicious or vexatious may be addressed separately under the Club's disciplinary procedures.

Procedure

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally, submit it in writing to the **Head of Academy Operations**, clearly stating that it is a **formal complaint**. If the complaint concerns the **Head of Academy Operations**, it should be addressed to the **Academy Manager**.

A designated manager (not necessarily the recipient of your complaint), will arrange a meeting within **seven working days** to fully understand the context and nature of your complaint.

Players:

- You may be accompanied by a parent, trade union official, or fellow employee(player), but legal representation is not permitted.
- If your chosen companion is unavailable, you must arrange an alternative to avoid delays.
- **If you are under 18, you must be accompanied by a parent or guardian unless it has been agreed by both parties and documented that you will attend alone.**

Recording the meeting via audio or video (covertly or otherwise) is prohibited without the Club's express permission.

The Club will respond in writing within **five working days** of the meeting. If a delay occurs, you will be informed of the reason and given a revised timeline. The response will include the Club's decision and details of your right to appeal. If you do not meet with the Club for whatever reason, it will be difficult to fully investigate the complaint. However, an investigation will still be carried out and an outcome reached. It is therefore vital to attend any scheduled meeting.

Stage 2 – Appeal

If unsatisfied with the decision, you may appeal in writing to the **Academy Technical Board** within **five working days**, stating your grounds for appeal.

A member of the **Academy Technical Board (not the Academy Manager)**, or an **independent chairperson appointed by the Board**, will conduct an appeal meeting. Players may again be accompanied as in Stage 1, but legal representation is not permitted.

Following the meeting, a decision will be communicated in writing form within **five working days**. If a delay occurs, you will be informed of the reason and expected timeline.

The Club's decision at this stage is final.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to an external governing body such as **The FA, EFL, PL, or an independent ombudsman**, where applicable.