CHILCOMPTON SPORTS

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Approved by: Chilcompton Sports FC Committee | Date adopted: 27th May 2004 & revised 23rd February 2026

1. Purpose

Chilcompton Sports is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment for players, coaches, volunteers, officials, parents, spectators and other members of the club.

The club recognises that, from time to time, concerns or complaints may arise. This policy sets out a clear and fair process for raising and dealing with complaints.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly;
- complaints are considered consistently and without prejudice;
- all parties have an opportunity to explain their position;
- conflicts of interest are avoided wherever possible;
- complaints are dealt with within a reasonable timescale; and
- appropriate action is taken where a complaint is upheld.

2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the conduct, behaviour, decision, action or omission of Chilcompton Sports, its committee, coaches, volunteers, players, members or other persons acting on behalf of the club.

A complaint should relate to a specific matter and should clearly explain what has happened and why the complainant considers this to be unacceptable or inappropriate.

Routine questions, requests for information, suggestions or disagreements about matters which are properly governed by league, County FA or FA rules will not necessarily constitute a complaint under this policy.

3. How a complaint must be made

All complaints must be made in writing to the Club Secretary.

Complaints may be submitted by email or in writing.

To enable the club to investigate and address the complaint appropriately, the complaint must clearly define the exact nature of the complaint and should include, where applicable:

- the name and contact details of the complainant;
- the date, time and location of the incident or matter complained about;
- the name(s) of the person(s) involved;

- a clear and factual description of what happened;
- any relevant supporting evidence or documentation;
- the names of any witnesses, where appropriate; and
- the outcome or action the complainant is seeking, if applicable.

4. Acknowledgement of complaints

The Club Secretary will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 7 days, where reasonably practicable.

The complainant will be informed of the next steps and, where possible, the anticipated timescale for dealing with the complaint.

The club will aim to deal with complaints as promptly as reasonably possible. More complicated matters may require additional time to investigate.

5. Initial consideration

The Club Secretary will establish whether the matter falls within the scope of this complaints policy and whether any immediate action is required.

Where appropriate, the Club Secretary may seek further information from the complainant or other relevant persons before the complaint is presented to the committee.

The Club Secretary will not make the final decision on a complaint where they are personally involved in the matter or where there is a potential conflict of interest.

6. First Committee Hearing

The complaint will be presented to the Chilcompton Sports Committee for consideration.

In order to provide an independent and fair process, the committee will be divided into two sections of approximately equal size.

The first section of the committee will hear and consider the complaint.

Any committee member who is directly involved in the complaint, is the subject of the complaint, or has another significant conflict of interest, must declare that conflict and will not participate in the hearing or decision-making process.

The committee will consider the available information objectively and will give the relevant parties a reasonable opportunity to provide their account where appropriate.

The committee may:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- reject the complaint;
- determine that there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion;
- recommend or require appropriate remedial action; or
- refer the matter to another appropriate body, such as the relevant League, County FA or The Football Association.

7. Second Committee Hearing – Independent Review

If the complaint is not resolved following the first committee hearing, the complainant may request that the matter be considered by the second section of the committee.

The second section will consider the complaint independently of the first hearing.

Where reasonably practicable, members of the second section will not have participated in the first hearing or have any conflict of interest in relation to the complaint.

The second section will review the information and decision arising from the first hearing and may consider any additional relevant information provided by the complainant.

The second section may:

- uphold the original decision;
- overturn or amend the original decision;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- determine that there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion; or
- refer the matter to an appropriate external authority.

8. Referral to The Football Association

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following completion of the club's internal complaints procedure, they are entitled, where the matter falls within the relevant jurisdiction, to take their grievance to The Football Association (FA) or the appropriate County Football Association or League.

The club will provide reasonable assistance in identifying the appropriate external body or procedure where this is known.

Nothing in this policy prevents the club, the complainant or any other relevant person from referring a matter directly to the FA, County FA, League, safeguarding authority, police or another appropriate body where the nature of the matter requires or permits this.

9. Safeguarding and serious concerns

Complaints involving safeguarding, abuse, discrimination, violence, serious misconduct or the welfare of a child or vulnerable person will be treated as a priority.

Such matters may require immediate referral to the club's Welfare Officer, the relevant County FA, The FA, the police or another appropriate authority.

A safeguarding concern should not be delayed simply because the club's normal complaints procedure has not been completed.

Where appropriate, the club may suspend or temporarily restrict an individual's involvement in club activities while a serious matter is being investigated. Such action is a precautionary measure and does not, in itself, imply that the person concerned is guilty of any allegation.

10. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled as confidentially as reasonably possible.

Information will only be shared with those who need it in order to investigate, consider or respond to the complaint, or where disclosure is required by law, safeguarding requirements, FA/County FA/League rules or another legitimate reason.

Because a fair investigation may require information to be shared with the person or persons concerned, complete confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

11. Fair treatment

All complaints will be considered objectively and without discrimination.

The club will not tolerate victimisation, intimidation, harassment or retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine complaint or assists with an investigation.

Equally, a complaint must not be used to deliberately harass, intimidate or maliciously target another person.

12. Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

The club recognises that volunteers give their time to run Chilcompton Sports and that resources available to investigate complaints are limited.

The club may take appropriate steps where a complaint is considered to be:

- malicious or knowingly false;
- repeatedly submitted after it has already been fully considered;
- abusive, threatening or intimidating;
- deliberately designed to cause unreasonable disruption; or
- based on demands that are unreasonable or disproportionate.

13. Evidence and standard of consideration

Complaints will be considered on the information reasonably available to the club.

The committee will seek to establish the facts as fairly as possible. It is not necessary for a complainant to provide formal legal evidence, but allegations should be supported by relevant information or evidence wherever possible.

The committee will not make assumptions about the truth or otherwise of an allegation before it has been properly considered.

14. Timescales

The club will aim to deal with complaints as promptly as reasonably practicable.

As a general guide:

- acknowledgement: within 7 days of receipt;
- first committee hearing: normally within 28 days, subject to committee availability and the complexity of the matter;
- written outcome: normally within 14 days of the hearing;
- request for a second hearing: normally within 14 days of receiving the first decision;
- second hearing: normally within 28 days of the request.

These timescales are guidelines rather than absolute deadlines. Where a matter is particularly complex, involves safeguarding, requires information from external organisations, or cannot reasonably be dealt with within these timescales, the complainant will be informed of the reason for any significant delay.

15. Records

The Club Secretary will maintain an appropriate record of complaints received and their outcomes.

Records will be kept securely and only for as long as reasonably necessary, taking account of the nature of the complaint and any applicable legal, safeguarding, FA, County FA or League requirements.

16. Complaints involving the Club Secretary

Where a complaint concerns the Club Secretary, the complaint should be submitted to the Chairman or another appropriate committee officer.

The Club Secretary must take no part in the administration, investigation or decision-making relating to that complaint.

17. Complaints involving the Chairman or the Committee

Where a complaint concerns the Chairman, a significant proportion of the committee, or circumstances in which the normal committee process would not provide sufficient independence, the club may appoint an appropriate independent person or seek assistance from the relevant County FA or League.

18. Complaints about referees, opposition clubs or league matters

Where a complaint concerns the conduct or decisions of a match official, opposition club, league official or another matter governed by competition or FA regulations, the complainant may be directed to the appropriate League, County FA or FA complaints or disciplinary process.

The club will assist with such a referral where appropriate.

19. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Chilcompton Sports Committee to ensure that it remains appropriate and reflects current FA, County FA, League and safeguarding requirements.

The committee may amend this policy where necessary, subject to approval in accordance with the club's constitution or governing arrangements.

CHILCOMPTON SPORTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Club Secretary: Susan Brawn

Chairman: Tim Curtis

Date approved: 27th May 2004
Revised: 23rd February 2026