

Running Forever Running Club

## Grievance and disciplinary policy and process

### Complaints and Disputes

1. All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of children or vulnerable adults will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Club's and England Athletics's safeguarding policy and procedures. The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Officer for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.
2. Any complaints of misconduct (improper or unprofessional conduct) regarding the behaviour of Members or Committee Members shall be dealt with by the Club in accordance with its discipline and appeals process below and must be presented in writing to the Secretary (and where the matter relates to the Secretary, the complaint must be submitted to the Welfare Officer). Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the Secretary will hear complaints within fourteen days of receiving a complaint. If the complaint is sufficiently evidenced, the Secretary will appoint 3 (three) Club Members (who have no direct or indirect interest/involvement in the matter) to sit on a disciplinary panel. Subject to rule 3 below, a decision of the disciplinary panel shall be final and conclusive.
3. Any appeals must be received by the Secretary within 7 (seven) days of receiving the written decision and, if appropriate, the appeals process will be followed.
4. Any complaints of serious misconduct (including, without limitation, theft, doping violations, fraud, physical violence, safeguarding policy breaches, serious breach of applicable health and safety, gambling and/or ticketing regulations or any act or omission of the Member or Committee Member which in the opinion of England Athletics, acting reasonably, brings or is likely to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute) regarding the behaviour of Members or Committee Members shall be reported and dealt with by England Athletics in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedures.
5. If a dispute arises between any Members or Committee Members of the Club about the validity or propriety of anything done by any Member or Committee Member under these Rules and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation.

## Process

### Informal

#### 1. Informal resolution - face to face

The majority of complaints can be handled informally. It is most often the case that the person who has caused offence has no idea that their actions or words have caused harm in any way. Therefore, the first port of call for any complaint is for the aggrieved party to speak informally to the person who has caused offence in order to make them aware of the situation. In the majority of cases, the offending party will be apologetic and not have realised that their actions were harmful in any way. There should be no further action here.

#### 2. Informal resolution - group leader

In a small number of cases, it may be that the person who is aggrieved either does not know the offending person, does not feel confident in approaching them or the matter is simple club etiquette such as 'looping'. In these cases, it is appropriate to approach the group leader and raise a concern. It is then for the group leader to resolve the matter in a way that they see fit. This might include a whole group message to remind everyone of the club ethos 'no-one gets left behind' or they may speak to the individual in person or they may choose to raise it with a committee member for further discussion/investigation.

#### 3. Informal resolution - committee member

If the matter is outside of the above two instances, it may be appropriate for a club member to approach a Committee Member with the problem. The Committee member shall determine at this stage whether the person wants it to be handled formally or informally. If formally, refer to the procedure below. If informal, the club member accepts that the Committee Member shall deal with the matter in the way that they best see fit depending on the nature of the incident. Words of advice to the offending party and potentially the aggrieved party shall resolve this issue.

### Formal Process

1. If a club member or member of the public wishes to make a formal complaint, this **MUST** be submitted in writing [by email or letter], within 14 days of the offence. The Club secretary (or Club welfare officer) shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 days and the club shall have a total of 14 days to hear the initial complaint.
2. The Club secretary (or Club welfare officer) shall make the whole Committee aware and appoint 3 members of the club investigate the complaint. The investigation may include face to face interviews or written submission from a number of parties. Any person interviewed shall have the right to have another club member present with them at the time of interview. The complaint shall be decided on balance of probability - that is, that something is more likely to have happened than not.
3. To determine the case, the club has a number of options:

1. a) Inform/disclose to a third party

In exceptionally rare circumstances, it may be necessary to pass a matter to the Police or Adult/Children's Social Care for investigation such is the concern. Should that be the case, the club shall suspend the membership of the offending party until the matter is resolved. This is a neutral act to protect the club and the club member from further harm.

2. b) Uphold the complaint

In this case, the Committee shall decide that the complaint is upheld. A written apology shall be made on behalf of the club. The club member who has caused offence shall receive either:

i. verbal warning as to their behaviour

ii. written warning

iii. in extreme cases it may be necessary to remove membership from someone, but this is a last resort and only for use in exceptional circumstances e.g. a proven theft.

3. c) Partially uphold the complaint

It may be that the complaint is based on several premises and that one or more of these are likely to have happened but some did not or it was unclear what occurred (one person's word against another). In these cases, the club shall acknowledge such fault as it finds and should consider an apology on behalf of the club. It is likely that a cautionary word with the offending party will be sufficient to resolve this.

4. d) Reject the complaint

In some cases, the complainant will have been wrong or the complaint unsubstantiated. In these cases, the club shall write to the person with their findings. No further action shall be required.

The investigating officers shall present a brief summary of the case and their recommendations to the Club secretary (via the Committee) who shall have the final say on any sanction recommended. This shall then be conveyed to all parties at the earliest opportunity. A de-personalised summary shall be made available on the website.

Any changes to club rules that may arise from an investigation would have to be passed through the normal constitution change process.