

Garden City Complaint Procedure & Policy



Dealing with Complaints

Garden City Football Club wishes to ensure that any adult and child involved with the Club feels confident and secure enough to raise complaints of any nature with the Club. We endeavour to make sure that any complaints received are solved quickly, simply and fairly. It is important for us to seek to deal with any issues in a satisfactory manner. This policy is a guide to achieve this.

Established Policies and Procedures

In all circumstances, individuals are positively encouraged to raise their concerns with a representative of the Club, which can be the Manager of the team, or a Club Official, as described within these procedures below. A general principle is that we believe that, based on experience, most complaints can be dealt with in a relatively informal manner, through communication with the manager, and with possible involvement from the Club Executive Team. But where this is not the case, we have a robust and fair procedure in place for complaints to be dealt with more formally through the Club, with an option to escalate the issue to outside authorities.

Stage 1 – Direct Resolution

Please raise your complaint with the Club Representative who is responsible for your issue immediately, as it is important that this person is given the opportunity to resolve the complaint. In this process the Club Executive Team may be consulted informally as well. However, if you are unwilling or unable to approach this member of the Team, please raise your issue with your teams Club Welfare Officer (CWO) or another member of the Executive Team, such as the Secretary or Chairperson.

The objective of this first stage is to resolve any problems quickly and simply with the minimum of formality. As noted above based on the Club's wealth of experience, the majority of complaints can normally be dealt with in this informal way.

Stage 2 – Informal Resolution Through the Club

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the Club Representative concerned, submit your claim in writing to the Club Welfare Officer via email: welfaregardencityfootballclub@gmail.com (or, if the CWO has a conflict of interest – to the Club Secretary at gcfc.secretary2022@hotmail.com) within 28 days of the issue explaining your concern(s) and the reasons for the continued dissatisfaction.

Complaints will be accepted in written form. To make this easier and ensure all complaints are dealt with in an equal and timely manner, a complaint form can be downloaded from our website.

Upon receiving a verbal complaint, the Club will refer to our procedure on the website and send the complainant a copy of the form. If this is not viable, the Club will take the complaint verbally, minute the details and send a written confirmation of the discussion to the complainant to sign. A written record will always be taken.

The Club will not acknowledge or accept a formal complaint via any form of social media.

When a complaint has been received, Garden City Football Club (through the Club Welfare Officer or other member of the Executive Team) will:

- Acknowledge your complaint in writing within reasonable time (given that all Executive Team Members are volunteers, we aim to respond within 48 hours but cannot guarantee this.)
- Advise you of any further information required or ask for the completion of the complaints form if not done already.
- Advise if information is required from a third party and, if appropriate, seek permission from you to obtain this from the third party.
- Indicate the next steps and timescales involved in resolving your complaint.
- Assure you that all complaints are dealt with in confidence and information is only shared on a 'need-to-know' basis, save for serious child safeguarding concerns, where the Club has a legal duty to disclose these concerns to the relevant statutory agencies.

The Club will seek to act within 7-14 days to liaise with both parties in order to seek a swift resolution. In this process we will give the party at the receiving end of the complaint a fair opportunity to respond to the complaint. Once a resolution has been reached, the Club will summarise this in writing and share with both parties involved.

We anticipate that most complaints can be dealt with effectively and fairly through this process of informal resolution.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution through the Club

If the matter cannot be resolved by informal resolution, the issue will be escalated to the Executive Team. The Club Welfare Officer (or the Chair or Club Secretary – if the CWO has a conflict of interest) will liaise with a minimum of three Executive Team Members (the Panel), each of whom will not have a conflict of interest, who will appoint a Chair and investigate the complaint. The CWO will keep the complainant and the other parties informed of any progress, if appropriate, and will also update the parties on the result and outcome of the Panel's decision. Other than any discussions or outcomes as a result of Stages 4 and/or Stage 5 described below, the Panel's decision is final as far as the Club is concerned.

Garden City Football Club strives to resolve all complaints within 4-6 weeks of receipt of the initial complaint in writing. Where this is not possible, an update will be provided to the complainant as to the reasons for the longer timeframe.

Possible outcomes/sanctions which could be provided by the Panel:

- Advice or warning as to future conduct/sanctions
- Details of any further training/support needed
- Supervision and or monitoring
- Suspension
- No case to answer

In (what we hope will be) exceptional circumstances, if you are not happy that your complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily, you will have the option of moving on to the following escalation procedures outside of the Club.

Stage 4 – Escalation Procedure outside of the Club (1)

If the complainant feels that the issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily, they can refer their complaint, within 14 days of the Club's decision, with reasons for their continued dissatisfaction to the Oxfordshire FA:

Mr. Nigel Staverton
The Oxfordshire Football Association
Football Support Services & Safeguarding
Bicester Leisure Centre
Queens Avenue
Bicester
Oxon OX26 2NR

Mobile No: 07856 902754
Email: support@OxfordshireFA.com
Website: www.oxfordshirefa.com

Stage 5 – Escalation Procedure Outside of the Club (2)

If the complainant is still unhappy with the decision, they can write to The FA, which is the governing body for the game in England and is primarily responsible for all regulatory aspects of the game:

The Football Association
Wembley Stadium
PO Box 1966
London SW1P 9EQ
Telephone: 0800 1691863
Website: www.thefa.com

Stage 6 – Final Stage – Independent Football Ombudsman

The final option is to refer the complaint to the Football Ombudsman, which has a clear remit to receive and adjudicate on complaints from football supporters and participants which have not been resolved by the football authorities:

Independent Football Ombudsman
Premier House
1-5 Argyle Way
Stevenage SG1 1AD
Telephone: 0330 1654223
Email: contact@theifo.co.uk
Website: www.theifo.co.uk

THE SIX STAGES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

