



# Leighton United Football Club

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

This procedure covers complaints arising internally within the club and external complaints concerning the club. It also includes complaints relating to alleged breaking of Club Rules, Policies, Procedures and Codes of Conduct.

### **1. General**

- 1.1 Complaints will be investigated by a panel consisting of Club Welfare Officers (CWOs), the Head Coach, Club Secretary, Chair, plus any other club officials this panel considers appropriate.
- 1.2 Correspondence with complainants will usually be by a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary.

### **2. Internal Complaints**

**Player, coach or parent/carer complaints regarding a) FOOTBALL or b) CLUB:**

- 2.1 **FOOTBALL:** All complaints relating to the way in which a team is coached or managed **must be referred in the first instance to the relevant Team Manager or Lead Coach.**

If the matter is not resolved amicably then the complaint must be put in writing (e.g. email) and forwarded to either a Club Welfare Officer (CWO), Chair, Club Secretary or the Head Coach for subsequent investigation and resolution by the complaints panel.

In accordance with good practice, a message will be sent to the formal complainant advising that the circumstances are being investigated and that a formal response will be provided in due course

Collection of witness statements will usually be coordinated by a CWO. If considered necessary, the parties involved in a complaint may be invited to a meeting with the complaints panel.

When considered necessary by the complaints panel, the Management Committee will be consulted. A written reply confirming the Club's decision via the panel will be sent to the complainant by a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary and as appropriate also to the respondents. The club's decision via the panel is final and there is no right of appeal.

- 2.2 Team Managers, coaches, Team Administrators or Club supporters wishing to **formally complain about the conduct of opposition players, officials or supporters** must promptly put details of the complaint in writing, e.g. email (together with any supporting evidence) and forward to either a CWO, Chair, Club Secretary or the Head Coach.

**On no account must dialogue or correspondence (including by email and social networking) be entered into with those being complained about or with third parties.**

**Club representatives (including supporters) must not try to resolve such complaints themselves.**

The circumstances will be investigated by the complaints panel. A CWO will usually coordinate the collection of witness statements, as appropriate. The panel will decide on actions to be taken, including whether a formal complaint should be made to the County FA and/or the opposing club. When considered necessary, the Management Committee will be consulted. Written confirmation of the decision will be sent by a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary to the relevant Team Manager, Lead Coach, Team Administrator and club supporters involved, as considered appropriate.

If a formal complaint is then to be made on behalf of the Club this will be submitted by a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary.

2.3 **GENERAL CLUB COMPLAINTS:** Anyone within the Club, whether player/parent/carer/supporter/official has the right to submit a complaint regarding any aspect of Club organisation, management or practice. Such complaints must be put in writing (e.g. email) and addressed to a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary, who will arrange for an investigation and resolution by the complaints panel.

2.4 Formally reported complaints should include:

- Details of what took place, when, and where the occurrence took place.
- Any witness statements and their contact details.
- Names of any others considered to have been treated in a similar manner.
- Details of any earlier complaints made about the incident, date, when, and to whom made.

2.5 In accordance with good practice, a message will be sent to the complainant advising that the circumstances are being investigated and that a formal response will be provided in due course

2.6 If considered necessary the parties involved in a complaint may be invited to a meeting with the complaints panel. When considered necessary by the complaints panel, the Management Committee will be consulted. A written reply confirming the Club's decision via the panel will be sent to the complainant by a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary and as appropriate also to the respondents. The club's decision via the panel is final and there is no right of appeal.

### 3. **External Complaints**

**Complaints made or received concerning persons or organizations outside of the Club.**

3.1 Both formal written and verbal complaints received from external sources must be referred immediately to either a CWO, Chair or Club Secretary for investigation by the complaints panel. When considered necessary by the panel, the Management Committee will be consulted.

**On no account must dialogue or correspondence (including by email and social websites) be entered into with the complainant.**

In accordance with good practice, a message will be sent to the complainant advising that the circumstances are being investigated and that a formal response will be provided in due course.

- 3.2 The circumstances surrounding the complaint will be investigated by the panel, if necessary, calling in other Management Committee members as appropriate. Witness statements will be requested, as appropriate, coordinated by a CWO. Following investigation, a final decision will be determined by the panel and sent to the complainant.

The panel will determine whether the matter should be referred to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, relevant league management or other official parties.

- 3.3 **The ‘What to Do If You Witness Misconduct’ guidelines must be followed (copy attached).**

#### 4. **Child Abuse**

Internal or external complaints received or proposed that allege child abuse must be referred immediately to the one of CWOs, in accordance with the club’s safeguarding policy. **No dialogue or correspondence must be entered into with the complainant or those being complained about.**

The CWO will then decide how to proceed.

5. Options available to the complaints panel include:

- Warn as to future conduct.
- Suspend from the Club for a specified period or indefinitely.
- Removal from the Club.

There is no right of appeal.

There will be no end of season amnesties for indefinite suspensions.

6. The Management Committee will be made aware of complaint trends in general (under the standard safeguarding agenda item), but the identity of complainants will remain anonymous, and no details of actual complaints will be revealed.



## Leighton United Football Club

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS MISCONDUCT GUIDANCE**

These guidelines are for Leighton United Football Club Coaches/Team Managers, assistant coaches, team helpers, team administrators, club officials, parents/carers and supporters in the event of misconduct by opposition teams or other parties being witnessed on or off the pitch during LUFC matches.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- Do not get involved either verbally or physically.
- Let the match officials deal with matters on the pitch.
- Keep off the playing area – do not go on the pitch during the match.
- Make a mental note who is behaving badly, when, what they are doing and/or saying, who comments are addressed to and where they are in relation to the pitch.
- Discourage our supporters and players from getting involved.
- Identify key witnesses and if considered necessary ask them to provide witness statements (which should be sent direct to a Club Welfare Officer).
- **DO NOT ENGAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING EMAIL AND FACEBOOK CORRESPONDENCE) WITH ANY OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED.**
- Write down what you saw and heard and what, if anything you did as soon as possible after an incident (including the locations of the parties concerned). Include a brief description of the incident, date, time and venue. Use the Bedfordshire Football Association witness statement where appropriate.
- Inform a Club Welfare Officer (CWO), if possible within 48 hours of the incident taking place. Club Welfare Officers are Jo Baggaley, email [jobaggley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jobaggley@hotmail.co.uk); Laura Redrup, email [lauraredrup@gmail.com](mailto:lauraredrup@gmail.com); Alan Redrup, email [alanmkdons@outlook.com](mailto:alanmkdons@outlook.com); Michelle Hibbert, email [michellehibbert@aol.com](mailto:michellehibbert@aol.com)

Send your written account to the CWO via email.

- Do not communicate with management of the relevant league, the Bedfordshire Football Association or opposition team management or club. All communications must be done through Leighton United.

- **Tell supporters they must not communicate with the management of the relevant league or the Bedfordshire Football Association under any circumstances. Again, comments should be sent direct to a Club Welfare Officer.**
- **The Club Welfare Officers, Head Coach, Chair and the relevant Coach/Team Manager (with reference to the full Management Committee if necessary) will jointly decide whether or not to inform or submit a formal complaint to the County Football Association.**