**GRFC Mini and Youth Complaints Procedure**

**Introduction**

GRFC Mini and Juniors Section aims to offer a safe and secure environment where Players, Parents, Coaches and other Club Representatives cooperate in the shared goal of promoting the ethos, attitude and skills of the game of rugby football.

GRFC is proud of both its playing record and also its safety and complaints record. As a Club that promotes openness and honesty, and that has a desire to develop and improve, there must be an avenue for opinions and complaints to be heard (however serious). Therefore, the Club operates a procedure that allows Members (including Players, Parents and Coaches), Spectators or visitors to raise complaints about any perceived issue (example shown under Types of Complaints).

See also the [Complaints Procedure Flow Chart](http://reedsweybridgerfc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Complaints-Procedure-Full-Manual-Complaints-Flow-Chart.pdf)

**Regular Communication**

In many cases though, through regular communication, and all parties being encouraged to voice their opinion, then the need to complain officially may never arise.

Coaches, Coordinators and other Club Representatives can often be found in the bar after training sessions or matches as this is the usual venue to discuss matters involving their age group. They are all open and approachable. Head Coaches and/or Club Representatives are happy to arrange one-to-one sessions to discuss issues outside of the training session times or in an environment outside of the Club premises. Your comments are always welcome, especially when made in a constructive manner away for the high emotions of the touchline.

**Types of Complaint**

To help the complaints process, a number of potential complaints/issues have been listed below. This list is by no means exhaustive, nor in order of seriousness, and does not mean to undermine or belittle a complaint if categorised in the “minor issue” section. It is meant to serve as a reference and to assist with how to raise an issue or to make a complaint. All Types of complaint will be taken seriously, however some may be more serious than others.

**Minor Issues**

* Differences of opinion
* Complaints over coaching style
* Poor communication from Coaches to other Coaches / Players / Parents
* Coaches failing to advise colleagues that he / she is unable to attend that week
* Parents failing to return to collect a player / child at a particular time (or in the younger age groups leaving a child at a session unattended)

**Major Issues**

* Repeated Minor Issues
* The Safety of Club activities
* Discrimination, harassment or bullying
* Child abuse and child welfare
* Poor standards of instructions or leadership (Coaching)
* Poor standard of equipment used for Club activities
* Poor Club administration
* Lack of suitable activities for their level of participation
* Behaviour contrary to the Codes of Conduct

Note: The Committee recommends that all issues should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity so that they may be resolved as amicably as possible. It is important that all parties communicate regularly and honestly.

**Who Can Make a Complaint?**

Anyone associated with the Club (whether a member or visitor) can make a complaint.

In the event that a Member (including Players, Parents, Coaches or other Club Representative), spectator or visitor feels that he or she has suffered abuse or discrimination in any way, or that the Club Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken, or are not happy with coaching methods etc. should follow the procedure below.

**How to Make a Complaint**

The complaint can be either a verbal complaint or a written complaint. Although a verbal complaint may be suitable for one-off minor issues, a written complaint or written report will be required for all serious issues or for repetition of minor issues after a Verbal Complaint has not rectified the matter. A serious complaint can still be made verbally to the relevant Club Representative, which in turn would trigger a written report.

**Verbal Complaint**

The complaint should be reported to the Head Coach of that group. If the complaint is about the Head Coach and you feel that you cannot approach the Head Coach, then the complaint should be made to the Club Safeguarding Officer, with details of what, when and where the occurrence took place. Please include names and contact details of any witnesses.

**Written Complaint**

Although the written complaint can be given to the Head Coach of that age group (especially if it involves one of the Assistant Coaches of that age group), a written complaint can be given directly to the Club Safeguarding Officer, with details of what, when and where the occurrence took place. Please include names and contact details of any witnesses.

Note: Any issues or complaints regarding Child Protection, Bullying or Neglect etc. should be immediately reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer, if the allegations are about the Club Safeguarding Officer then report the matter immediately to the Club Chairman.

**Club Reaction to a Complaint**

Verbal Complaint to Head Coach or Safeguarding Officer

Depending on the nature of the complaint (e.g. a difference of opinion on coaching or team selection) it may be possible to resolve these issues without needing to escalate matters. A brief report from the Head Coach should be sent to the Safeguarding Officer and relevant Chairman.

Should the matter be more serious, then a brief report (by the Head Coach or Club Safeguarding Officer) should be sent to the Executive Committee of GRFC Mini and Junior Section (“the Committee”) and maybe the RFU Child Protection Officer and the Police.

Written Complaint to Head Coach or Club Safeguarding Officer depending on the nature of the complaint (e.g. repeated minor issues) then a brief report (by the Head Coach or Club Safeguarding Officer) should be sent to the Committee for in-house resolution.

Should the matter be more serious, then a brief report (by the Head Coach or Club Safeguarding Officer) should be sent to the Committee and maybe the RFU Child Protection Officer and the Police.

**Taking Action**

If the Committee considers the complaint to be unjustified then no further action will be taken. In such circumstances the Committee will consider how similar situations or misunderstandings might be avoided in the future.

The aim is that all parties to be informed of the outcome in writing within 30 days. If the Committee considers the complaint to be justified then it will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. In doing so they will take account of past records, relevant disciplinary policies of the Club and if necessary the RFU.

In such circumstances the Committee will consider how similar situations or misunderstandings might be avoided in the future.

All parties are to be informed of the outcome in writing, however the time taken to respond will depend on the nature of the complaint and the investigations processes followed.

Note: The person to whom the complaint refers (until the complaint is proved or remedied) may, at the discretion of the Committee, be suspended (pending further investigations). This is not an admission of guilt or a fait accompli; it would just be served to protect all parties during the investigations.

**Written Response to a Complaint**

Should the Committee decide that a written response is necessary and appropriate, a written response will be made after the Committee has heard from all parties. The written response will include the Committee’s decision and any action to be taken.

**Appeals**

In the event of either party not being satisfied with the Committee’s response, an appeal may be made in writing to the GRFC Executive Committee or the RFU.