



COMPLAINTS + ESCALATION PROCEDURE

Worcester Knights YFC

Approved by: Chairman & CWO

Version: 2025.1

Review: Annually

1. Purpose

This procedure ensures that all concerns or complaints are handled:

- fairly
- transparently
- promptly
- in line with FA safeguarding and club standards

We welcome constructive feedback and treat all complaints seriously.

2. Types of Complaints

We recognise three categories:

A. General Concerns - Handled internally by the coach or secretary

- Communication
- Playing time
- Training queries
- Parent disagreements

B. Welfare / Behaviour Concerns - Handled by Club Welfare Officer

- Emotional wellbeing
- On-pitch incidents
- Conduct of players or parents

C. Safeguarding Concerns - Handled immediately by the Club Welfare Officer and Worcestershire FA Safeguarding Team

- Any concern involving a child's safety
- Behaviour of an adult toward a child

3. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly.

Parents should raise issues directly with:

- **Coach:** for football-related matters
- **Club Welfare Officer:** for welfare or conduct concerns

We aim to respond within **48 hours**.

4. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint can be submitted in writing to the Club Welfare Officer.

Details should include:

- What happened
- Who was involved
- When and where
- Any supporting evidence

The Club will:

- Acknowledge within 3 working days
- Review evidence
- Speak to relevant parties
- Provide a written response within 14 days, where possible

For welfare or conduct matters, the Head Coach may be consulted.

5. Stage 3 – Escalation to Worcestershire FA

If the complaint involves:

- safeguarding
- serious conduct
- discrimination
- alleged breaches of FA policy
- dissatisfaction with Stage 2 outcome

...the case should be escalated to:

Worcestershire FA Safeguarding Team

01905 827137

We assist fully with all escalations.

6. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled sensitively and in line with GDPR.

We do not share identities or information outside those required to resolve the matter.

7. Fairness & Protection

No parent, child, coach or official will be:

- victimised
- disadvantaged
- excluded

...for making a legitimate complaint.

We expect all parties to engage respectfully.

8. Record-Keeping

We keep written records of:

- concerns
- actions
- responses
- outcomes

These are securely stored by the Club Welfare Officer.

9. Learning from Recent Events & Strengthened Procedures

In light of recent situations involving multiple overlapping concerns, formal complaints, safeguarding referrals and external escalations, Worcester Knights YFC has strengthened and clarified its internal processes to ensure that all future concerns are handled consistently, transparently and safely.

The following principles now apply to all complaints and concerns raised within the club:

9.1 Clear Separation of Issues

Where a concern involves:

- football matters
- player behaviour

- parent conduct
- welfare
- safeguarding
- or any combination of these

...the club will separate each strand and handle it through the correct channel.

This ensures clarity, prevents confusion, and avoids unrelated concerns being mixed together.

9.2 Requirement for Direct Evidence

The club will only act on:

- first-hand concerns
- supported factual information
- evidence-based reports

The club cannot respond to:

- hearsay
- assumptions
- unverified claims
- retaliatory allegations
- information passed through multiple third parties

This protects all children and adults from unfair or unfounded allegations.

9.3 Use of Informal Stage First (Where Appropriate)

All non-safeguarding concerns must first go through **informal discussion**, unless:

- there is an immediate risk to a child
- the matter involves serious misconduct

This prevents premature escalation, misunderstandings and conflict between adults.

9.4 Requirement for Mutual Respect & Appropriate Conduct

The club expects all adults associated with the team to:

- work collaboratively
- follow communication routes
- behave appropriately on the sidelines
- avoid confrontation
- avoid involving children in adult conflict

Where behaviour from parents becomes:

- persistent
- targeted
- disruptive

- retaliatory
- or harmful to the wellbeing of children or volunteers

...this will be addressed formally as a breach of the **Club Parent/Carer Code of Conduct**.

9.5 Support for Volunteer Officials

As a volunteer-run club, we rely heavily on trust and respectful communication.

The club will no longer tolerate:

- targeted behaviour towards officials
- repeated or malicious complaints
- attempts to undermine decision-making
- intimidation, harassment or pressure on volunteers

Any concerns about officials must be raised through the proper channels.

9.6 Safeguarding of All Children Involved

The club will not allow:

- adult disputes
- grievances between parents
- or retaliatory behaviour

...to spill over and affect the wellbeing of children.

If any child appears to be drawn into adult conflict, the club will:

- intervene immediately
- liaise with Worcestershire FA
- involve external agencies where appropriate
- take steps to protect all children involved

This includes safeguarding **against inappropriate behaviour from adults**, not only between children.

9.7 Transparent Escalation to Worcestershire FA

If a parent requests that the club “not escalate” a safeguarding complaint, the club will **still follow mandatory FA procedure**, regardless of preference.

This protects:

- children
- the integrity of the process
- and the volunteers handling the matter.

9.8 Preventing Misuse of Processes

The club will not allow:

- safeguarding procedures
- complaints processes
- or club governance

...to be used as tools for dispute, retaliation or personal grievances.

Where such patterns appear, the matter may itself be referred to Worcestershire FA.