



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Braid LTC (“the Club”) is committed to providing a friendly, positive, and safe sporting environment for its members. The Club Committee aims to ensure that members uphold a high standard of behaviour on a tennis court, within the Club’s premises and when representing the Club.

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at the Club. This is the policy that we will follow if your complaint is about someone’s conduct or behaviour. This could be because you think that someone has behaved in a way that is unsafe, unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive, or intimidating. It could be because someone has broken important rules or policies.

1.0 Values & Principles

- 1.1 You have the right to complain, and we will take all complaints seriously. You should not be harassed, bullied, or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.
- 1.2 Equality: you should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, or political persuasion.
- 1.3 Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.
- 1.4 Safety and welfare of all who play at the Club are paramount: we will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare. In some circumstances, this may result in the Club Committee having to balance the safety of those who play at the Club and the welfare of a particular individual. When this occurs, the Club will endeavour to reach an arrangement(s) that is/are fair, reasonable, and proportionate.
- 1.5 Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible. Sometimes we must discuss complaints with other organisations. If we are worried about a risk to a person or to the public, we might need to pass on our concerns to the right authorities. If necessary, we will get advice from other organisations such as the Police, Social Services, or the LTA.

2.0 How to make a complaint.

- 2.1 A complaint must be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary within 14 days of the incident that gave rise to the complaint. The complaint should include (a) details of what happened; (b) details of when and where the incident took place, (c) any witness details and copies of any witness statements, (d) names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed), and (e) details of any former complaints made about other incidents, if relevant, including the date and to whom such complaint was made.
- 2.2 The Club Committee has complete discretion whether to accept and investigate a complaint submitted more than 14 days after the incident that gave rise to the complaint.

3.0 Consideration of the Complaint

The Club Committee will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that it will discuss the complaint with all the relevant people. It will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint. Sometimes we will ask to show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. This is because it believes in fairness and openness. It will not share information if it thinks that this will endanger someone's safety or welfare. We shall take into consideration data protection and privacy rules when handling a complaint and we shall therefore not pass on personal information unless we receive permission from the holder of that information to do so.

3.1 Informal Resolution

- 3.1.1 Upon receipt of the complaint, the Club's Welfare Officer will, in the first instance, endeavour to resolve it informally.
- 3.1.2 The Club's Welfare Officer will be entitled to consider (a) any background information deemed relevant including the personal circumstances of the person complained about; and (b) any advice or guidance that may be appropriate and relevant to a resolution of the complaint.
- 3.1.3 The Club's Welfare Officer has the power to take one or more of the following actions:

- Seek an explanation or apology,
- Seek agreement to communicate or act differently in future,
- A change to procedures or arrangements for play at the Club,
- A warning as to future conduct.

3.1.4 The Club's Welfare Officer will: (i) provide both the complainant and the person complained of with written reasons for his/her decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within two weeks of such decision being made; and (ii) notify the Club Committee said decision.

3.2 Formal Resolution

3.2.1 If the complaint is not capable of being resolved informally, the Club's Welfare Officer will submit a report to the Club Secretary of his/her investigation, findings and/or recommendations.

3.2.2 The Club Secretary will convene an Investigating Committee consisting of three members of the Club Committee to investigate the complaint and produce a written report of its findings and decision whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint. The Club Secretary will ensure that the committee does not contain anyone directly involved with your complaint.

3.2.3 The Investigating Committee will have regard to the Welfare Officer's report. In addition, it will have the power to gather all written and other evidence including, without prejudice to that generality, witness statements and other supporting papers. It may, at its sole discretion, decide whether to interview the person who is the subject of the complaint, the complainer and any witnesses to the conduct or behaviour giving rise to the complaint.

3.2.4 Members of the Club (whether the subject of a complaint, the complainer, or a witness) are expected to co-operate fully with the Investigating Committee. If any member of the Club (whether the subject of a complaint, the complainer, or a witness) refuses to co-operate fully with the Investigating Committee, the Investigating Committee has power to draw whatever inference it deems fit from such refusal.

3.2.5 The Investigating Committee may, at its sole discretion, decide the complaint without holding a hearing. If it decides to hold a hearing the parties (the subject of the complaint and the complainer) will be entitled to attend, present their evidence, and make representations in person. They shall be entitled to be accompanied by one relative, friend or legal

representative, who may make representations on their behalf if the Investigating Committee, in its sole discretion, so decides. In the case of members under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian is expected to attend and is entitled to make representations on behalf of the member in question.

3.2.6 The Investigating Committee has the power to take one or more of the following decisions:

- (a) Seek an explanation or apology,
- (b) Seek an agreement to communicate or act differently in future,
- (c) A change to the procedure and arrangements for play at the Club,
- (d) A warning as to future conduct
- (e) Recommend formal disciplinary action to the Club Committee including suspension or removal from membership,
- (f) Decide to refer the case to another organisation such as the LTA, Police, or Social Services
- (g) Closure of the complaint without action,
- (h) For non-members:
 - (i) Recommend exclusion from the Club, either temporarily or permanently; or
 - (ii) Recommend refusal to accept current and/or future membership applications

Upon completion of its investigation, the Investigating Committee will produce a written report of their findings and decision.

3.2.7 The Club Secretary will provide both the complainant and the person complained of with written reasons for the Investigating committee's decision to uphold or dismiss the Complaint within two weeks of such decision being made.

3.2.8 In the case of suspension or removal from membership, the member concerned shall not be entitled to any whole or partial refund of the annual subscription paid for the relevant subscription year.

3.2.9 The decision of the Investigating Committee shall be final.

4. General

- 4.1 In the event that any matter arises, or circumstance occurs for which this Complaints Procedure does not make express provision, the Club Committee shall have complete discretion as to how to proceed.

Adopted by the Committee 12 October 2023