



Policy 3: COMPLAINTS POLICY

How to make a complaint and how your complaint will be dealt with

Introduction

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at Henfield Tennis Club (HTC) if someone has behaved in a way that is unsafe, unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating or broken important rules or policies. The policy also sets out how we will deal with the complaint.

1. Values and principles

You have the right to complain. We take complaints seriously. You will not be harassed, bullied or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

You will receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation or political persuasion.

Complaints will be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint will have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.

We will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare particularly if children are involved.

We will treat complaints as confidentially as possible. We might have to discuss complaints with other organisations and 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. How to make a complaint?

Before making a formal complaint, seek to resolve the issue amicably by talking to the person(s) concerned and/or enlisting the help of a committee member. At this stage, face to face or over the phone is more effective. Email should be a last resort, and then on a one to one basis.

If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, then make a written complaint. providing as much detail as possible.

2.1 Who should be contacted to make a complaint?

- Safeguarding Officer - if you are a child, or if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child
- Any committee member
- One of the coaches

- Relevant team captain if your complaint concerns competitive tennis
- Anyone else involved at HTC that you trust

2.2 Written complaints

Written complaints will usually be handled by the Chairman or Vice Chairman of HTC. Please send complaints to the Chairman at chairman@henfieldtennisclub.com, or in his absence (or if the complaint concerns the Chairman) the Vice Chairman at vc@henfieldtennisclub.com. In no circumstances should anybody else be copied in without the express permission of the Chairman/Vice Chairman.

Please include:

- a) name and contact details
- b) what the actual complaint is, together with details of what occurred, when and where the occurrence took place;
- c) any witness details or statements;
- d) names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
- e) details of attempts made to resolve the issue;
- f) details of any earlier reports or complaints about the incident, including the date and to whom the report or complaint was made; and
- g) an indication as to the desired outcome and how you would like the outcome to be communicated to you.

3. What will we do to investigate?

We will give an initial response within five working days, more quickly if urgent. We will refer to all the relevant people and gather relevant information. Sometimes we will ask to show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. We will not share information if we think that this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

4. How will I know what is happening?

You will be given a point of contact to ensure you understand the process, and to answer any questions or concerns. You will be updated on the progress of your complaint every two weeks. If there are delays in handling your complaint for any reason, we will keep you informed. If your complaint leads to formal action against someone, we will inform you of the outcome unless that person is a child, or if we believe that telling you would create a risk to other people. In this situation, we will still try to tell you about how you are affected by the action that we have taken.

5. What are the possible outcomes or results of my complaint?

In many cases, we aim to resolve problems informally. Possible outcomes include:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities;
- An explanation or apology; or
- A commitment to communicate or act differently in future

If an informal resolution is not appropriate, then a small team of senior officials will consider the matter. This team will not contain anyone directly involved with your complaint. Possible outcomes include:-

- Suspension or expulsion under the rules of HTC;
- Changes in formal contracts or arrangements put in place by HTC;
- Referral to another organisation such as the LTA, Police, or Social Services; or
- Closure of your complaint without action.

6. Is there anyone else I can talk to?

In certain circumstances, it can be useful to speak directly to someone outside HTC:

- If you need urgent advice about someone's safety or welfare
- If you don't want to discuss the issue with someone at HTC
- If your complaint involves other organisations
- If you need specialist advice
- The LTA is able to advise on a range of different complaints, and in some cases will handle the complaint directly. If you are worried about a child's welfare, you can contact the following people:
 - The Child Protection Officer at Sussex County LTA
 - The National LTA Child Protection Department (24hrs)
 - Childline, or the NSPCC advice line, local Social Services, Police