

HENLEAZE LAWN TENNIS CLUB LIMITED

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Date: April 2024

Next review due: April 2027

This Policy tells you how to make a complaint at Henleaze Lawn Tennis Club Ltd. It is the Policy that we will follow in the event that any employee, member, volunteer, visitor or visiting team feels that he, she or they have suffered discrimination or harassment in any way or that the Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken.

Values and principles

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

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.

Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with in a timely, fair and open manner. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.

Safety and welfare take priority: we will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare. Issues affecting children will be treated very seriously.

Confidentiality: we will treat complaints as confidentially as possible. Sometimes we may have to 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.

Definitions of Parties involved in a Complaint

- **Complainant** - You, the person making the complaint
- **Contact Person** – the person you choose (someone you trust in the club) to represent you while you are making your complaint
- **Dispute(s)** - The person(s) you are making the complaint about
- **Complaint Report** -A written description of your complaint
- **Resolution Report** – the report of the findings from the Disciplinary Panel Review meeting
- **Committee** – the Management Committee as defined in the Articles of Association

1. **There are 3 possible levels involved when making a complaint**

- Level 1 : Verbal Complaint
- Level 2 : Written Complaint
- Level 3 : Disciplinary Procedure

The Club will maintain a Complaints Register of **All** complaints made at each of the 3 levels.

Level 1 : Who to contact to make a verbal complaint?

If you have a complaint, in the first instance please speak to one of the following:

- Management Committee: you can speak to any of our committee members
- Coach: the coaches can tell you how to make a complaint
- Welfare Officer: if you are a child, or if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child. If you are an adult, or if you are concerned about another adult, you can also contact the Welfare Officer.
- Anyone else involved at the Club that you trust.

This person will then be your **Contact Person** for the duration of the complaint. Please check they understand the responsibilities they are taking on.

What happens next?

Your **Contact Person** will then arrange a meeting with the Secretary or their nominee from the elected Committee where you (supported by your **Contact Person** if you wish) can provide details of your complaint.

The Secretary will then inform the **Dispute(s)** about the complaint and ask for their response. If the **Dispute(s)** acknowledges that the complaint is reasonable and agrees to apologise, the process stops here. If they don't then their side of the story should be invited.

At this stage, to preserve confidentiality, no other parties will be consulted. Confidentiality means not sharing information with anyone about the on-going complaint.

Your complaint will then usually be handled by the Committee. If the complaint closely concerns a member of the Committee, that person will absent themselves from any meeting called to determine the outcome of the complaint.

In many cases, the Committee, having received information from both parties, will then be able to resolve problems informally by recommending certain actions. This might include:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities e.g. adjustment in coaching groups
- An explanation or apology from the **Dispute(s)**
- An agreement by parties to communicate or act differently in future
- A warning as to future conduct

Resolving the verbal complaint

The complaint will be considered **Resolved** if you (the **Complainant**) accept the action recommended by the Committee.

Level 2 : Written complaint

If you and the Committee cannot agree on any recommended actions and decide your complaint needs to be looked into further, you will then be asked to put your complaint in writing. The Committee accept anonymous complaints, but it is often very difficult to investigate these properly and come to a resolution. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

You (the **Complainant**) should report the matter in writing by email to the Secretary of the Club, copied to the Chair person. All written complaints should be addressed to the Secretary at henleazeltc@gmail.com

Your **Complaint Report** should include:

1. details of what occurred
2. details of when and where the occurrence took place
3. any witness details and copies of any witness statements
4. an indication as to the desired outcome

How the Written Complaint will be handled

Written Complaints will usually be handled by the Committee. If the **Dispute(s)** is a member of the Committee, that person, as above, will absent themselves from any meeting called to determine the outcome of the complaint.

The Committee will then make the **Complaint Report** available to the **Dispute(s)** and ask them for a response in writing.

What will the Club do to investigate?

The Committee will then widen the investigation and discuss the **Complaint Report** with all the relevant people. The Committee will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint. This may include names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed) and details of any former complaints made about the matter, including the date and to whom such complaint was made.

Sometimes the Committee will ask to show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. This is because we believe in fairness and openness. We will not share information without the permission of the **Complainant** and/or if we think this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

Informal arbitration

The Chairman (or Chair's representative) will lead an attempt to arbitrate informally, keeping a record and giving an explanation that, if not resolved informally the process will become a Disciplinary Procedure.

As above, informal arbitration may result in certain courses of action being suggested by the Committee. At this stage, these actions might include:-

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation or apology from the subject of the complaint
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future
- A warning as to future conduct

How will I know what is happening?

Your **Contact Person** will make sure that you understand the process and will help to answer any questions or concerns that you have.

We will give an initial response to your complaint within **14 days**. If the matter is urgent, we will respond more quickly. We will investigate your complaint fairly.

You will be given an update 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.

Resolving the written complaint

As before, the complaint will be considered **Resolved** if you (the **Complainant**) accept the action recommended by the Committee.

If the Committee cannot recommend any actions and decides that your complaint needs to be looked into further, the next stage will be to initiate formal disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure against the subject of the complaint.

Level 3 : Disciplinary Procedure

When informal arbitration has not resolved the complaint, the Secretary will convene a Disciplinary Panel to review all the relevant information.

We will usually inform you about the outcome. We will not tell you the outcome if 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.

The Disciplinary Panel will consist of the Club Chairman, the Club Secretary and two other members nominated by the Committee (they do not have to be Committee members). In the event the Chairman or Secretary are **Disputee(s)**, they will not be involved in the Panel

or in the selection process of Panel members, or in any other role, other than as a **Disputee**. Their place will be taken by another member of the Committee or a Director, chosen by the Committee in the absence of the **Disputee**.

The Disciplinary Panel will agree a date upon which to meet and review the evidence. The **Disputee(s)** will be advised of the date of this meeting in writing and will receive 14 days' notice. In serious cases of misconduct, the Committee may decide to suspend the **Disputee(s)** and such suspensions will be notified in writing.

The Secretary will gather all written case evidence and put together an **Information Pack** consisting of-

1. The **Complaint Report**
2. The written response to the **Complaint Report** from the **Disputee(s)**
3. Any other written responses received from witnesses and relevant people

The Secretary will then circulate this **Information Pack** to the Disciplinary Panel, the **Complainant** and the **Disputee(s)**.

The **Complainant** and the **Disputee(s)** will be given the opportunity to attend the Review Meeting separately to make representations in person. Both parties will be entitled to be accompanied. The Disciplinary Panel may also invite and interview other parties involved in the incident and/or witnesses. Proceedings of the Review will be minuted.

After reviewing the case the Disciplinary Panel will produce a written **Resolution Report** of their findings and make recommendations as to any action felt appropriate. They may recommend one of the following outcomes:

- a) warn as to future conduct
- b) suspend from membership
- c) remove from membership
- d) exclude a non-member from the facility, either temporarily or permanently
- e) turn down a non-member's current and/or future membership applications.

The Secretary will present the **Resolution Report** to the Committee for final decision.

On receipt of the Panel's **Resolution Report** the Committee, who have discretion to depart from the Panel's recommendations if considered appropriate, will determine the action to be taken. They will either agree with the recommended decisions of the Disciplinary Panel or may amend/change the decision. At least five elected members of the Committee, or two thirds of the elected Committee then present, must agree on the course of action.

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Through the Secretary, the Committee will provide the **Complainant and Disputee(s)** with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one calendar month of such decision being made. The **Complainant and Disputee(s)** each have the right to appeal against the decision to the Directors of the club, and must submit written notification of this intention within 30 days of the decision letter. The Directors of the Club have authority under the Articles of Association to terminate or deny membership.

In addition, either party may appeal a Disciplinary Procedure decision of the Committee to Avon Tennis (including a decision not to hold a disciplinary hearing) by writing to the County Secretary within 3 months of the Club's decision being notified to that party.

Also, if the nature of the complaint is with regard to the Committee or other body or group in the Club, the member/visitor has the right to report the discrimination or harassment directly to the relevant County Association.