

# HENLEAZE LAWN TENNIS CLUB LIMITED

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

**Date: February 2021**

**Next review due: February 2023**

This Policy tells you how to make a complaint at Henleaze Tennis Club. 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.

### **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:

Complaints Policy and Disciplinary Procedure adopted at a meeting of the Directors of Henleaze Lawn Tennis Club on 22 February 2021.

- 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.

### **What happens next?**

The person you have spoken to will then arrange a meeting with the Secretary or their nominee from the elected Committee, where you (supported by the person you have spoken to if you wish) can provide details of your complaint.

The Secretary will then inform the person/s, the subject of the complaint, about the complaint and ask for their response. If that person 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.

Your complaint will then usually be handled by the Management Committee. If the complaint 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 the problem informally by suggesting certain actions. 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

### **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 **or** the Committee decide your complaint needs to be looked into further, you will then be asked to put your complaint in writing. The Management Committee accepts anonymous complaints, but it is often difficult to investigate these properly. 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 or by email to the Secretary of the Club, copied to the Chairman. The address for written complaints is Secretary, email:

[henleazeltc@gmail.com](mailto: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. names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed)
5. details of any former complaints made about the matter, including the date and to whom such complaint was made
6. an indication as to the desired outcome

### **How the Written Complaint will be handled**

Written Complaints will usually be handled by the Management Committee. If the complaint concerns a member of the Committee that person will absent themselves from any meeting called to determine the outcome of the complaint.

If the complaint concerns a breach of the Club Rules and Regulations or Code of Conduct, the Committee will request that both parties to the complaint and/or any other person with information relevant to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the matter(s)

### **What will the club do to investigate?**

The Management Committee will then widen the investigation and discuss the complaint with all the relevant people. The Committee will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint. 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 may 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?**

You will be given the details of a person who will be your point of contact at the club. That 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 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 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 parties to the dispute then, contrary to what has been stated earlier, 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 party or parties against whom the allegation has been made 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 party/ies and such suspensions will be notified in writing.

The Secretary will gather all written case evidence, including witness statements and other supporting papers and circulate these to the Panel and to the Party/ies who will be given

the opportunity to attend the Review Meeting and present their evidence and make representations in person. The 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 Panel will produce a written report of their findings and make recommendation 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 report to the Committee for final decision.

On receipt of the Panel's 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, whichever is the higher, must agree on the course of action.

Through the Secretary, the Committee will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one calendar month of such decision being made. The party/ies have the right to appeal against the decision to the Directors of the club and must submit written notification of this intention to the Secretary 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.