



## **GUIDELINES FOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR CLUBS**

### **Club Complaints Procedure**

Some clubs may have in place codes of conduct for players, parents/carers, coaches and officials – Table Tennis England has a set of codes, which we would encourage clubs and leagues to adopt. They may be found earlier in the Safeguarding Guidelines and also on the Table Tennis England’s website. However, Codes of Conduct can only be effective if there is a disciplinary process to support them and in this the club or league must be fair and consistent at all times.

The following are some options that might be considered as sanctions:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Exclusion from specified number of training sessions
- Exclusion from club trips and/or competitions
- Exclusion from the club or league which could be permanent or time limited

Initially look at instigating one sanction, preferably a fairly light one, and then add to it as appropriate. An example might be in the case of bad behaviour or poor practice that a verbal warning is given, if there is no improvement then a written warning can be given then if there is still no change excluding the person from the club or activities for a period of time could be the next step. Be aware that once a sanction has been imposed on a person it is difficult to reverse so better to have a progressive process in place.

### **Having a complaints process**

Writing and adopting clear Codes of Conducts and advertising the ethos of your club is key to limiting the number of potential complaints. If everyone involved with table tennis and your club knows the expectation from them with regard to their conduct both on and off the table, in addition to their responsibility as an individual towards everyone involved with our sport complaints can be dealt with simply and effectively. Initially it may be a case for just referring the individual to Table Tennis England’s and the club’s Codes of conduct.

If the complaint cannot be dealt with in this way then the following processes could be implemented:

- If the complaint is to do with child protection then it should be submitted to the Club/League Welfare Officer or directly to Table Tennis England's Safeguarding Manager where appropriate guidance will be given
- If the complaint is to do with technical issues then the club/league coach could be involved
- For all other complaints then they could be directed towards the club/league chairman or to the club's disciplinary panel.
- Similarly to the progression of sanctions the way complaints are handled could initially be verbally, then in writing
- Once a complaint has been received and dealt with then there should also be a clear appeals process which could be with the club/league

The whole process should be formally written and adopted by the club/league and available on the club/league's website, placed in any handbook and/or displayed on a noticeboard so that every member or visitor can see and access the information.

Clubs and leagues should also be aware that Table Tennis England has a formal disciplinary process which is included in Table Tennis England's Rules Book, a copy of which can be obtained by from the Table Tennis England website.

### **Sample Club/League Complaints Procedure**

In the event that any member feels that they have suffered discrimination in any way or that the Club/League Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below:

1. If the matter is a child protection issue or involves anyone aged under 18 years it should be reported to the club/league welfare officer or Table Tennis England's Safeguarding Manager (Judy Rogers on 07507860034). Sample incident report forms for any child protection issues are included in these appendices or can be found on Table Tennis England's website.
2. For all other complaints the matter should be referred to the club/league disciplinary chairman or other appropriate officer. The report should include:
  - i) Details of the incident
  - ii) The date and time the incident occurred
  - iii) Names of any witnesses or people present at the time of the incident
  - iv) Statements from any witnesses

3. The club/league disciplinary chairman or other appropriate officer will refer the information either to the club/league management committee or to the club/league disciplinary panel if in place. The designated committee will:
  - i) Treat every report as confidential
  - ii) Not discuss any matters with anyone outside of the committee other than to request expert advice
  - iii) Declare immediately if they have a conflict of interest
  - iv) Treat each reported incident fairly and equitably
  
4. The club/league management or disciplinary committee will have the power to:
  - i) Issue a verbal warning as to future conduct
  - ii) Issue a written warning as to future conduct
  - iii) Suspend from activities or membership for a period of time
  - iv) Remove/expel from the club/league

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