



Greenfield Cricket Club Complaints & Whistle-blowing Policy

2018 version

The purpose of this policy is:

In conjunction with the Club Safeguarding Policy, this policy provides protection for the children and young people who come into contact with GCC, our players, families and friends, including the children of adult members and users.

The policy provides members and volunteers with guidance on procedures through which they can challenge decisions or actions with which they are unhappy.

This policy applies to all members, including committee members, players, coaches, volunteers and sessional workers, agency members, students or anyone working on behalf of GCC.

Complaints and Whistle-blowing

Children and young people need both a committed adult to stand alongside them and procedures through which they can challenge decisions or actions with which they are unhappy.

Are children, young people and workers aware of what to do if they have worries about any aspect of our club and supported to act if they do? There are different ways in which our club can help give people the confidence and opportunity to speak or act if they are unhappy about something within the organisation. By setting up systems where people are able to speak openly or in confidence, we have already gone a long way to making our club a safe one where bad practice is discouraged.

Supervision is one way which allows concerns to be raised.

The following are other ways in which we create an atmosphere of openness and trust within the club and allow people to raise concerns.

Whistle-blowing and complaining are very different.

- Whistle blowing occurs when a member or volunteer raises a concern about potential danger or illegality that they have witnessed.
- A complaint is lodged by a member, volunteer, member of the public, etc when they feel that they have personally been wronged and are seeking a resolution.

Making a distinction between whistle blowing and complaining is important to ensure our club understands how to respond and that people are not confused about the best way to take an issue forward.

Whistle blowing

This whistle blowing policy makes it clear that reports of malpractice are taken seriously by GCC, therefore encouraging members to come forward should they wish to raise a concern, even if that eventually means having to bypass senior committee members. This policy protects protect both the whistleblower and the club by outlining a simple process for raising concerns.

Some examples of cases that might warrant whistle blowing:

- Unlawful misconduct, such as assaulting children and young people.
- Financial malpractice, which could be anything from stealing from the petty cash to full-blown fraud.
- Dangers to the public.
- Dangers to the environment or to the safety of people in the club.

Members should understand what is meant by whistle blowing and the procedure to be followed if a member decides to “blow the whistle”. Whistleblowers’ concerns must be taken seriously and properly and objectively investigated, with appropriate action taken.

Complaints and concerns

It is important to have a general complaints policy that is understood by members. Every member has the right to raise concerns or complaints, not just about major issues, but also about day-to-day concerns.

When thinking about a complaint it is important to think about:

- What exactly is a complaint?
- What can children, parents or members do if they have a complaint?
- How will you reassure those who have made the complaint? How will you keep them informed of what you will do about it? How will you tell them when you will act upon it?
- Will you provide a timetable for dealing with a complaint? What procedure will you have in place if a complaint is not dealt with straight away?
- What if the person who has made the complaint is not happy about the outcome?
- Who should complaints go to?
- Who is responsible for putting the concern to rights?
- What complaints systems can be put in place so that everybody feels able to complain?
- How will you make children, parents and members aware that you have a system in place for reporting complaints and concerns?
- How will your club gather the information and monitor if patterns are occurring?
- What support will you provide for those wanting to make a complaint?
- How will you address any impact a complaint has had on members, children and young people?
- How will records of complaints be kept?

Our complaints and whistle blowing policy is readily available to parents and carers of children and young people who use the club and to all members.



Greenfield Cricket Club Complaints & Whistle-blowing Policy

All members at one time or another may have concerns about what is happening at our club. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, if they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, health and safety risk to members or the public, damage to the environment, possible fraud or corruption, or any other unethical conduct, it can be difficult to know what to do.

Members may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to themselves, perhaps feeling it is none of their business or that it is only a suspicion. Members may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to the club or individuals.

You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next. You may also fear that you could be harassed or victimised. There is legislation in place to protect paid staff and volunteers who disclose issues in the public interest.

Greenfield Cricket Club is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. It expects that members who have serious concerns about anything that is happening in our club will come forward and raise those concerns.

Greenfield Cricket Club recognises that individuals need to be supported and have confidence that any concerns will be treated appropriately. The purpose of this policy is to enable you to raise your concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.

Safeguards

This policy is designed to offer protection to members of Greenfield Cricket Club who disclose concerns provided the disclosure is made

- In good faith
- In the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below). It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure.

Greenfield Cricket Club will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect members when they raise a concern in good faith. If you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary may be taken against you. An investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect members.

Confidentiality

Greenfield Cricket Club will treat such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

How to raise a concern internally

Concerns should be reported to a member of the GCC committee. Usually this will be direct to the Chairman. However, if the concern of complaint involves the chairman directly or indirectly, the concern needs to be raised with another committee member.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Members who wish to make a written submission must mention the following

- Background and history of the concern (giving any relevant dates).
- The reason for the concern.

Members must report the concern at the earliest opportunity so that action can be taken. Although members are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

Actions that Greenfield Cricket Club will take. Investigating procedure

If necessary, an investigating office will be appointed. The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarification of the concern should be obtained.
- In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- Within 14 days, acknowledge to the complaint has been received; indicate how it is proposed to deal with the matter and inform them whether further investigation will take place and if not, why not.
- Inform any member against whom the complaint is made as soon as practically possible.
- If there is any evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the police. Greenfield Cricket Club will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer.
- A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement.
- The GCC Committee will decide what action to take if any.
- If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, Greenfield Cricket Club recognises the lawful rights of members to make disclosures to other agencies.

Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact:

- The Citizens Advice Bureau, whose advice is free.

Adopted by Greenfield Cricket Club Committee

Signed:

Date: