

 **Complaints Policy and Procedures**

At the Red Hot Flames club we recognise that:

* everyone who comes to our club has the right to a high standard of service
* those who come to the club have a right to complain if they are not happy with the service.
* learning form complaints helps us to improve our service we provide

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

* help us to provide a service of the highest standard to all those who come to Red Hot Flames Club.
* help us to ensure that children and families using or wishing to become members know they have a right to express concerns if they need to.
* help us to deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our service.
* set out steps that children, young children and their families should take if they wish to make a complaint.

This policy and procedure applies to all children. Young adults and families attending or wishing to attend Red Hot Flames Club.

If anyone whether a coach, volunteer, child/young person or family member, is concerned that a child may be at risk of harm, they should use Red Hot Flames Club Safe Guarding policy and procedures rather than this complaints policy and procedure.

We will seek to deal with complaints by:

* making sure that everyone knows about the policy and procedure.
* reassuring people that they will not be penalised in any way for using the complaints procedure and that they we will respond positively to any complaints made in good faith.
* take a staged approach to complaints that takes account of the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolution at different points.
* Investigating each complaint as objectively and fully as we reasonably can
* keeping the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and of the outcome if his/her complaint.
* keeping clear records of complaints and how they are resolved.

**Complaints Procedure:**

What do we mean by a complaint?

A complaint is a statement from someone that he/she is not happy about the service provided to him/her by Red Hot Flames Club and would like this to be improved.

The complaint might be about:

* the behaviour of a coach/volunteer, if this relates to allegations that someone may of harmed a child or be at risk of doing so, child protection procedures should be used.
* the behaviour of other children and young people In the group.
* written information
* a child, young person or family member feeling that he or she has been treated unfairly or in a way that is discriminatory

**Procedure for making a complaint**

1. If possible, the person should discuss the complaint with his/her coach/Head Coach. If this is not possible (for example the complainant does not feel comfortable speaking to the coach/head coach because the relationship is too difficult) the discussion should be with the Welfare Officers.
2. The coach/Head Coach will, in the first instance, try and resolve the matter informally. This is often possible and can mean the problem can be sorted more quickly.
3. If an informal solution has been tried before and not work out, or if the complainant does not feel that informal discussions are adequate or likely to be effective, stage one of the complaints procedure should be followed.

**Stage one (1)**

1. The complainant should put their concerns in writing/email to rhflames@gmail.com or, if the coach/head coach is the subject of the complainant.
2. The coach/head coach should send the email complaint to the Head coach/committee within 24 hours. The person should then acknowledge the complaint within five (5) working days by sending a brief email/letter to:
* thank the complaint for getting in touch
* express regret that a complaint has been necessary
* assure him/her that the matter will be investigated
* set a provisional timescale for the investigation that is achievable but avoids delay as much as possible
* explain when the Head coach/committee will be next in contact
* offer a contact name (usually the Head Coach or committee member dealing with the complaint) in case the complainant has any questions in the meantime
* make temporary arrangements that may be necessary pending the outcome of the investigation into the complaint
1. Normally the service to the complainant should continue as normal during the investigation into the compliant. If this is not possible (eg because a child has had to excluded from an activity, or because it would not be appropriate for the coach to continue working with the child) then this should be acknowledged and alternative arrangements made if possible.
2. If the complainant is about a specific coach or volunteer or child/young person, then that person (and parent/carer if the person is a child) then that person should be informed within two working days (or as soon as possible) that the complaint has been made against him/her and the nature of the complaint, the person should not be informed if doing so would compromise anyone’s safety.
3. The Head Coach should normally be responsible for investigating a stage one complaint. The head coach should plan the investigation according to the nature of the complaint, taking into account witnesses. As a minimum, the complainant (and parent/carer if the complainant is a child/young person) should be interviewed. Any person who might be the subject of the complaint should also be interviewed, provided that doing so would not compromise anyone’s safety.
4. If it emerges at any point that a child may have been caused significant harm or may be at risk of significant harm, child protection procedure will be investigated immediately.
5. The investigating person should make notes of the investigation, including notes of any meeting that take place, and should write a report based on his/her findings. The report should state clearly whether the complaint is upheld or not and make recommendations about how the matter can be taken forward. The report should be shared with the complainant and any specific member of the coaching/volunteers or other child, who may be involved.
6. Once a way forward has been agreed, this should be reviewed regularly.
7. If either the complainant or a person who is the subject of the complainant is not prepared to accept the finding of the report, they should confirm this in writing/email. The matter then comes a stage two complaint.

**Stage two (2)**

1. A stage two complaint may come about for one or two reasons. It may be a complaint or a person that has escalated from a stage one because the complainant or the person subject who was subject of the complaint wishes to challenge the findings of the stage one investigation.
2. Stage two complaints should be investigated by the committee with the person who was investigating stage one.
3. If a complaint was to progress to stage two, the complainant should once again indicate in writing/email that he/she wishes to complain (further complain) and should state the reason why.
4. The written statement should be presented to the chair of the board, who should then within five (5) working days, respond in email/letter to the complainant in the same way as indicated in the stage one procedures.
5. The procedure for the investigation and sharing of the report should be similar to that outlined in the stage one procedure.
6. Stage two is the final stage of the complaints procedure and the Committee have the final decision regarding the outcome of the complaint.

**Keeping a record of the complaint**

Regardless of whether the complaint is dealt with formally or informally, accurate notes should be made by the head coach or investigating person of each stage of the process, including records of meetings. Copies of the final report should be given to the person making the complaint and to anyone who may be subject to the complaint.

If the complaint leads to any disciplinary action or referral to a statutory authority, copies of notes made during the investigation and the report of the investigation (together with any notes relating to the outcome) should be kept confidentially on the file of any person who is subject to the complaint.

Anonymous summary of notes of any complaint should also be kept on the complaints file (insert reference number) this will assist Red Hot Flames in the process of monitoring and learning from complaints.

**This policy and procedure should be reviewed every two years.**

Date of review: January 2017

Date of next review: January 2019