

Garstang & District Tennis Club Complaints Policy & Procedure

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at Garstang & District Tennis Club.

This is the policy that we will follow if your complaint is about someone's conduct or behaviour, be that club member, visitor or visiting team. This could be because you think that someone has behaved in a way that is unsafe, unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating. It could be because someone has broken important club rules or policies.

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 fairly and openly. 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 treat complaints as confidentially as possible.

Sometimes we 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.

How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, it is often best to start by having a conversation with someone at the club. If your complaint needs to be looked into further, you will normally be asked to put your complaint in writing. We accept anonymous complaints, but it is often very difficult to investigate these properly. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

Who to contact to make a complaint?

Complaints should be made initially to the **Club Secretary, Libby Flintoff**, who may be able to resolve the complaint immediately or will consider a course of action. If the complaint concerns welfare or safeguarding issues it will then be handled by the **Club Welfare Officer, Alice Robinson**, together with another committee member. All other complaints will be handled by the full committee.

What will we do to investigate?

We will give an initial response to your complaint as soon as possible, appointing, if necessary, someone to investigate it who is independent from the incident. That person will be a committee member. We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that we will discuss the complaint with you and all relevant people. We will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint. You will be entitled to bring a companion to any meeting to provide you with additional support if you prefer this.

Sometimes we 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 if we think that this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

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. You will be given an update on the progress of your complaint. If there are delays in handling your complaint for any reason, we will keep you informed.

What are the possible outcomes or results of my complaint?

In many cases, we will be able to resolve problems informally through deciding, for example, on:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation or apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future

If an informal resolution is not suitable or you wish to appeal the decision, then a small number of the committee will look at the information about the case. We will try to make sure that this committee does not contain anyone directly involved with your original complaint. They might decide to take the following action: -

- An explanation or apology
- Formal disciplinary action under the rules of the club
- A change in arrangement of a particular activity.
- A decision to refer the case to another organisation such as the LTA, Police, or Social Services.
- Closure of your complaint without action.

If formal disciplinary action is taken

If the committee or representatives of the committee decide disciplinary action needs to be taken this will be to either:

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

Is there anyone else I can talk to?

Sometimes it can be useful to speak directly to someone outside the club if:

- You need urgent advice about someone's safety or welfare
- You don't want to discuss the issue with someone at the club
- Your complaint is very serious
- Your complaint involves other organisations
- You need specialist advice

The LTA is able to advise on a range of different complaints, and in some cases will handle the complaint directly. If you are worried about a child's welfare, you can contact the following people:

- The club Welfare Officer, Alice Robinson on 07896 805804
- The County Safeguarding Officer on 07912 492897
- The National LTA Child Protection Department 020 8487 7000 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)
- Childline, or the NSPCC advice line 0808 800 5000 , local Social Services, Police

Questions or queries about this policy, or to lodge a written complaint

Please contact the Club Secretary, Libby Flintoff

email_garstangtennis@gmail.com

or if the complaint involves a child or vulnerable adult, contact the Welfare Officer, Alice Robinson

email_atlalice@btinternet.com