

## ACADEMY COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1 Policy Statement

To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.  
To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.

Cambridge United Academy is committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides. We recognise that, occasionally, mistakes will be made or the service offered will not meet an individual's requirements or expectations. For these reasons it is Club policy that all complaints should be:

- 1.1 Treated seriously and in an open manner
- 1.2 Acknowledged immediately, preferably in writing
- 1.3 Investigated
- 1.4 Resolved, wherever that is reasonably practicable, within no longer than 13 working weeks
- 1.5 Used as feedback to improve the service which the Club offers

No complainant bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably by any member of staff. If there is evidence to the contrary, the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

### 2 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Cambridge United Academy Football Club

### 3 Legislation

The Human Rights Act 1998 applies to the operation of this policy.

### 4 Dealing with complaints – initial concerns (informal process)

CUFC take informal concerns seriously with the hope of the concern not developing into a formal complaint. However, formal complaints should always follow the complaints procedure.

In most cases the 'Team Manager' (e.g. U9s Team Coach) or the individual delivering the coaching or teaching session, may often receive the first approach. It would be helpful if staff were able to resolve issues on the spot. Recognising an error and apologising (without prejudice) where necessary may result in a swift and satisfactory resolution.

If a concern or complaint has been made a member of staff will telephone the complainant to gain greater clarification of the situation or in some cases it may be that a parent wishes to request a meeting with a senior member of staff. Any such request should be made via the Academy Manager, preferably in writing. The request will need to include sufficient details to allow the Academy Manager to decide whether a meeting is necessary, who should be asked to attend the meeting and to make any necessary preparations.

Any person, player or parent may make a formal safeguarding complaint at any time by putting the complaint in writing to the club. Complaints should go to either the Academy manager or DSO.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

The person handling the complaint within a week should acknowledge complaints. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a reply within one working week and a definitive reply within 4 weeks. If not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Anonymous complaints cannot be investigated

## **5 Dealing with safeguarding complaints – formal procedures**

The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further. The request for a formal referral should be acknowledged within a working week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply. An FA referral form should be sent to the complainant.

The complainant should be asked to clarify their complaint by putting it in writing and advised to clearly identify the nature of the complaint, including examples of poor practice; details of those involved; dates; times and venue where the incident(s) occurred if at all possible.

Dependent upon the nature of the complaint and who is involved, this may include The Academy Manager, Head of Player Welfare. The Senior Safeguarding Manager would not be included at this stage as they may be required to have a role in any appeals procedure. Any member of staff or volunteer cited in a complaint must not be the person to whom a written complaint is passed to deal with.

## **6 Child Protection within Safeguarding**

The club will refer any child protection concern to the appropriate statutory agencies and football authorities, allegations or disclosures, regardless of the time-scale of receipt of the information. Historical allegations of child abuse must be referred to the Police.

## **7 Resolving Complaints**

CUFC will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently
- An assurance that the event complained of will not happen again
- An explanation of the steps that have or are to be taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review club policies in light of the complaint

All the above MUST be recorded.

## **8 Selecting the most appropriate procedure**

Any initial approach may have the potential to develop into a complicated complaint. For that reason it is very important to follow the appropriate procedure from the outset, so that the interests of the individuals may be safeguarded and in order to seek to identify a resolution as quickly as possible.

All complaints or concerns and outcome will be recorded.

## **9 Appeals**

The member of staff shall have a right to appeal to the Board against any disciplinary decision. They should inform the CEO in writing of his/her wish to appeal within seven days of the date of notification to him/her. The CEO will conduct an appeal hearing as soon as possible thereafter at which the member of staff will be given the opportunity to state his/her case either personally or with a representative. The decision of the CEO will be notified to the member of staff in writing within seven days.

The above appeals section should follow any club procedures for appeals.

The total comments/complaints procedure should be finalised in no more than 13 working weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances in which case the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

## **10 Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Club will maintain a confidential record of complaints dealt with to feed into quality improvement processes. The Club will maintain a record of all complaints, appeals and outcomes and produce an annual report for analysis by the Board.