



Complaints Policy

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Complaints Policy for Derbyshire Youth Sailing Club *(Modelled on RYA Guidance for Best Practice)*

1 Introduction

Derbyshire Youth Sailing Club is committed to providing a positive and enjoyable experience for all its members, visitors, and stakeholders. We recognize, however, that occasionally issues may arise that prompt concerns or complaints. This policy aims to provide a clear and fair process for handling in a timely and transparent manner.

We encourage open communication to resolve matters at the earliest opportunity, and this policy outlines the formal procedures to be followed when a complaint cannot be resolved informally.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Club members
- Parents or guardians of junior members
- Visitors
- Volunteers and coaches

Complaints may relate to a range of issues, including but not limited to:

- Conduct of members, coaches, volunteers, or visitors
- Club governance or management
- Safeguarding or safety concerns
- Club facilities or services

Complaints relating to safeguarding or welfare concerns of children, young people, or vulnerable adults will be managed under the club's **Safeguarding Policy** and referred to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

3 Principles

- **Fairness:** All complaints will be dealt with fairly, impartially, and confidentially.
- **Transparency:** The process for dealing with complaints will be clear, and all parties will be informed of the steps and outcomes- **Timeliness:** Complaints will be acknowledged and addressed as quickly as possible.
- **Respect:** All parties involved in a complaint are expected to treat each other with respect throughout the process.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared with those who need to know to resolve the issue.

4 Informal Resolution

We encourage complaints to be resolved informally wherever possible. In the first instance, members or visitors should attempt to discuss their concern with the relevant individual or a club official (e.g., a committee member or coach) in an open and constructive manner.

In many cases, concerns can be resolved through dialogue, explanation, or a simple apology. If the issue is resolved informally, no further action will be required.

5 Formal Complaints Procedure

If an informal approach does not resolve the issue, or if the complaint is of a more serious nature, the following formal procedure should be followed:

Step 1: The Complaint

- Complaints must be submitted in writing to the **Club Secretary**. The complaint should include:
 - The complainant's name and contact details
 - A clear and detailed description of the issue
 - The outcome or resolution sought by the complainant
 - Any relevant evidence (e.g., witness statements, emails, etc.)

Complaints can be submitted via email or letter, and the club will acknowledge receipt within 14 working days.

Step 2: Initial Review

- The **Club Secretary** will review the complaint and may appoint a suitable person, such as a committee member, to investigate the issue.
- The person investigating the complaint (the "investigator") will contact the complainant to confirm they are handling the matter and explain the process.
- The investigation may include speaking to those involved in the complaint, reviewing relevant documentation, and gathering any necessary evidence.

Step 3: Resolution and Outcome

- Once the investigation is complete, the investigator will make a recommendation on how the complaint should be resolved. The recommended action will be proportionate to the nature of the complaint and could include:
 - An explanation or apology
 - Mediation between the parties
 - Disciplinary action (if relevant and appropriate)
 - Improvements to club procedures or facilities
- The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant in writing within 28 days of the complaint being acknowledged.

Step 4: Appeal

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision within 14 days of receiving the resolution. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the **Club Chair** or another senior committee member who was not involved in the original investigation.

- The appeal will be reviewed by a panel of three committee members who were not involved in the initial investigation. They will reconsider the evidence and make a final decision on the matter.
- The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing within 28 days, this decision will be final.

6 Complaints Against Club Officials or Committee Members

If the complaint involves a club official, committee member, or coach, the complaint should be directed to the **Club Chair** or a senior committee member.

In cases where the Club Chair is the subject of the complaint, the matter will be referred to a member of the **Club Committee** who will ensure an impartial investigation is conducted.

7 Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared with those involved in resolving the complaint. Any personal data collected during the complaints process will be managed in accordance with the club's data protection policy and relevant UK legislation (e.g., the General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR).

8 Safeguarding Concerns

Complaints involving the welfare or safety of children, young people, or vulnerable adults will be handled in accordance with the club's **Safeguarding Policy**. The Club Safeguarding Officer will take responsibility for managing such concerns liaising with the relevant authorities where necessary.

9 Vexatious or Malicious Complaints

The club aims to ensure that all complaints are treated seriously. However, complaints that are deemed to be vexatious or malicious (i.e., complaints intended to cause harm, disrupt the club, or that have no basis in fact) may result in disciplinary action being taken against the complainant in line with the club's disciplinary procedures.

10 Monitoring and Review

The **Club Committee** will monitor all complaints to identify any patterns or areas where improvements may be required. The complaints process and policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices, including guidance from the RYA.

Contact Information:

- **Club Secretary:** [Name and contact details]
- **Club Chair:** [Name and contact details]
- **RYA Safeguarding Team (for safeguarding-related concerns):**
safeguarding@rya.org.uk

This policy is designed to ensure that complaints are handled, promptly, and transparently, fostering a positive environment within Derbyshire Youth Sailing Club. We encourage all members to raise concerns in a constructive manner, supporting the club's commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

By aligning with RYA guidance and best practices, this complaints policy ensures a clear and fair process for addressing issues, promoting open communication and continuous improvement within the club.