



CLUB COMPLAINTS /DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:-

AA = INTERNAL USE BY CLUB

BB = EXTERNAL USE BY THE CLUB & TEAMS

SECTION AA : FOR INTERNAL USE BY CLUB

INTRODUCTION: Highfield Grange Football Club recognises that we as individuals do not live in perfect world and that occasionally disputes arise between people within an organisation. The club's complaint procedure attempts to judge fairly and equitably disputes within and outside the club and if any injustice has taken place, or if the individual (s) – either officials, players or parents acted quite correctly within the parameters of the club's codes of conducts.

PROCEDURE : In the event any member (registered player, team officials or committee person) feels that he / she has suffered discrimination (see also club bullying, equal opportunities codes) in any way OR the club policies, procedures, protocols and codes of conduct have been broken, then they have recourse to pursue the matter through the following procedure laid out below to seek recompense :-

POINT ONE : He / she should report (in the case of U18's players via parents if they do not feel confident enough to bring the matter forward) the matter to the CLUB SECRETARY ideally, but can be expressed to another member of the club committee if the club secretary is implicated in the matter. Initially, the report can be expressed verbally but needs to be backed-up in writing (hard copy or electronically) within 3 DAYS. The report should include the following :-

- Details of what, when (date / time) and where the occurrence took place.
 - Any witness statements, names contact information (Tel number /e-mail) Particularly important if possible that a impartial witness is obtained –official referee, league official or opposition official (providing they are not involved, implicated in the incident / matter). It should be indicated if witnesses are willing to attend a club personal hearing.
 - Details of any previous complaints or evidence on the matter or similar incidents connected with the person with details of when, who and made to who and the relevance to the current action.
 - Details of a preferred solution to the matter by the complainant.
 - Statement of -if a personal hearing is required or a decision by the committee will be sufficient on the matter.
- **EXCEPTION TO ABOVE :** In the event of the initial complaint being on the matter of player abuse either historic or current, then the matter will be referred immediately EXTERNALLY to LFA, FA, police, Social Services or NSPCC in respect of legal action, investigation and protection measures being required by said professional bodies. Similarly in the event of bullying the case may be referred via the club welfare officer to the Lancashire FA Child Welfare Officer (LFA –CWO) or to the FA CWO

POINT TWO : The complainant will be informed in writing (either hardcopy or electronically) not less than 14 DAYS of the outcome of any hearing (non-personal) OR in the case of a personal hearing within 7 days –notice will be given of a hearing date

REF: HG – A10 AA & BB

within the following 7 DAYS. In the event of external evidence from people being required an extension to the above dates will be exercise to suit the appearance of these persons at mutually agreed day & time. The same time parameters will apply to the person within the club the complaint is being addressed to i.e “ the defendant “.

If the complaint is external to the club then SECTION BB below will be followed.

A quorum (minimum three) of club committee officials will hear both types of hearing listed above.

The complainant will be allowed a representative at the personal hearing or in the case of a young player a parent will be permitted along will a representative.

Notice of witness attendance will be required prior to any personal hearing to the club.

POINT THREE : The Highfield Grange FC hearing panel (minimum of three & kept to a odd number for voting purposes of numbers of persons above the minimum) shall be made up of (unless one or more are the instigators of the complaints) subject to availability from the following :-

- ❖ President
- ❖ Vice President
- ❖ Chairman
- ❖ Vice-chairman
- ❖ Secretary
- ❖ Treasurer
- ❖ Minutes secretary
- ❖ Welfare officer *
- ❖ Charter Standard officer
- ❖ Press Officer

*N.B Must be in attendance for any 18's (and below ages) complaints along with any parents. If any club players feel the process is too daunting then a written statement can be provided to be read out by their parent. Parents will not be able to speak if they are purely at the hearing for player support.

POINT FOUR : A panel (minimum of 3 and a odd number if greater than that – see above) will hear the case and vote to determine the outcome. The panel if the complainant does not request the formal procedure below will hear the evidence and make a decision to be notified as per POINT TWO above.

A hearing (if requested by the complainant or considered as the appropriate vehicle to hear the matter) will be a formal process with a set AGENDA of :-

- Outlining of the meeting procedure to both parties present. The defendant will be asked to leave the room then.
- The complainant (or parent / representative) will outline the complaint with support evidence (written & personal attendance) and then leave the room along with parent and representative.
- The defendant will similarly give evidence as the above complainant and then leave the room.
- The hearing panel will debate the evidence and vote.

REF: HG – A10 AA & BB

- Both parties will be called back into the room and the decision and the rationale given out over the decision. Any decision will be binding and there will be NO right of appeal by either party.

Should in exceptional circumstances during a hearing that it becomes apparent that the case should either require extra information or FA guidance or referring to another body then the case will be adjourned. In the case of a club adjournment for extra information then the club will inform the parties of a new hearing date when set. It would be hoped that the extra information or FA guidance would have been obtained prior to the case being heard.

POINT FIVE : The HG FC hearing panel will have the authority to :-

1. Dismiss the complaint
2. Warn the defendant as to future conduct and require they undertake such measures (retaking / additional training as appropriate) within a specified time limit.
3. Suspend the defendant for a determined amount of time as well as undertaking necessary training / retaking qualifications as above
4. Remove the defendant from the club permanently.

If any training or reasonable attempt to book on courses is not made by the defendant within a time considered reasonable by the club committee then the above following items 3 & 4 actions will be instigated against the person (s)

SECTION BB : FOR EXTERNAL USE BY THE CLUB & TEAMS

This procedure & protocol to be used in the event of :-

- a) Club teams complaining to Leagues over non-compliance of rules, actions and abuse suffered in games by other teams.
- b) Lancashire Football Association charges to club teams over non-compliance of rules.
- c) Other clubs and teams making complaints directly to the Highfield Grange FC over events or incidents that have occurred either on or off the field of play concerning the club teams.
- d) Referee incidents involving players, officials and parents.
- e) Complaints to the FA by club teams, officials and members over club rules, codes of conduct and procedures etc.

POINT SIX: Teams and officials will NOT ENTER into communications with any of the above parties over what may or may not have occurred - instead information in great detail is to be given to the CLUB SECRETARY, The club secretary will then become the single point of contact** in the matter with all parties. If any club official, player or parent contacts anybody in respect of the dispute then that person (s) will be suspended from the club until such time the matter is resolved and will face additional disciplinary measures in SECTION AA above

NOTES ON COMPLAINING AGAINST OTHER CLUBS PLAYERS & OFFICIALS : If any of our club teams intend to bring charges against other teams in Item a) above it is important and imperative that impartial witness (referee, man with dog passing by, league officials) details and statements are obtained at the match or in the dressing room soon afterwards to strengthen the substance of any complaint. Without impartial evidence

REF: HG – A10 AA & BB

it can become /seen as “Tit for Tat “ allegations (either by spectator or officials) against both parties by league officials – so the need for impartial view can be critical in determining any complaint.

**The correct protocol is that club secretaries are the only parties recognised as the club spokesperson by the FA, LFA and local leagues and will not generally communicate with other parties even though they may be involved in the dispute - so as not to contaminate/effect later statements / rulings by those bodies.

POINT SEVEN : As above in SECTION AA the same information will given by persons within the club for the secretary to submit the relevant documentation to the appropriate bodies concerning the incident weather it the FA, LFA or local leagues. If required or requested - persons within the club will attend any hearings meeting with the club secretary.

POINT EIGHT : The parent club will not support club teams where statutory body rules either at FA, County or local league level have been infringed e.g. supplying team sheets, squad lists and match reports, non-compliance of match equipment and facilities, basic team administration of other matters or return information within time parameters etc

POINT NINE : Any hearing decision made at league level against club teams or officials can be challenged at the higher FA level afterwards but would need the parent club support to move forward - which would be evaluated on the merits of the case and points raised. If the club decided that any case was not strong enough or did not merit an appeal to a higher body then it would expect the club team / official/ individual to accept this ruling and not pursue the complaint.

POINT TEN : The payment of appeal hearing charges and hearing expenses to external bodies at league or FA level is to be met by the club teams. N.B At FA county level hearing expenses can be as much as £100 + depending on the number of councillors involved, loss of work time and travelling expenses incurred.