



Dronfield Running Club - Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

Version Control 1.2

Complaints and Disputes

- All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of children or vulnerable adults will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Club's and England Athletics's safeguarding policy and procedures. The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Officer for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.
- Any complaints of misconduct (improper or unprofessional conduct) regarding the behaviour of Members or Officers shall be dealt with by the Club in accordance with this policy and must be presented in writing to the Club Secretary (and where the matter relates to the Secretary, the complaint must be submitted to the Welfare Officer).
Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the Secretary will hear complaints within fourteen days of receiving a complaint. If the complaint is sufficiently evidenced, the Secretary will appoint 3 (three) Club Members (who have no direct or indirect interest/involvement in the matter) to sit on a disciplinary panel. Subject to rule 3 below, a decision of the disciplinary panel shall be final and conclusive.
- Any appeals must be received by the Secretary within 7 (seven) days of receiving the written decision and, if appropriate, the England Athletics recommended disciplinary and appeals process will be followed.
- Any complaints of serious misconduct (including, without limitation, theft, doping violations, fraud, physical violence, safeguarding policy breaches, serious breach of applicable health and safety, gambling and/or ticketing regulations or any act or omission of the Member or Officer which in the opinion of England Athletics, acting reasonably, brings or is likely to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute) regarding the behaviour of Members or Officers shall be reported and dealt with by England Athletics in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedures.
- If a dispute arises between any Members or Officers of the Club about the validity or propriety of anything done by any Member or Officer under these Rules and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation.



Managing Club disputes and complaints

The club will follow the England Athletics recommended guide for managing disputes and complaints which includes both informal and formal resolution processes.

This policy could relate to: -

- **Serious misconduct and safeguarding**

All matters of serious misconduct or safeguarding issues should be reported to England Athletics. Anything of a criminal nature should be reported to both the police and to England Athletics, as there is also likely to be a conduct breach. Please refer to Welfare and safeguarding policy for further information.

- **England Athletics licensed roles**

Any active coaches (e.g. LiRF) and officials should be licensed by England Athletics. The license terms and conditions, together with the code of conduct, set out the standards of professional practice which must be adhered to.

- **Affiliated Clubs**

If the dispute or misconduct does not constitute serious misconduct or a safeguarding issue, then it may be suitable to be managed at club level. Examples would be: - social media comments, athletes falling out, committee members excluding new members from joining, athlete or club members code of conduct breaches.

Informal resolution

The club considers an informal complaint as a matter that requires follow up action or investigation by the club to resolve it, without the need for a formal hearing. The complaint does not require a comprehensive investigation, remains fully confidential, be recorded, and would not require any disciplinary action if there is agreement between both parties and/or a formal complaint is not submitted.

Formal resolution (grievance and disciplinary procedure)

The club would implement formal resolution of a complaint, where it has not been possible to resolve informally, or when informal mechanisms are ineffective, or inappropriate given the nature of the dispute or misconduct. The matter would need to be raised formally to the club secretary (or committee) in writing, with written witness accounts and a written response from the respondent.

At any stage, the club can look at the complaint and decide if the formal procedure needs to continue, if the issue can be resolved informally, and/or if a suspension is required.



Two scenarios where the club would use a grievance and disciplinary procedure are: -

- A formal complaint is submitted to the club which triggers the complaint and disciplinary procedure. The complaint is investigated, which could result in disciplinary actions being taken.
- A disciplinary could be issued without a complaint being submitted if poor behaviour has been observed and it goes against the club code of conduct. Such misconduct would be investigated ahead of any potential disciplinary.

Once a complaint has been submitted in writing or the club decides there is grounds to take a club member and/or volunteer through a disciplinary procedure, the club will ensure associated tasks are dealt with by the correct person as per EA guidance. This will involve a number of roles from the club committee e.g. club chair, club secretary, nominated investigator, panel members.

As recommended by England Athletics guidance, formal resolution would incorporate 3 stages :-

- 1) Investigation
- 2) Grievance and Disciplinary Panel Hearings
- 3) Appeals

The process would follow that which is outlined in

<https://www.englandathletics.org/clubhub/asset-download/2023/11/Club-Guide-Managing-Club-Disputes-and-Complaints-v2.pdf>

Suspension

The club committee may decide to temporarily stop a club member and/or volunteer from attending a club activity. A club committee can consider suspending someone while carrying out a complaint and disciplinary investigation, if there is a serious issue or situation. A suspension does not mean a club member and/or volunteer has done anything wrong, and is not used as discipline.

Suspension would only be considered if it is needed to protect: -

- the person under investigation
- the investigation - if you're concerned about someone damaging evidence or influencing witness
- the club- if there is genuine risk to club member/and or volunteers, club equipment, property or finances
- other club members/and or volunteers.



In all circumstances, the club would consider all alternatives before suspension such as, change in volunteer duties/role, working with different groups.