

Sheffield Federation for School Sports Complaints Policy

Preamble

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. Complaints can potentially come from many sources: from parents, following a competition in which their child has taken part; from schools over the treatment of a team or a pupil at a competition; from organisations and people outside of SFSS who have been affected by a match or competition; from Associations over a perceived injustice over, for example, the allocation of funds.

Complaint handling principles

The handling of complaints is based on the following principles:

- All complaints will be treated seriously
- Follow-up action will be prompt
- People will be treated fairly and both sides of the story will be listened to
- Parties to the complaint will be kept informed
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible
- An accurate record will be kept of the complaint and actions taken
- Decisions will be based only on information gathered
- Disciplinary action (if relevant) will be relative to people's behaviour and the context of its occurrence

Complaints Procedure Statement

The SFSS complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to everyone's satisfaction. All complaints will be taken seriously and have a resolution in as short a time as possible

Complaint made by a pupil or parent

In the first instance, the complaint should be made to the school or school representative, who should then inform the Association secretary of the complaint. If a parent makes a complaint directly to an event organiser or a volunteer steward, they should be informed that the school representative is the person to whom the complaint should be made and that this person will follow up.

Where possible, less serious complaints should be resolved informally at the level they occur (e.g. at Association level).

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, the complaint should be referred on to the Federation Secretary. She/he is empowered to make a judgement if she/he can see a clear resolution. If not, then the complaint will be considered by a group of 3 Federation Officers, one of whom should be the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer. Referral to the Federation's Child Protection Officer may be required for very serious issues like suspicion of harm against a child.

Complaint made by a school or academy trust

In the first instance, the complaint should be made to the event organiser. Where possible, less serious complaints should be resolved informally at the level they occur (e.g. at association level).

If this is not possible, or where there is a conflict of interest, the complaint should be referred on to either the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer. She/he is empowered to make a judgement if she/he can see a clear resolution. If not, then the complaint will be considered by a group of 3 Federation Officers, one of whom should be the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer. Referral to the Federation's Child Protection Officer may be required for very serious issues like suspicion of harm against a child.

It is recognised that in some cases (e.g. if the complaint is against an Association officer), it may be necessary to refer the complaint directly to SFSS officers. In this case the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer should be contacted and she/he will involve the Federation Child Protection Officer if this is felt appropriate.

In all cases, the school will be kept informed of intended follow-up actions.

Complaint made by an Association

In the first instance, the complaint should be made to the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer. She/he is empowered to make a judgement if she/he can see a clear resolution. If not, then the complaint will be considered by a group of 3 Federation Officers, one of whom should be the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer.

Any decision will be referred back to the Association, which can make comment. This will be considered by Federation Officers, who can change the original decision if they see fit.

Complaint made by a person or organisation outside of SFSS and schools

This can occur where, for example, a member of the public feels they have been adversely affected by the holding of a competition or behaviour of a pupil (or pupils). Or a complaint may come from a linked organisation or body. For example, the organisation may have felt that a facility has not been left in a good state after a competition.

It is difficult to generalise on an appropriate procedure as situations can be so different. However, the complaint handling principles become very important here as inappropriate responses can reflect badly on the entire Federation. If in doubt the Association Secretary should refer on to the Primary or Secondary Liaison Officer, who will decide whether the Child Protection Officer or other Federation Officers should be involved.

Key information to note when a complaint is made:

- date/time
- location
- exact nature of complaint
- details of person/body making the complaint
- attempts to come to a resolution
- referred on to (who)

All records of complaints will be kept in line with the Federation's GDPR policy.

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