

# Poole Runners Grievance and disciplinary policy

## Complaints and Disputes

1. 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. (See the Club's child safeguarding policy and procedures.). The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Officer for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.
2. 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 its discipline and appeals process (see below) and must be presented in writing to the 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.
3. Any appeals must be received by the Secretary within 7 (seven) days of receiving the written decision and, if appropriate, the appeals process will be followed.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Should a complaint be received from a member of the public, the principles set out in this policy will broadly apply. Poole Runners will advise and consult with England Athletic when considered necessary.

## Discipline and Appeals Process

Poole Runners will ultimately take decisions that they believe to be in the best interests of the club and will ask its members to accept decisions in the spirit that they are made.

If you wish to raise a complaint you can do so either informally or formally. Raising issues promptly and informally typically leads to the most effective form of resolution. You are therefore encouraged to follow the **informal procedure** in the first instance, unless the matter is serious, in which case you may choose to go directly to the formal stage.

The policy also gives you the opportunity to appeal the decision in the event you are unhappy with the outcome of the formal process.

We recognise that it is not always easy for an individual to raise something they are unhappy about. Any complaint raised will be treated with discretion and the club will only consult with those who are involved and whose views need to be considered. If it is felt the issue raised is outside of the Club's remit or is trivial, this will be explained to you and you will be asked to find an alternative route to try and resolve your concern.

## **Informal Stage**

If you have a concern, you should initially speak to your Coach who will try and resolve the issue, involving other people as needed. If you do not feel able to speak to your Coach, then you should speak to the Club Secretary. A note of any informal meetings and agreed actions will be kept for reference. We may also agree a timescale to check in with you to make sure things have improved and are going well. It is anticipated that the majority of concerns will be settled quickly through constructive informal discussions. However, if you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal stage or do not feel able to raise the issue informally you should go to the formal stage.

Facilitated meeting If your issue relates to another club member, you may be asked if you are willing to take part in a facilitated meeting as a constructive way to help improve the relationship between you and resolve the situation. This option may be explored at any part of the process but is more likely to be successful before a formal process is initiated. It may be that the facilitator is accompanied by a member of the committee.

Temporary Changes If a complaint is made against you, the club may require you to temporarily stop or have changes made to any involvement you have with club activities, duties, or attendance at training sessions. This can be considered at any stage of the process and would need to be approved by the Club Secretary.

## **Formal Stage**

If you wish to raise a concern formally you should write to the Club Secretary. If your complaint relates to the Club Secretary, then you should write to the Welfare Officer. Your letter should include:

- The reason for your complaint (this should be specific and factual, including any relevant examples)
- Any attempts that you have made to raise and resolve the issue informally (indicating who you spoke to and when)
- Any actions you feel might resolve the problem.

Upon receipt, the secretary/welfare officer will elect a committee member to consider your formal complaint. This person will then decide how best to progress your complaint, which may involve meeting or having a phone call with you or providing a written response directly. If a meeting is required, you will be given a reasonable amount of notice and may be accompanied by a fellow Poole Runner. The person accompanying you can contribute to the meeting but would not be able to answer any questions put to you.

Where your complaint relates to another person, that person will normally be made aware of the complaint and who has made it. Once the complaint has been fully considered, and any further investigations required have been completed which may involve seeking the views of others, you will be informed of the outcome in writing.

We will endeavour to let you know the outcome within a calendar month of your complaint being received. However, depending on the complexity and circumstances of the case, this timescale may need to be reviewed. We will of course keep you updated with expected timescales. The letter will indicate whether the club considers there are grounds for your complaint and explain what, if any, action is to be taken as a result. You will not necessarily be privy to all subsequent steps and actions taken where your upheld complaint relates to another individual.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can appeal this within 7 (seven) days of receiving the outcome letter.

## **Appeals**

If you wish to challenge the outcome of the formal procedure, you should set out your reasons in writing and send this to the Club Secretary. This should be done within 7 (seven) days of receiving your outcome letter.

An appeals panel will be convened which will consist of three committee members who have not been involved at any earlier stage of the procedure. The appeals panel will consider the grounds of your appeal and, if necessary, invite you to attend a further meeting.

You will be advised of the outcome of your appeal in writing. We will endeavour to let you know the outcome within a calendar month of your appeal being lodged.

The appeal outcome will be final, and you will have no further opportunity to challenge it.

## **How the club will raise an issue with you**

There may be occasions where the club needs to raise and consider taking action against you in respect to your approach, conduct, suitability or availability to do a role within the club, or some other issue.

Where possible any concern will be raised informally with you in the first instance. However, where the issue is sufficiently serious it may be necessary to move directly to the formal stage as detailed above.

Having carefully considered the evidence and within a reasonable amount of time, ideally within one calendar month, you will be informed of the outcome by letter.

The letter will indicate:

- The nature of the problem
- The change in behaviour or actions required (including timescales for improvement and how progress will be reviewed where applicable)
- How long any issued warning will remain active
- The potential consequences if there are further problems
- The opportunity to appeal the outcome

Potential outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Informal action
- A written warning
- A final written warning
- Suspension or disqualification from representing the club in athletic competition, club coaching and/or administration and/or use of the Club's premises for some definite or indefinite period
- A recommendation to the relevant governing body that the Member be disqualified from any involvement in athletics for some definite or indefinite period and/or
- terminate the membership or such other penalty as considered appropriate

Warning duration and Retention.

Warnings will apply for: 9 months for a written warning and 12 months for a final written warning (or up to two years in exceptional cases). Notes of any informal discussions will be held for 6 months.

Upon expiry, any warnings that have been issued will no longer be used for the purpose of imposing any formal sanction but will remain on the member's file, held securely by the Club Secretary, for a period of two years. A decision to terminate a member's membership will not be based on an expired warning, but the fact that one exists, may explain why the club does not substitute a lesser sanction. Any other documentation collated under this policy will similarly be retained for a period of two years, after which it will be destroyed.

If you wish to challenge the outcome of the formal procedure, you should follow the Appeals Procedure.

### **Notification to UK Athletics and England Athletics**

Where deemed necessary, the club will notify England Athletics (EA) and/or United Kingdom Athletics (UKA) of the outcome to ensure compliance with any sanction imposed or for the safety and well-being of those engaged in athletics activity. EA/UKA may determine to publish details on their websites.