



Ross on Wye RFC

Complaint & Grievance Policy

1) Purpose

Ross Rugby Club ("the Club") is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive environment for everyone involved in Club activity. This policy sets out how concerns, complaints, and grievances can be raised and how the Club will respond fairly, promptly, and consistently.

2) Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all persons involved with, representing, or attending the Club, including:

- Club members
- Employees and casual staff
- Volunteers
- Coaches, managers, and committee members
- Players (senior and junior)
- Parents/guardians
- Spectators and visitors

3) What this policy covers

This policy may be used to raise concerns about (not exhaustive):

- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, abusive language, or threatening behaviour
- Conduct of players, spectators, volunteers, coaches/managers, officials, or staff
- Club standards, facilities, events, communications, or administration
- Team management concerns (including selection, where appropriate)
- Misuse of Club property, funds, or resources (where relevant)

4) What this policy does not replace (important)

Some matters must be handled under separate procedures:

- **Safeguarding (RFU):** Any concern involving a child (U18) or an adult at risk must be reported immediately to the Club Safeguarding/Welfare Officer and handled under RFU safeguarding procedures. Do not delay by using this complaints route.
- **Emergency or criminal matters:** If there is immediate danger or a crime may have been committed, contact emergency services first.
- **Disciplinary matters:** Where the concern involves misconduct, the Club may manage it under a disciplinary process (this policy may still be used to receive the initial complaint).

5) Principles

- Concerns will be taken seriously and handled respectfully.
- The Club will aim to resolve issues informally where appropriate.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible.

- No person will be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.
- The Club will keep clear records of formal complaints and outcomes.

6) Roles and responsibilities

- **Complaints Officer:** Primary point of contact for formal complaints and grievances; responsible for acknowledgement, triage, and coordinating the process.
- **Safeguarding/Welfare Officer:** Handles safeguarding concerns under RFU procedures.
- **Committee Panel (if appointed):** A small panel (typically 2–3 people) to investigate and/or hear outcomes/appeals where appropriate.

7) Step 1 — Informal resolution (where appropriate)

Where it is safe and reasonable, the complainant should raise the issue informally as soon as possible with one of the following:

- Team Coach/Manager (if team-related)
- Match/Event organiser (if event-day issue)
- Duty Manager/Bar Manager (if clubhouse-related)
- A Committee member on site

The Club will aim to address informal concerns promptly, usually within **7–14 days**.

If the issue is serious, sensitive, involves safeguarding, or the complainant is uncomfortable raising it informally, move straight to Step 2.

8) Step 2 — Formal complaint / grievance

8.1 How to submit

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) to the **Complaints Officer**.

If the complaint concerns the Complaints Officer, it should be sent to the **Club Chair**. If it concerns the Chair, it should be sent to a **Vice Chair or another nominated committee member**.

8.2 What to include

- What happened (facts, dates/times, location)
- Who was involved (names/roles if known)
- Witnesses (if applicable)
- Supporting evidence (messages, photos, etc.)
- The outcome sought (what would resolve it)

9) Acknowledgement and initial assessment

The Club will acknowledge receipt within **5 working days** and confirm:

- Who will handle the complaint
- Whether it will be managed under this policy or another process (e.g., safeguarding/disciplinary)
- Expected timescales

10) Investigation

The Club will investigate proportionately. This may include:

- Speaking to the complainant and the person complained about

- Taking witness statements
- Reviewing relevant records (e.g., incident logs, messages, CCTV if applicable)

The Club may appoint an investigation lead or a small committee panel to ensure fairness and avoid conflicts of interest.

11) Meetings (if needed)

The Club may invite the complainant and/or the person complained about to a meeting.

For junior players (U18), a parent/guardian may attend and should be included in communications where appropriate.

12) Decision and outcomes

The Club will provide the outcome in writing, normally within **10 working days** of concluding the investigation (or explain if more time is required).

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action (with reasons)
- Apology and agreed behaviour expectations
- Mediation / facilitated discussion
- Formal warning or sanctions under Club rules/disciplinary procedures
- Suspension or termination of membership/volunteering (where applicable)
- Referral to the RFU, league, or competition organiser (where appropriate)

13) Appeals

If the complainant believes the process was not followed fairly, or new evidence has come to light, they may appeal in writing within **10 working days** of the outcome.

The appeal will be reviewed by a different person/panel where possible. The appeal decision is final.

14) Unreasonable or malicious complaints

The Club will not tolerate abusive, threatening, or persistently unreasonable behaviour during the process. If a complaint is found to be deliberately false or malicious, the Club may take appropriate action under Club rules.

15) Confidentiality and data

Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis. Records will be stored securely and retained in line with Club governance and data protection requirements.