

TWEED BRIDGE CLUB

PROCEDURES TO ACCOMPANY POLICY DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

1. Establish a Code of Conduct

- **Objective:** Clearly define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours within the Club.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Refer members to the policy.
 - Specify that any form of harassment, bullying, or discrimination will not be tolerated.

2. Create an Awareness Program

- **Objective:** Promote awareness of respectful behaviour and the importance of maintaining a friendly environment.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Regularly remind players of the need to be respectful and to “be nice to each other” in any kind of contact whether direct, in conversation or in any kind of written communication.
 - Encourage players to speak up if they observe or experience inappropriate behaviour.
 - Provide examples of what constitutes harassment and how players can address it calmly.
 - Stress that, within play, if any issue arises, no attempt to resolve should be made and the Director should be called.
 - Ensure all members understand the severity of complaints and the consequences of such behaviour.

3. Designate a Complaints Officer or Committee

- **Objective:** Provide a clear point of contact for complaints and ensure they are handled appropriately.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Appoint one or more complaints officers who are trained in conflict resolution and can handle sensitive issues.
 - Ensure that the complaints officer is approachable and has a neutral stance.
 - Create a system for submitting complaints (e.g. complaint forms or direct contact with the officer).
 - Maintain confidentiality during the investigation of complaints.

4. Implement a Formal Complaints Process

- **Objective:** Establish a structured approach for addressing complaints in a timely and fair manner.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Clearly outline the steps for filing a complaint:
 1. **Initial Reporting:** Player reports the issue to the complaints officer via email or in person.
 2. **Determining the Appropriate Process:** Depending on the nature of the complaint and giving consideration to those involved, a decision should be made as to whether the matter should be dealt with informally by the officer with the person subject of the complaint, or by mediation or by formal investigation if deemed necessary.

3. **Informal treatment of more minor matters:**

An officer designated by The Committee, should approach the complainant to advise the options and that informal treatment would seem adequate and could be dealt with by the officer. If the complainant agrees, the officer should meet with the person, subject of the complaint to explain the nature of the complaint and that, while it needs to be dealt with it is considered less serious. The person should be allowed to respond and the matter finalised with advice as appropriate.

4. **Mediation:**

An officer designated by The Committee, should approach the persons involved and explain that there has been a complaint and that mediation is seen as the most suitable way to resolve the complaint and that if it can be resolved in this way, that will be the end of the matter. Should that not be possible, the matter will need to be dealt with by investigation.

5. **Investigation:** The officer conducts a fair investigation, clarifying the details of the complaint, providing natural justice, ensuring that all parties feel heard, gathering relevant details from all parties involved and that any resolution is fair and consistent with the Club's policy and values.

(A proforma document to be forwarded to the person subject of the complaint is provided as an attachment to these procedures at Attachment 1.)

The officer should provide the Committee with a report on the findings and possible course of action.

6. **Resolution:** Depending on the severity, the Committee may issue a advice, a warning, temporary suspension, or permanent ban from the club for those found guilty of inappropriate behaviour.

7. **Follow-up:** The officer should ensure that the person who filed the complaint is kept informed of the process and of the outcome.

5. Encourage Peer Support and Communication

- **Objective:** Foster a supportive community where players can help each other and address issues in a non-confrontational manner.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Encourage players to speak to each other directly and calmly if they are uncomfortable with someone's behaviour.
 - Encourage any player who feels that they may have been out of line or caused offence to another to seek them out and apologise if that was the case.

6. Create an Accountability System

- **Objective:** Ensure that club members are held accountable for their behaviour and that repeat offenders are managed.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Track complaints over time to spot patterns of behaviour and address issues early.
 - Establish graduated consequences for repeat offenders, such as temporary suspensions, mandatory counselling, or, in severe cases, removal from the club.
 - Encourage members to uphold the integrity of the club and report any violations they witness, so that problems can be tackled before escalating.

7. Review and Improve Procedures Regularly

- **Objective:** Continuously evaluate and improve the system to make sure it is effective in handling issues.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Adjust the code of conduct or complaint procedures as necessary to address new challenges or to improve fairness and transparency.
 - Encourage feedback from club members on the process and their experiences.

8. Create a Safe and Respectful Environment

- **Objective:** Ensure everyone feels comfortable and included in the club.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Promote diversity and inclusion within the club by welcoming players from different backgrounds, skill levels, and experiences.
 - Foster a culture of kindness, patience, and respect, ensuring that everyone feels like they belong.

Attachment 1: Proforma Complaint Advice

In each instance, depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be determined that the contact can be made by letter or by email.

Proforma Sample:

Dear [Recipient Name],

This letter/email is to inform you that a complaint has been made against you regarding your conduct, which if found to be substantiated would amount to improper under the Club's Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

The complaint alleges that you [state the itemised specifics of the alleged conduct, including date(s) , nature of complaint, e.g. engaged in inappropriate behaviour, made harassing remarks, etc. against (complainant)].

I am committed to conducting a fair and thorough investigation and, as part of my investigation and in the interest of natural justice, I am now offering you the opportunity to respond to the complaint at interview or in writing, providing any information or documentation you believe is relevant. Also, I will gather information from any source seen to be relevant, including any person you might nominate.

Please be aware that this is being treated as a serious matter, and I will be taking your response and any further information you provide into consideration when making my findings.

Should I not have any response from you within three weeks of this notification, I will proceed to finalise the matter without your input.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Your Name/Title]

[Your Contact Information]