

MERE TOWN YOUTH FC COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



1. Introduction & Purpose

Mere Town Youth FC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable grassroots football environment for all young players, parents, coaches, and volunteers. As an **FA Accredited Club** affiliated with the **Wiltshire FA**, our club values directly align with The Football Association's policies on safeguarding, equality, and the **Grassroots Code**.

We welcome constructive feedback and take all concerns and complaints seriously. This policy outlines our structured procedures for handling complaints fairly, efficiently, and consistently.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all players, parents, guardians, coaches, team managers, club officials, and volunteers associated with Mere Town Youth FC. It covers complaints regarding:

- Coaching standards, player treatment, or playing time disputes
- Matchday behaviour, sideline conduct, and breaches of the **FA Respect Code**
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind
- Club administration, membership issues, or general management
- *Note: This policy does not apply to decisions made by matchday referees. Referee or league disciplinary matters are governed by the relevant **Dorset youth football league** and Wiltshire FA protocols.*

3. Core Principles

- **Confidentiality:** All complaints will be handled discreetly, sharing information only with those committee members who absolutely need to know.
- **Fairness:** Every party involved in a dispute will be given an equal, unbiased opportunity to present their side.
- **Timeliness:** We aim to acknowledge and resolve all complaints within the strict windows detailed below.
- **No Retaliation:** No youth player or family will be penalized or treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.

4. The 3-Stage Complaints Procedure

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Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Most minor concerns or misunderstandings can be resolved quickly through open communication.

- **Action:** Raise the issue directly with your respective **Team Manager** or **Coach**. Please do not do this during a matchday or mid-training session; wait for a suitable, quiet time.
- **Timeline:** The coach or manager should discuss the issue and respond to you within **3 days**.
- *Note: If the complaint directly involves the Team Manager, or is of a sensitive nature, skip Stage 1 and move directly to Stage 2.*

Stage 2: Formal Complaint to the Club

If the informal approach does not resolve the issue, or if the matter is serious, a formal complaint should be submitted.

- **Action:** Complete the **Club Complaints Form** (see Appendix A) and email it directly to the **Club Secretary, Jen Cox**.
- **Acknowledgment:** Jen Cox will acknowledge receipt of your written complaint within **48 hours**.
- **Investigation:** The Mere Town Youth FC Committee will appoint an objective officer to investigate. This may involve interviewing the parties involved.
- **Resolution:** A written decision and an explanation of any actions taken (such as issuing codes of conduct or temporary parental restrictions) will be issued within **14 days** of receiving the form.

Stage 3: Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome provided by the investigation, you have the right to appeal.

- **Action:** Submit a written appeal to the **Club Chairman, Tom Shaftoe** within **7 days** of receiving the Stage 2 decision.
- **Review:** A separate appeals panel from the Club Committee will review the case files.
- **Final Outcome:** The panel's decision is final for internal club matters and will be communicated within **14 days**.

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5. Escalation to League and Wiltshire FA

If a complaint cannot be resolved internally, or if it involves cross-club misconduct during a match in the **Dorset youth football leagues**, the Mere Town Youth FC Secretary or **Club Welfare Officer (CWO)** will elevate the incident to the League Officials.

If necessary, leagues or individual members may further escalate formal disciplinary or respect complaints directly to the **Wiltshire FA**.

6. Urgent Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

If your complaint involves **child safety, poor practice, abuse, or serious safeguarding violations**, do not use the standard complaints procedure. Contact our **Club Welfare Officer (CWO), Corrie Tatum**, immediately:

- **Club Welfare Officer Name:** Corrie Tatum
- **Contact Phone:** [Insert Corrie's Phone Number]
- **Email Address:** [Insert Corrie's Email Address]

Wiltshire FA & National FA Safeguarding Contacts:

If Corrie Tatum is unavailable, or if you prefer to report the matter directly to the county governing body:

- **Wiltshire FA Safeguarding Team Email:** Safeguarding@WiltshireFA.com
- **Wiltshire FA Safeguarding Phone:** 07340 272564
- **The FA Safeguarding Team:** Safeguarding@TheFA.com
- *If a child is in immediate danger, bypass club protocols and call the emergency services (999) or the NSPCC (0800 800 5000) straight away.*

7. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Mere Town Youth FC Committee to ensure it remains effective, compliant, and up to date with Wiltshire FA guidelines.

- **Last Reviewed:** September 2026
- **Next Review Due:** September 2027

- **Full Name:** _____
- **Relationship to Club (e.g., Parent, Volunteer):** _____
- **Phone Number:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____

- **Player's Name:** _____
- **Age Group / Team:** _____

- **Date and time of incident(s):** _____
- **Location (e.g., Mere Recreation Ground, Gillingham Astro):**

- **Name(s) of individual(s) involved:**

- **Description of the issue (Please provide clear, factual details of what happened):**
- **What outcome or resolution are you seeking?**

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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