**Power Athletics Complaints Procedure**

Power Athletics Cheerleading
Date of Next Review: July 2021
Reviewed by: Sian Young on 11/07/2020

Power Athletics operates an open policy in which any customer who has a grievance or complaint against any athlete or the club is encouraged to make their feelings known so that the problem can be discussed and we can work together to resolve it. You can always contact us in writing via email or handing a letter to any coach address to either the Safeguarding Officer or Head Coach.

Likewise, if anyone has any suggestions that they feel would enhance the club, they are welcome to voice their ideas.

This policy and procedure should be read alongside Power Athletics other policies, which can be found on our website.

**We recognise that:**

* Everyone who participates in our club has a right to a high standard of service
* Those who come to the club have the right to complain if they are not happy with the service they receive
* Learning from complaints, and suggestions, helps us to improve the service we provide.

**The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:**

* Help us to provide a service of the highest standard to all those who come to Power Athletics
* Help us to ensure that athletes and their families using or wishing to use the service know they have a right to complain about our service if they need to
* Help us to deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our service
* Set out the issues that could be covered under this procedure
* Set out steps that children, young people and their families should take if they wish to make a complaint
* Set out how we can deal with complaints in a fair and consistent way.

**This policy and procedure applies to:** all athletes and their families attending or wishing to attend sessions with Power Athletics.

However, this policy does not cover staff or volunteer complaints, concerns of malpractice or wrongdoing by staff or volunteers (use whistleblowing policy and procedure) or those relating to concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm (use anti-bullying or safeguarding policy and procedures, depending on the incident concerned). If you are unsure which policy and procedure you should be using, feel free to speak to one of our coaches or contact us via electronic methods, such as email or social media sites. Details of all of these can be found on our website.

**What do we mean by a complaint?**

A complaint is a statement from someone that they are not happy about the service provided to them by Power Athletics and would like this to be improved.

The complaint might be about:

* The behaviour of a coach or volunteer (where this does not relate to a safeguarding or malpractice concern: if it does see our Safeguarding or Whistleblowing Policies and Procedures)
* The behaviour of other children and young people (where this does not relate to bullying: if it does see our Anti-bullying policy and procedure)
* The level of service received
* The type of service received
* Being refused a service altogether
* The building or facilities (this may be passed onto Stoke Damerel Community College)
* Written information
* Service received over the telephone or through digital communications (via email or social media accounts)
* An athlete or family member who feels that they have been treated unfairly or in any way that is discriminatory
* A specific outing or activity
* Anything else relating to the service provided by Power Athletics

**We will seek to deal with complaints by:**

* Defining clearly what we mean by a complaint
* Setting out a procedure that can be easily followed and understood
* Making sure that everyone knows about the policy and procedure
* Reassuring people that they will not be penalized for using the complaints procedure and that we will respond positively to any comments or complaints in good faith
* Offering extra support to those who need help making a complaint
* Taking a staged approach to complaints that takes account of the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolutions at different points
* Investigating each complaint as objectively and fully as we reasonably can
* Keeping the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and the outcome of their complaint
* Keeping clear records of complaints and how they are resolved.

**Complaints Procedure**

1. Where possible, the person should discuss the complaint with their session coach. If this is not possible (eg you don’t feel comfortable talking to your coach), you can discuss the complaint with the Head Coach or Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. The coach will, in the first instance, try to resolve the matter informally. This is often possible and can mean that the problem is sorted out simply and more efficiently
3. If an informal solution has been tried before and has not worked, or of the complainant doesn’t feel that informal discussions are adequate, the complaint will move through the following complaints procedure:

Stage 1

1. The complainant should put their concerns in writing to the session coach. If the complaint is about the session coach, please address concerns to either the Head Coach or Designated Safeguarding Officer. If any help is required to do this, please speak to a member of the coaching team.
2. The complaint should be given to the Head Coach (when not given directly to them) within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged. The Head Coach should then acknowledge the complaint within two working days, via the complainant’s preferred communication method, and covering:
* A note of thanks for getting in touch
* Expression of regret that the complaint has been necessary
* Assurance that the matter will be investigated
* Provisional timescale for the investigation that is achievable, yet avoids delays as much as possible
* When the next contact about the issue is due
* Offer contact details for the relevant person should the complainant have any questions in the meantime
* Any temporary arrangements that may be necessary pending the complaints investigation outcome.
1. Normally the service to the complainant should continue as normal during the investigation into the complaint. If this is not possible (as an athlete has been banned from training, or the complainant doesn’t want to use the service at that point, or it would be inappropriate for the session coach to keep working with that athlete) then this should be acknowledged and temporary alternative arrangements should be made where possible.
2. If the complaint has been made against a coach, volunteer, other athlete or parent then that person (and parent if under 18) should be informed of the complaint within two working days, including the nature of the complaint. However, the person will not be informed if doing so would compromise anyone’s safety or an ongoing police investigation.
3. The Head Coach should normally be responsible for investigating a complaint. The investigator should plan the investigation according to the nature of the complaint, taking into account any witnesses or specialist opinion that should be sought. As a minimum, the complainant (and parent if under 18) should be interviewed. Any person who might be the subject of a complaint should also be interviewed, unless doing so would jeopardise anyone’s safety or a police investigation.
4. If the complaint is about a building, facilities or equipment, then this will be passed directly onto Stoke Damerel Community College.
5. If the complaint is about access to service, the reasoning behind a decision to offer or not offer a particular service should be examined.
6. If, at any point during the investigation, it appears that a criminal offense may have been committed, the matter should be reported to the police straight away. Discussions should be held with the police about whether investigation into the complaint can continue alongside their own investigation.
7. If it emerges at any point that a child may have been caused significant harm or may be at risk of significant harm, safeguarding procedures should be instigated immediately.
8. The investigator should keep notes about the investigation, including notes of meetings, and should write a report on their findings. The report should state clearly if the complaint was upheld or not, and should make recommendations about how the matter can be taken forward. The report should be shared with the complainant and any club member(s) that are involved. Any comments that either party wishes to make about the extent they accept or reject the findings of the report should be noted.
9. Once a way forward has been agreed, this should be regularly reviewed.
10. If either the complainant or person who is the subject of the complaint is not prepared to accept the findings of the report, they should confirm this in writing. The matter then becomes a stage two complaint.
11. A complaint also progresses to a stage two complaint if it has previously (ie within the last 12 months) been handled as a stage one complaint but has resurfaced.

Stage 2

1. A stage two complaint may come about for one of two reasons, either; there is a challenge to the findings of a stage 1 complaint or the matter had been investigated within the last 12 months but has since resurfaced.
2. Stage two complaints should be investigated either by the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Head Coach or by a completely independent person, nominated by Power Athletics coaching staff. Findings should be reported back to staff directly.
3. If a complaint is to progress to stage two, the complainant (whether the original complainant or the person was the subject of the original complaint) should again indicate in writing the he/she wishes to complain (or complain further) and should state the reason for this.
4. The written complaint should be presented to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who should respond in writing (via the complainants preferred contact method) within two working days in the same way as for stage 1 complaints. If the matter is being dealt with by an independent person, then details for this person should also be included in the written response.
5. The procedure will follow those of a stage 1 complaint and should be investigated and shared in the same way.
6. Stage 2 is the final stage for our complaints procedure. If any party wishes to complain further following the completion of this stage, this should be taken up with an external party (eg local councilor, MP or commissioning body).

**Keeping a record of a complaint**

Regardless of whether the complaint is dealt with formally or informally, accurate notes should be made by the coach or volunteer of each stage of the process, including recording meetings and informal chats. Copies of the final report should be given to the person making the complaint and any who is the subject of the complaint.

Copies of these notes will generally be kept in a separate complaints file, however if the complaint leads to any disciplinary action or referral to statutory body then a copy of all notes will be kept confidentially in the file of the person who was the subject of the complaint. Any reports and follow up actions will always be kept in the file of the person who was subject to the complaint to be constantly monitored and reviewed where necessary.

**This policy and procedure should be reviewed every two years by the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Head Coach.**