



SOUTHEND INVICTUS

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The club acknowledges that concerns, complaints and disagreements may occasionally arise. All complaints will be treated seriously, investigated fairly and resolved as promptly as possible.

This policy aims to:

- Provide a fair and transparent process for raising concerns.
- Ensure complaints are dealt with consistently.
- Protect the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.
- Promote accountability and positive behaviour.
- Support compliance with FA regulations, safeguarding requirements and the Equality Act 2010.

The club will not tolerate abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or behaviour that brings the club into disrepute.

This policy applies to:

- Players
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Welfare Officers
- Committee members
- Parents and carers
- Personal assistants and support workers
- Match officials
- Spectators and supporters

The policy applies during:

- Training sessions
- Matches and tournaments
- Club meetings
- Social events
- Club trips
- Online communications
- Social media activity connected to the club

What is a Complaint?

A complaint may relate to:

- Poor conduct or behaviour.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Discrimination.
- Failure to follow club rules or policies.
- Coaching concerns.
- Volunteer or official conduct.
- Welfare concerns.
- Poor communication.
- Breaches of inclusion policies.
- Behaviour that damages the reputation of the club.

Safeguarding concerns involving children or adults at risk will be managed under the club's Safeguarding Policy and may be referred immediately to the Welfare Officer, County FA or relevant authorities.

Submitting a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted as soon as reasonably possible.

Complaints may be made:

- Verbally to a committee member (Ben, Jon, Vicky, Dani or Kay) or Welfare Officer (Vicky or Dani).
- By email (southendinvictusfc@gmail.com)
- In writing.
- Anonymously via the form on our website (www.southendinvictusfc.co.uk)

Where possible, complaints should include:

- Name of complainant.
- Date and location of incident.
- Details of the concern.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Any supporting evidence available.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where there are welfare or safeguarding concerns.

Complaint Investigation Process

Upon receiving a complaint, the club will:

Stage 1: Initial Assessment

The Club Welfare Officer or designated committee member will:

- Acknowledge the complaint.
- Determine whether safeguarding concerns exist.
- Assess whether immediate action is required.

Stage 2: Investigation

The club may:

- Interview relevant individuals.
- Review written statements.
- Consider photographs, videos or electronic communications.
- Obtain evidence from witnesses.

Individuals subject to a complaint will be given a fair opportunity to respond.

Stage 3: Decision

Following investigation, the club will determine:

- Whether the complaint is upheld.
- Whether the complaint is partially upheld.
- Whether there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint.

A written outcome will be recorded.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially.

Information will only be shared with individuals who need it to properly investigate or manage the matter.

Deliberately malicious or knowingly false complaints may themselves become disciplinary matters.

Disciplinary Matters

Disciplinary action may be considered where an individual:

- Breaches club policies.
- Violates the club code of conduct.
- Engages in bullying or harassment.
- Uses abusive or threatening behaviour.
- Acts in a discriminatory manner.
- Brings the club into disrepute.
- Fails to follow safeguarding requirements.
- Repeatedly behaves in a disruptive or inappropriate manner.

Immediate Suspension

The club reserves the right to impose a temporary suspension pending investigation where there is concern regarding:

- Safeguarding.
- Player welfare.
- Violence or threats of violence.
- Serious misconduct.
- Criminal allegations.
- Behaviour posing a risk to others.

Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Where misconduct is established, the club may apply one or more of the following sanctions.

Informal Resolution

- Verbal warning.
- Education and guidance.
- Restorative discussion.
- Mediation.

Formal Action

- Written warning.
- Final written warning.
- Behaviour agreement.

- Removal from specific activities.
- Temporary suspension.

Serious Misconduct

- Removal from coaching or volunteer duties.
- Permanent exclusion from the club.
- Referral to the County FA.
- Referral to The Football Association.
- Referral to statutory agencies or police where necessary.

The severity of the sanction will reflect:

- The seriousness of the misconduct.
- Any safeguarding implications.
- Previous conduct history.
- Impact on participants and the club.

Conduct Expectations

The following behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Physical or verbal abuse.
- Intimidation.
- Discrimination.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or disability-related abuse.
- Bullying.
- Harassment.
- Excessive shouting at players, officials or volunteers.
- Inappropriate social media use.
- Alcohol or drug misuse during club activities.
- Retaliation against anyone making a complaint.

Appeals Process

Any individual subject to disciplinary action may appeal within 14 days of the decision.

Appeals must:

- Be submitted in writing.
- State the grounds for appeal.
- Provide any additional evidence where applicable.

Appeals may be considered on the basis of:

- New evidence.
- Procedural error.
- Unreasonable outcome.

The appeal will be reviewed by individuals not directly involved in the original decision where possible.

The appeal decision shall be final.

Record Keeping

The club will maintain secure records of:

- Complaints received.
- Investigation findings.
- Disciplinary actions taken.
- Appeals and outcomes.

Records will be stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements.