



Document Title: COMPLAINTS POLICY
Date: SEPTEMBER 2024

POLICY

WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB aims to provide an inclusive and supportive environment in which people of all ages are offered a quality volleyball experience that is fun, equitable, safe, welcoming, and child friendly.

- It is our goal for all members to learn a love for the sport of volleyball and appreciate the positive contribution it can make in their lives and to that of their community.
- We aim to help all members, whether players, coaches or officials, to reach their full potential by providing experiences and opportunities at all levels from local through to regional and national standard. We will support the development of volleyball within the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and East Dorset areas, Dorset County, the Southwest region and nationally.
- Wessex Volleyball Club expects all members to contribute to the ethos and reputation of the Club through high levels of manners, respect and sporting behaviour.

The junior part of the Club provides opportunities for young people between the ages of 8 and 18 years to receive coaching and competition in events ranging from local mini volleyball tournaments to National Cup to senior volleyball for those ready for that level. All coaching is by qualified coaches who have been screened (DBS) for their suitability for working with young people and vulnerable adults.

The aim of our complaints policy is to provide a process for Club members and/or volunteers to follow for managing disputes, grievances and complaints and to help the Club communicate expectations to Club members and/or volunteers.

WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB is responsible for setting and maintaining the standards of delivery for members and volunteers. The Club is committed to dealing with any complaint equitably, comprehensively and in a timely manner.

Please refer to the Grievance and Disciplinary process, and safeguarding policies to determine if you need to report a concern or raise a complaint.



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Dealing with General Complaints

The emphasis of the general complaints procedures of WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB will be on the early resolution of problems with minimum disruption to members or volunteers.

- All complaints will be dealt with sympathetically, fairly and honestly.
- Responses to complaints will be as full and detailed as possible.
- If WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB, its volunteers, members or usual processes are found to be at fault, that will be acknowledged and the complainant will be informed of any future action to be taken to prevent similar problems occurring again.

1. General Complaints

A general complaint that is not linked in any way to an action that might be associated with a criminal, disciplinary, anti-doping or safeguarding offence is defined as:

- an expression of dissatisfaction about an action (or inaction) or decision (or policy) of WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB, or by one of its officers, or members or other volunteers acting in any capacity on behalf of the Club.
- a complaint may initially be made verbally, the complainant will be asked to follow it up in writing in all cases via e-mail.

A person making a complaint is usually referred to as “the complainant”. Complaints can come from any sphere of activities. They may come from a member, another organisation, a parent/guardian or a member of the general public. Irrespective of where the complaint originates this standard process should be used.

2. Who will deal with complaints

In all cases the complaint will be directed to the most appropriate person:

Person/body against whom the complaint is made	Initial response	Response to the Complaint	Additional/subsequent response if complaint not satisfied
WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB or one or more of our named Officers.	Standard email confirming receipt of the complaint and name of person to whom the complaint	Welfare Officer	Chair or Acting Chair of the Board
Chair or Acting Chair of the Board		Welfare Officer	Secretary
Welfare Officer		Chair or Acting Chair of the Board	Secretary



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Member	has been referred	Welfare Officer, if needed member's coach	Chair or Acting Chair of the Board, if needed member's coach
Person acting on behalf of WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB as a volunteer e.g. coach, tournament official, committee member		Welfare Officer, if needed member's coach	The Board member responsible for the relevant area of work e.g. performance, development, events

3. Process

All general complaints will be acknowledged in writing by letter or email usually within 3 working days/5 days of receipt. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant of the procedure that will be followed in dealing with the matter and if possible the likely timescale for resolution. A standard initial response format should be used.

The person receiving the complaint will either deal with it themselves or pass it to the appropriate person to deal with, as shown above.

The person dealing with the complaint will:

- Determine the facts of the matter as required, the actions to determine the facts will vary on a case by case basis
- Keep the complainant informed of progress with regard to their complaint, particularly important if there is likely to be a delay in answering the complaint for any reason
- Write to the complainant answering their concerns and giving explanation(s) where appropriate within 10 working days/14 calendar days unless a longer period is required in order to obtain information

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response the person who has dealt with the complaint will endeavour to resolve any further issues raised and will respond again in writing.

In the event that the complainant is still not satisfied the complaint will be referred to the subsequent responder as indicated in the table or their equivalent. Any subsequent correspondence will be dealt with within the same timescales.

The responder should not enter into lengthy and extended correspondence with the complainant once the original complaint and any subsequent substantive issues have been answered and/or resolved as far as WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB is concerned. The Welfare Officer, Chair, Acting Chair or Secretary as appropriate should bring the matter to a close, in the most amicable way possible, if they believe that nothing will be gained by either party through continuance of the discussions.



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It is good practice to keep a record of all complaints received as this may show a pattern either about a particular person or a particular way of working (this will be held and maintained by the Welfare Officer). If this is the case then a further action or a change in policy may be necessary.

4. Vexatious Complaints

A vexatious complainant is one who is raising a complaint contentiously, without reasonable grounds or with little merit or substance, and with the purpose of causing annoyance or disruption; or is pursuing a complaint to an unreasonable degree or after appropriate procedures have been followed and exhausted.

WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB expects its Board members, volunteers and Club members to be treated with courtesy and respect at all times and will protect them from unacceptable behaviour by complainants. Unacceptable behaviour may include:

- abusive, threatening or inappropriate language, either verbally or in writing;
- sending multiple emails, especially over a short timescale;
- making multiple calls / leaving multiple voicemails; or
- otherwise unreasonably pursuing a complaint

Examples of unreasonably persistent / vexatious complainants include

1. refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
2. refusing to follow the correct procedure at the correct level, for example not exhausting a processes before escalating;
3. refusing to accept that issues do not come within the complaints, disciplinary and grievance policies, despite having been provided with information about the scope of the policy
4. insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Club's policies or with good practice
5. making what appear to be groundless complaints about the person dealing with the complaint
6. making an unreasonable number of contacts by any means in relation to a specific complaint or complaints;
7. making persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of volunteers and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant
8. raising numerous subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process;
9. refusing to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion and attempting to escalate it.



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Process for declaring a complaint to be vexatious

If the Board is concerned about a complaint potentially being vexatious, the matter should be referred, up to Volleyball England with a note explaining the member's concerns and attaching any relevant emails/documents.

The Board should consider the matter including all the documents and decide whether the complaint comes within the above definition of vexatious. Where the Board has decided that a complaint is vexatious, the course of action will be as follows:

1. the Board will record the decision in writing giving brief reasons;
2. the Board will contact the complainant in writing via email to inform them that a decision has been taken that this procedure will apply to their complaint henceforth and enclosing a copy of this policy. The email will set out the preferred method of communication for all parties involved and the way the matter will be dealt with going forward;
4. once the email has been sent, contact with the complainant will be restricted to specific individuals and by specific method/s, usually via email;
5. where the policies have been exhausted, further correspondence will be acknowledged but not answered;
6. in extreme circumstances it may be necessary to instruct external lawyers to deter the individual from further contact;
7. the Club reserve the right to refuse entry at training or matches, and/or renewal of membership to any member/volunteer/parent or member of the public who has been declared to be vexatious.

5. Volleyball England

Where the policies of WESSEX VOLLEYBALL CLUB are not detailed or explicit enough the Club shall revert to the advice and policies of Volleyball England.



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