

ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION LTD – GUIDELINES FOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR CLUBS

Club Complaints Procedure

Many clubs will already have in place codes of conduct for players, parents/carers, coaches and officials – for more information see the section in the ETTA's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines or on the ETTA website (www.etta.co.uk). However, Codes of Conduct can only be effective if there is a disciplinary process to support them. It is essential that the club is fair and consistent and at all times.

The following are some options that might be considered as sanctions:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Exclusion from specified number of training sessions
- Exclusion from club trips and/or competitions.

Initially look at instigating one sanction, preferably a fairly light one, and then add to it as appropriate. An example might be in the case of bad behaviour or poor practice that a verbal warning is given, if there is no improvement then a written warning can be given then if there is still no change excluding the person from the club or activities for a period of time could be the next step. Be aware that once a sanction has been imposed on a person it is difficult to reverse so better to have a progressive process in place.

Having a complaints process

Writing and adopting clear Codes of Conducts and advertising the ethos of your club is key to limiting the number of potential complaints. If everyone involved with table tennis and your club knows the expectation from them with regard to their conduct both on and off the table, in addition to their responsibility as an individual towards everyone involved with our sport complaints can be dealt with simply and effectively. Initially it may be a case for just referring the individual to the ETTA's and the club's Codes of conduct.

If the complaint cannot be dealt with in this way then the following processes could be implemented:

- If the complaint is to do with child protection then it should be submitted to the Club/League Welfare Officer or directly to the ETTA's Child Protection Officer where appropriate guidance will be given
- If the complaint is to do with technical issues then the club/league coach could be involved
- For all other complaints then they could be directed towards the club/league chairman
- Similarly to the progression of sanctions the way complaints are handled could initially be verbally, then in writing
- Once a complaint has been received and dealt with then there should also be a clear appeals process which could be with the club/league or via the ETTA's formal process

The whole process should be formally written and adopted by the club/league and available on the club/league's website, placed in any handbook and/or displayed on a noticeboard so that every member or visitor can see and access the information.

Clubs and leagues should also be aware that the ETTA has a formal disciplinary process which is included in the ETTA's Rules Book, a copy of which can be obtained by from the Hastings Office or on the ETTA website.

Sample Club/League Complaints Procedure

In the event that any member feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way or that the Club/League Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below:

1. If the matter is a child protection issue or involves anyone aged under 18 years it should be reported to the club/league welfare officer or the ETTA's Child Protection Officer (*insert contact details*). Sample incident report forms for any child protection issues are available on the ETTA's website.
2. For all other complaints the matter should be referred to the club/league chairman (*enter contact details or other club/league officer to whom the referral should be made*). The report should include:
 - i) Details of the incident
 - ii) The date and time the incident occurred
 - iii) Names of any witnesses or people present at the time of the incident
 - iv) Statements from any witnesses
3. The club/league chairman (or other designated officer) will refer the information either to the club/league management committee or to the club/league disciplinary panel if in place. The designated committee will:
 - i) Treat every report as confidential
 - ii) Not discuss any matters with anyone outside of the committee other than to request expert advice
 - iii) Declare immediately if they have a conflict of interest
 - iv) Treat each reported incident fairly and equitably
4. The club/league management or disciplinary committee will have the power to:
 - i) Issue a verbal warning as to future conduct
 - ii) Issue a written warning as to future conduct
 - iii) Suspend from activities or membership for a period of time
 - iv) Remove/expel from the club/league

For more information on reporting and outcomes of child protection issues please refer to the ETTA's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines – copies can be downloaded from the ETTA's website or from the headquarters office:

English Table Tennis Association,
Queensbury House,
Havelock Road,
Hastings,
TN34 1HF.