



Safeguarding Complaints Procedure

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Introduction

The Premier League takes complaints about our work in all aspects of safeguarding seriously. We are committed to dealing with safeguarding complaints equitably, comprehensively and in a timely manner.

This Procedure will be periodically reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.

Scope

This Procedure outlines the steps to be taken by anyone wishing to raise a safeguarding complaint and how we respond to such complaints.

A safeguarding complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about how the Premier League or one of its member Clubs has dealt with a safeguarding issue. These complaints typically arise when an individual believes there has been a failure in effectively implementing relevant safeguarding procedures or they perceive the response to a safeguarding issue as inadequate.

This Procedure **cannot** be used to:

Report safeguarding concerns	Safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the relevant organisation’s safeguarding policies and procedures. Visit our website for further information: https://www.premierleague.com/en/about/safeguarding/safeguarding-getting-advice-and-reporting-concerns In an emergency or if you consider someone is at risk of immediate harm, call 999.
Raise a complaint about a Club before exhausting its complaints procedures	If you are unable to resolve a complaint through informal discussions, the Club’s complaints procedures should be followed. Should you remain dissatisfied after exhausting the Club’s procedures, you have the option to escalate your complaint to the Premier League for consideration.

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Request termination of an Academy Player's registration		
See Premier League Youth Development Rules relating to termination of registration: https://www.premierleague.com/en/about/governance		
Where an application to terminate a registration is based on the same issue(s) that form part of a formal safeguarding complaint submitted to the Premier League, the safeguarding complaint may need to be investigated before a decision regarding the academy player's registration can be made.		
If you have a query about the Youth Development Rules, please contact our Player Registrations Department by emailing: YouthRegistrations@premierleague.com .		
For independent advice, you can contact the PFA Independent Youth Advisory Service: https://www.thepfa.com/players/academy-players-andparents/pfa-independent-advisory-service		
The Youth Development Rules are in place to protect all stakeholders and uphold the highest standards of integrity and academy player welfare. If you have concerns about any alleged breaches of these Rules, you can report them confidentially to us by emailing: reporting@premierleague.com .		
Resolve employee workplace grievances		
The relevant organisation's employee grievance policies and procedures should be followed in these cases.		
The Acas helpline offers free, impartial advice on workplace rights: https://www.acas.org.uk/contact		
Resolving matters for which there is an alternative procedure		
We have discretion to not accept complaints under the Procedure if there is a more appropriate dispute resolution or other process available.		

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Safeguarding governance in football

The FA

The FA sets the safeguarding policy and regulatory framework across football in England.

Visit The FA's website for further information:
<https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding>

The Premier League

The Premier League is the governing body of the Premier League football competition with responsibility for the organisation and regulation of the League, through the application of its rules to Clubs and their officials. These rules include the safeguarding measures which Clubs are required to adopt.

The Premier League has a dual role in supporting Clubs with the implementation of their safeguarding arrangements, and in monitoring and evaluating the adequacy of each Club's safeguarding procedures and practices. Additionally, the Premier League has its own safeguarding policies and procedures which underpin its central activities.

Our Safeguarding Team can be contacted by emailing safeguarding@premierleague.com or by calling 0208 157 9000.

Visit our website for further information:
<https://www.premierleague.com/en/about/safeguarding>

Privacy Policy: <https://www.premierleague.com/en/privacy-policy>

Clubs

Clubs are required to implement safeguarding procedures and practices consistent with football authority regulations, relevant legislation and statutory guidance. Club compliance with our safeguarding Rules is subject to regular independent scrutiny.

If you are or your child is engaged in a Club activity, you can contact their Safeguarding Team for advice or to raise a concern.

Follow this link to get in touch with your Club's Safeguarding Team:
<https://www.premierleague.com/en/about/safeguarding/safeguarding-getting-advice-and-reporting-concerns>

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Making a safeguarding complaint

Informal resolution

It is in the best interest of all parties to promptly resolve safeguarding complaints. Many issues can be resolved informally, avoiding the need to resort to formal procedures.

We will aim to address safeguarding complaints through informal means in the first instance. This may involve a telephone conversation or arranging a meeting to discuss the matter.

Formal complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of informal attempts to resolve the issue, or if you would prefer to proceed directly to a raising a formal safeguarding complaint, you should do so in writing by emailing safeguarding@premierleague.com.

Complainants are asked to:

- raise their complaint as soon as possible;
- treat our staff with respect;
- clearly articulate the issue and specify how they would like it to be resolved;
- provide all information and supporting evidence they wish to be considered in our response to the complaint;
- cooperate with the process and refrain from excessive or unnecessary contact while a complaint is under review; and
- respect the confidentiality of the process and recognise the right of all parties to privacy and respect for their sensitive personal data.

Anonymous complaints

If a complaint is raised anonymously, it will be reviewed to the extent possible. However, anonymous complaints may affect our ability to investigate and respond effectively.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

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How we respond to safeguarding complaints

Upon receipt for a formal safeguarding complaint, we will:

- acknowledge receipt within two working days;
- ensure all safeguarding risks have been considered and mitigated as appropriate;
- review details of the complaint and consider whether the issues raised fall within the scope of this procedure; and
- consider whether implementing this Procedure would hinder any safeguarding investigation or other proceedings.

Investigation

After accepting a complaint under this Procedure, we will assign a lead person to investigate the complaint. This individual will have no prior involvement in the complaint or related circumstances.

We will engage with the complainant to clarify the issues raised and desired outcome, and to mutually agree the scope of the complaint in writing. Additional details may be requested from the complainant to ensure we fully understand the issues raised.

The investigation will commence upon written agreement on the complaint’s scope.

Timescales

We will aim to provide a full response within six weeks of agreeing the complaint’s scope, however, complaints that are complex, unclear or multifaceted may require additional time for thorough review. If we anticipate a delay beyond the six-week timeframe, we will inform the complainant of the reason for the delay and provide an estimated timeline for a response. Additionally, we will ensure that regular updates are provided throughout the process.

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Outcome

Complainants will be provided with a formal written response setting out our findings and action taken and/or to be taken in response to the safeguarding complaint.

All action taken in response to a safeguarding complaint will be appropriate and proportionate. The action taken in response to a safeguarding complaint can include any combination of remedies, for example:

Safeguarding complaints made against the Premier League	Safeguarding complaints made against a Club
• Issuing an apology and/or explanation • Using identified learning to review our procedures and practices • Providing training	• Overseeing Club action to improve procedures and practices informed by learning/findings • Providing training • Facilitating a mediation meeting • Sanctioning a Club if our Rules have been breached

Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary or other action involving a member of Premier League or Club staff as a result of a complaint. Complainants are entitled to be informed that the matter is being dealt with appropriately, but they will not receive any detail about the outcome in such circumstances.

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Escalating a safeguarding complaint

If a complainant believes their safeguarding complaint has not been adequately addressed, they may request that the complaint be escalated for further review.

A safeguarding complaint can be escalated for review if there is evidence that this Procedure was not properly followed, if new information comes to light that was not available during the original investigation and could affect the outcome, or if the decision is inconsistent with the available evidence. Any appeal must clearly state the grounds for review and include supporting evidence where available.

Complainants should email safeguarding@premierleague.com within 28 days indicating their intention to escalate the safeguarding complaint and clearly articulate the reasons for doing so.

Upon receipt of a request to escalate a safeguarding complaint, we will acknowledge receipt within two working days.

The safeguarding complaint will then be reviewed by a more senior member of staff. This person will decide whether to uphold the complaint in full, uphold it in part, or dismiss it. The complainant will be notified of the decision in writing within 28 days. This decision marks the end of our involvement in responding to a safeguarding complaint.

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If a complainant pursues a complaint in an unreasonable manner, we may:

- request a telephone call or a meeting to discuss the issue;
- limit or decline contact from the complainant until an outcome is reached; and/or
- in extreme cases, notify them that we will not progress the complaint along with our reasons.

If a complainant’s case has been closed but they continue to pursue the same issue, we may decide that further communication on the matter is unwarranted. In such cases, the complainant will be informed that their complaint is considered unreasonable. While all correspondence will be reviewed, unless new evidence emerges that could affect our position, further communications will be recorded but may not be acknowledged.

If an individual has made a complaint deemed unreasonable, we will not assume that any future complaints will be handled in the same way. Any new complaint on a different matter will be considered on its own merits.

Below are non-exhaustive actions and behaviours that may be deemed unreasonable:

- Threatening or abusive communication or conduct
- Refusing to specify or agree upon the scope of a complaint
- Pursuing an unrealistic outcome
- Knowingly providing false information
- Failing to cooperate with this Procedure while still seeking resolution
- Refusing to accept that certain issues fall outside the scope of this Procedure
- Attempting to alter the scope of a complaint during the investigation
- Recording meetings or conversations without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved
- Overburdening our staff with excessive, unnecessary contact
- Persistently contacting the Premier League through multiple channels about the same issue
- Failing to respect confidentiality, such as publishing confidential or sensitive personal data on social media or other public forums
- Submitting repeated complaints about the same issue after the process has concluded, with invalid additions or variations that the complainant insists constitute a ‘new’ complaint



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