



Blaydon Harrier and Athletics Club

Grievance, Disciplinary and Appeals Policy

1. Purpose and Principles

This Policy sets out Blaydon Harrier and Athletics Club's (the Club's) approach to:

- raising and resolving grievances;
- dealing with complaints of misconduct through a fair disciplinary process; and
- managing appeals against disciplinary decisions.

The Policy combines and replaces previous standalone documents relating to grievance, discipline, hearings and appeals. It is designed to ensure that all matters are dealt with promptly, fairly, consistently and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all complaints or disputes involving:

- Club members;
- Club officers;
- volunteers acting on behalf of the Club; and
- conduct occurring at, or in connection with, Club activities.

Matters involving safeguarding concerns or serious misconduct may fall outside this Policy and be referred directly to England Athletics (EA), UK Athletics (UKA) or other appropriate authorities.

3. Safeguarding

All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of children or vulnerable adults will:

- be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- be managed in accordance with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and the safeguarding procedures of England Athletics.

The Club's Lead Welfare Officer is the lead officer for safeguarding matters. Disciplinary procedures under this Policy may be suspended or adapted where safeguarding processes take precedence.

4. Grievances and Complaints

4.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, members are encouraged to resolve concerns informally through discussion or mediation, provided this is safe and suitable for the nature of the issue.

4.2 Formal Complaints

All formal complaints relating to misconduct must:

- be submitted in writing; and
- set out specific details and evidence of the alleged misconduct.

Complaints should be sent to:

- the Club Secretary; or
- the Lead Welfare Officer, where the complaint concerns the Club Secretary.

Members may also report concerns directly to the Club Secretary or Lead Welfare Officer via the Club's *Report an Incident or Concern* page on the Club website.

5. Disciplinary Procedure

5.1 Receipt of Complaint

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Club Secretary may take such advice as deemed appropriate.

5.2 Notification and Response

The Club Secretary will write to the member(s) concerned:

- outlining the allegations; and
- inviting a written response within 14 calendar days.

5.3 Initial Assessment

Following receipt of responses, the Club Secretary will decide whether:

- the complaint is frivolous or unfounded (and should be dismissed); or
- the complaint is sufficiently evidenced to proceed.

If the matter proceeds, a Disciplinary Panel of three impartial Club members will be appointed. Panel members must have no direct or indirect interest in the case.

5.4 Disciplinary Hearing

The Disciplinary Panel will:

- consider written submissions and evidence;
- make any reasonable further enquiries;
- offer the member(s) concerned a reasonable opportunity to be heard; and
- allow the member(s) to be accompanied by a supporter (who may be a legal representative).

The Panel may impose a temporary suspension pending investigation. Such suspension is without prejudice to the final outcome.

The hearing will:

- be conducted in private;
- apply the principles of natural justice; and

- determine matters on the balance of probabilities.

Possible Outcomes and Sanctions

If misconduct is established, the Panel may:

- take no further action;
- issue a formal warning;
- impose suspension from Club activities or roles (definite or indefinite);
- terminate membership;
- require education or training; and/or
- recommend action to EA or UKA where appropriate.

Sanctions may be combined as appropriate.

Notification of Outcome

All parties will receive a written decision, including reasons and any sanctions, within 7 calendar days of the decision.

6. Serious Misconduct

Allegations of serious misconduct, including (but not limited to):

- safeguarding breaches;
- physical violence;
- theft, fraud or dishonesty;
- doping violations;
- serious breaches of health and safety; or
- conduct likely to bring the sport or the Club into disrepute

May be referred directly to England Athletics or other relevant bodies and dealt with under their disciplinary procedures.

7. Appeals Process

7.1 Right of Appeal

The Complainant and/or the Accused may appeal the decision of a Disciplinary Panel.

7.2 Notice of Appeal

A written Notice of Appeal must be submitted to the Club Secretary within 7 calendar days of receiving the decision. The Notice must clearly state the grounds of appeal.

The Club Secretary will:

- acknowledge the appeal within 7 calendar days; and
- determine whether sufficient grounds exist for the appeal to proceed.

7.3 Appeal Panel

Where an appeal proceeds:

- an Appeal Panel of three impartial members will be appointed;
- panel members must not have been involved in the original decision; and
- parties may object to the composition of the Panel, with reasons, within 7 calendar days of being notified.

7.4 Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Panel will:

- decide whether the appeal proceeds by written submissions or oral hearing;
- set timescales and procedural directions; and
- conduct hearings in private unless otherwise agreed.

7.5 Powers of the Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel may:

- confirm the original decision;
- quash the decision;
- order a rehearing;
- increase or reduce the sanction.

The Appeal Panel will issue a written decision, with reasons, within 14 calendar days. Its decision is final.

8. Records and Confidentiality

All disciplinary and appeal records will be kept confidential.

Records will be retained for six years, after which they will be securely destroyed.

9. Notification to England Athletics and UK Athletics

Where appropriate, and once appeal rights are exhausted:

- decisions and sanctions may be notified to EA and/or UKA;
- disclosures will only be made where necessary for compliance, safety or regulatory reasons.

10. Cooperation and Legal Advice

All parties are expected to cooperate fully. Where cooperation is withheld, the Club may proceed based on available evidence.

The Club Secretary may act in accordance with legal advice obtained directly or via England Athletics' affiliated member services.

11. Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains compliant with Club rules and governing body requirements.