



Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness Complaints Policy

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness.

This is the policy the club will follow if your complaint is about someone's conduct or behaviour. This could be because you think that someone has behaved in a way that is unsafe, unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating. It could be because someone has broken important rules or policies.

Values and principles

You have the right to complain: we take complaints seriously. You should not be harassed, bullied or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

Our policy is based on:

Equality: you should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation or political persuasion.

Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.

Safety and welfare take priority: we will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare. Issues affecting children will be treated very seriously.

Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible.

Sometimes we have to discuss complaints with other organisations. If we are worried about a risk to a person or to the public, we might need to pass on our concerns to the right authorities. If necessary, we will get advice from other organisations such as the Police, Social Services or the LTA.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint

- To make sure everyone at Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness.

Where Might Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

The person who conducts the investigation into the complaint will place the paperwork into a brown envelope, seal it, write their name in capitals across the sealed flap and cover this with sellotape. The envelope will then be placed in the appropriate file.

Once all the recommendations have been carried out and the complaint is no longer relevant, the paperwork will be destroyed after a period of 3 months.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Chairperson and Board of Directors.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed regularly and updated as required.

September 2020



Complaints Procedure of Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness

How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, it is often best to start by having a conversation with someone at the club. There are suggestions below about who to speak to. They may be able to help to resolve your problem. Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to any of Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness directors or committee members.

If your complaint needs looking into further, you will normally be asked to put your complaint in writing. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

Who to contact to make a complaint?

- Complaints will usually be handled by senior members of the Committee.
- Any of the coaches or other staff can also tell you how to make a complaint.
- Welfare Officer: if you are a child or young person or are worried about the safety or welfare of a child or young person
- Anyone else involved at the club that you trust

Written complaints may be sent to any member of the Board of Directors or the website enquiry and will be passed on to the relevant members of the board to deal with. This will generally be the Chairperson and another member of the Committee as requested and agreed by the Chairperson at the time of the complaint and based on the initial knowledge of the complaint. If it is not appropriate for the Chairperson to deal with the complaint then two members of the Committee will be asked to deal with it.

Receiving Complaints

A complaint must be made within 3 months of the situation that has given rise to the complaint. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should do the following:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Club
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

What we will do to investigate

We will give an initial response to your complaint within 5 working days. If the matter is urgent, we will respond more quickly. We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means we will discuss the complaint with all of the relevant people. We will try to gather any information that may be relevant to your complaint.

Sometimes, we will ask to show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. This is because we believe in fairness and openness. We will not share information if we think this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chairperson within 5 days.

On receiving the complaint, the Chairperson will record it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate appropriate persons to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 5 days. The acknowledgement should say who your point of contact will be for the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent after 2 weeks with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Committee level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board and the Chairperson.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who the point of contact will be for the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The person who receives Stage Two complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves, unless this would result in a conflict of interest, or may delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent after 2 weeks with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Committee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chairperson should not also have the Chairperson as the person leading a Stage Two review.

What are the possible outcomes or results of a complaint?

In many cases, we are able to resolve problems informally. This might include:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation or apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future
- If an informal resolution is not suitable, then a small number of senior Committee members will look at the information about the case. We will try to make sure that this does not include anyone directly involved with your complaint. They might decide to take the following action:
 - Formal disciplinary action under the club's rules
 - Formal disciplinary action against a member of staff
 - Changes in formal contracts or arrangements put in place by the club
 - a decision to refer the case to another organisation such as the LTA, Police, or Social Services
 - Closure of your complaint without action

Is there anyone else I can talk to?

Sometimes it can be useful to speak directly to someone outside the club if, for example:

- You need urgent advice about someone's safety or welfare
- You don't want to discuss the issue with someone at the club
- Your complaint is very serious
- Your complaint involves other organisations
- You need specialist advice

The LTA is able to give advice on a range of different complaints, and in some cases will handle the complaint directly. If you are worried about a child or young person's welfare, you can contact the following people:

- The Safeguarding Officer at Yorkshire Tennis
- The National LTA Safeguarding Department
- Childline, or the NSPCC advice line, local Social Services, Police

Questions or queries about this policy

If you have a general query about this complaints policy, you should speak to:

The Chairperson

c/o Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness

Miry Lane

Thongsbridge

HD9 7RY

01484 687160

theteam@thongsbridge.org

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints will be reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

September 2020