

1. Introduction

1.1 Bexley Tigers Basketball Club is committed to fostering a culture where it is safe and acceptable for staff, volunteers, and contractors to raise concerns about poor practices, misconduct, or safeguarding issues.

1.2 Individuals within our club may sometimes be the first to notice something that seems wrong. However, they may hesitate to voice concerns due to fear of disloyalty, harassment, or victimisation.

1.3 At Bexley Tigers, we aim to maintain the highest standards of openness, governance, accountability, and integrity. This policy provides a clear pathway for raising concerns confidentially and without fear of repercussions.

1.4 This policy aligns with the principles of the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, ensuring protection for individuals who report concerns in good faith.

2. Aims and Scope

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals to feel confident in raising serious concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Provide a clear process for reporting concerns and receiving feedback on any actions taken.
- Ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Outline how concerns can be pursued if the individual is dissatisfied with the response.

2.2 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors of Bexley Tigers Basketball Club. Concerns that can be raised include but are not limited to:

- Criminal activity or misconduct.
- Safeguarding concerns involving children or vulnerable adults.
- Serious breaches of club policies or procedures.
- Health and safety risks.
- Damage to the environment.

3. Safeguards

3.1 **Good Faith Reporting:** If you report concerns in good faith and with reasonable belief, you will not face any adverse consequences, regardless of whether the concern is later substantiated.

3.2 **Protection from Retaliation:** The club will not tolerate harassment, victimisation, or discrimination of any kind against individuals who raise concerns in good faith.

3.3 **Confidentiality:** Concerns will be treated in strict confidence. Your identity will not be disclosed without your consent, except where required by law or necessary for the investigation.

4. Reporting Concerns

4.1 Concerns can be reported verbally or in writing. Written reports should include:

- The background and history of the concern, including relevant dates.
- The reason you believe the issue is a concern.

4.2 If raising a concern verbally, the recipient of the information should document it promptly and accurately.

4.3 Concerns should be raised with your line manager, safeguarding officer, or another senior club official. If this is inappropriate due to the nature of the concern, you may escalate the issue directly to the Club Chairperson.

5. Anonymous Allegations

5.1 Anonymous concerns will be considered but may be more difficult to investigate due to the lack of identifiable evidence. The decision to investigate an anonymous report will depend on factors such as:

- The seriousness of the issue.
- The credibility of the concern.
- The likelihood of obtaining corroborating evidence.

6. Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

6.1 No action will be taken against individuals who raise concerns in good faith but are ultimately unsubstantiated.

6.2 If, however, a concern is raised maliciously, frivolously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual raising the false claim.

7. How the Club Will Respond

7.1 Once a concern is raised, the club will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern within two working days.
- Conduct an initial assessment to determine if further investigation is required.
- Decide on the appropriate course of action, which may include an internal review, referral to safeguarding authorities, or police involvement.

7.2 The individual raising the concern will be kept informed of the progress and outcomes, subject to confidentiality requirements.

8. Responsible Officer

8.1 The Club Chairperson has overall responsibility for maintaining and overseeing this policy. They will review the policy periodically to ensure its effectiveness.

9. Taking the Matter Further

9.1 If you feel that your concern has not been adequately addressed, you may escalate the matter to an external body. Ensure that you do not disclose confidential information without proper authority. External contacts include:

- Sport England
- Local Safeguarding Boards
- The Police
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Relevant regulatory bodies or voluntary organisations