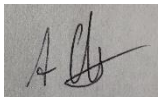
Kick-Off Sports Complaints Policy

Approved • Signature  Adam Clements

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Introduction to Kick-Off Sports Complaints Policy

Kick-Off Sports sets high standards in service delivery and welcomes feedback from individuals, users of our services, and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our services. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work. However, from time to time we may receive a complaint regarding the service we have delivered.

All alternative provisions must have a complaints procedure. These must meet the standards set out in schedule 1, part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014. Alternative Provisions should have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their practice and to any community facilities or services that the company provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of pupils who attend Kick-Off Sports. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

It is also based on guidance for schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE)

There are certain complaints which fall outside the remit of this complaints procedure, for example, staff grievances or disciplinary procedures.

Any third party providers offering community facilities or services through the academy premises, or using academy facilities, should have their own complaints procedure in place.

1 2. General Principles

At Kick-Off Sports we aim to encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible. We believe that handling, listening to and resolving complaints in a timely manner will contribute to continuous learning and improvement.

• This complaints policy and procedure is published on our website and is intended to be easily accessible and simple to understand and use.

• We always aim to be impartial and non-adversarial in addressing concerns and complaints.

• We aim to handle concerns and complaints swiftly, maintaining time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress.

• We aim to ensure a full and fair investigation and will use an independent person where necessary.
• We will respect people's desire for confidentiality.
• We will address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.

3. Definitions and Scope

The DFE guidance for schools on complaints procedures explains the differences between concerns raised and formal complaints. A concern is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought". The academy will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action". Kick-Off Sports intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally.

This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints. This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:
• Admissions
• Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
• Safeguarding matters
• Whistleblowing
• Staff grievances
• Staff discipline

4. Roles and responsibilities

With the object of solving problems quickly, simply, and fairly. It is hoped that the great majority of issues can be settled amicably at the First Stage, and that complaints will only 2 exceptionally reach the Second Stage. Staff of Kick-Off Sports will respond promptly to written complaints and will also expect clients to keep to an agreed timetable for pursuing a complaint. Constructive criticism, made through client questionnaire surveys or in discussion with staff, is always welcome as help towards raising service levels.

4.1 The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:
• Follow these procedures
• Co-operate with Kick-Off Sports throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
• Ask for assistance as needed
• Treat all those involved with respect
• Not publish details about the complaint on social media

4.2 The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. The individual appointed will be a manager within the company e.g. Operations Manager. They will:
• Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
• Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
• Prepare a comprehensive report to the Directors or HR Manager which includes the facts and

potential solutions

4.3 Complaints co-ordinator

Complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The Director, HR Manager or Manager
- Any other staff member providing administrative support.

The complaints co ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage of the procedure
- Makes sure the process runs smoothly liaising with all parties involved
- Be aware of any issues including: sharing third party information and any additional support needed by complainant e.g. interpretation support

4.4 Client

A client can be:

- Student
- Teacher
- Parent,
- Local Authority
- Charity
- Partner
- School

5. Overview

Kick-Off Sports has the intention to address all complaints as quickly as possible and with the minimum of formality. To achieve this, realistic and achievable timeframes will be set. Where there is a delay and further investigations are needed, new timeframes will be set and the complainant will receive the details of any new deadlines.

When investigating a complaint Kick-Off Sports will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- The complainants views on how they would like it put right

5.1 Initial Concerns

As highlighted Kick-Off Sports will always try to address concerns within the daily communications and operational aspects of the company. In taking this approach Kick-Off Sports hopes to limit the amount of concerns turning into complaints by addressing them at the earliest stage possible. In most cases, the AP tutor or manager will aim to resolve issues on the spot, including where apologies are needed.

5.2 Formal Procedures

If the complainant is not satisfied once the informal process has been followed then the formal complaints process will proceed. The stages of the formal complaints process are outlined in section 6 of this policy.

5.3 Investigating Complaints

Kick-Off Sports prefer that complainants submit all complaints in writing. Kick-Off Sports can provide alternative arrangements for those who cannot or do not feel comfortable raising complaints in writing for reasons such as learning difficulties or disability. Other options can include contacting

Kick-Off Sports via telephone and scheduling an appointment or raising a complaint through a third party or advocate. Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this policy. Considerations will be made if the anonymous complaint is raised due to fear of identification or an issue relating to child protection. At each stage, the investigation Kick-Off Sports staff member will:

- establish what has happened and who was involved
- clarify the nature of the complaint
- understand what the complainant feels should be put right during a meeting
- interview all parties, ensuring that complainants have the option to be accompanied should they wish
- keep factual notes
- conduct the interview in a fair manner with an open mind

5.4 Resolving Complaints

Kick-Off Sports will always have in mind ways in which all complaints can be resolved in whole or part. Kick-Off Sports recognises that in order to resolve a complaint fully it may need to offer:

- an apology
- an admission that the situation could have been handled better
- an assurance that the issue will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken and an assurance that they wont happen again
- a review of Kick-Off Sports policies as a point of learning

It is important that all complaints highlight what actions they feel will resolve a complaint at all stages of the process. Kick-Off Sports will try to resolve every complaint in a positive manner and will treat all complaints as a point of learning and improvement. An admission that a situation could have been handled better is not an admission of negligence on Kick-Off Sports behalf.

6. Stages of complaints

Kick-Off Sports recognises that complaints need to resolved as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Staff will be periodically given training and made aware of the procedures so that they know what to do when they receive a complaint. Kick-Off Sports sets out realistic, achievable timeframes for each stage of the complaint process. Kick-Off Sports also recognises that that there may be good reasons to why a complaint has not been raised earlier (e.g. gathering evidence to substantiate a complaint). In line with guidance from the EFSA, Kick-Off Sports sets out a three month timeframe for lodging a complaint, although there may be exceptional circumstances which could be consider to alter this.

Stage 1: Informal

- Complainants should raise concerns as soon as possible with either the relevant AP Tutor or Manager by letter, telephone or email
- Contact details of relevant Kick-Off Sports Managers will be given at the end of this policy. If complainants are unable to contact managers directly then they should contact: kickoffsports@aol.com
- Kick-Off Sports will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and aim to provide a response within 10 working days
- The informal stage may involve a meeting between complainant and either AP tutor or Managers
- If the complaint is not resolved informally it will move on to the next stage.

Stage 2: Formal

A formal complaint can be raised by using the form provided in this policy and either communication

via:
• Letter
• Email
• Telephone
• In person
• Or via a third party or advocate

Details provided in the complaint should be as thorough as possible. The complaint should include relevant dates, times, names of people present or witnesses, copies of any relevant documentation, and what the complainant feels should be the appropriate response.

The relevant Kick-Off Sports Manager will record the date the complaint was received and will acknowledge the complaint by either email or letter, within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will explain the complaints process briefly and provide a target date of when the complainant should receive a response, usually within 10 working days. If there is exceptional circumstances and the target response date cannot be met a letter should be written and received with 10 working days setting out the reason for delay and providing a revised target date.

The Kick-Off Sports Senior Management team, HR Manager or Director will then proceed to conduct an investigation. The appointed member of the management team dealing with the complaint will seek to meet/speak with the relevant people to establish the fact which could include complainant, staff and any other person.

Once the above process has concluded and fact have been established the person investigating will provide a written response and may request a meeting in person to ensure the matter is resolved.

Potential outcomes of complaint responses:
• complaint cannot be upheld due to insufficient evidence
• concern raised was not substantiated by evidence gathered
• the concern was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given around Kick-Off Sports action that has been taking to review processes. Details of the investigation and any disciplinary proceedings will not be released
• the matter has been investigated fully and processes have been followed which will remain confidential e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures have been followed The letter outlining the outcome of the investigation must be approved by the Kick-Off Sports Director and the Head of HR before it is sent to the complainant.

7. Persistent complaints
Unreasonable persistent complaints are where:
• knowingly provides false information
• changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
• has made the same complaint previously, and its already been resolved through Kick-Off Sports complaint procedures
• makes a complaint in an obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitive manner
• seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any purpose or value If the complainants behaviour is perceived as unreasonable at any time throughout the process the investigating manager has the right to:
• limit the amount of times a complainant can make contact

• assign a single point of contact
• ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf e.g. Citizens Advice
• put any other strategy in place as necessary

7.1 Stopping responding

Kick-Off Sports reserve the right to cease all correspondence if it is believed that:
• all reasonable steps have been taken to help address the complainants' concerns
• we believe the complaints intentions are unreasonable and are causing disruption and or inconvenience
• we have provided a clear written response and outlined the complainants options

7.2 Duplicate complaints

There may be circumstances where Kick-Off Sports receives the same complaint from a partner, family member or other individual that has already been through the complaints procedure. In these circumstances we will assess the complaint to see whether any aspects had not been previously considered and if there are any new aspects to consider.
• If there are no new factors to consider we will respond outlining that the complaint has already been investigated
• Direct them to the local authority if they are dissatisfied with Kick-Off Sports handling of the complaint

8. Learning Lessons

Kick-Off Sports will use all complaints to review any issues raised via the senior management team. Complaints will be reviewed in a confidential manner to ensure that any improvements to practice can be made and to prevent any similar issues recurring in the future.

9. Record keeping

Kick-Off Sports will:
• keep records of the whole complaints investigation, including all actions at all stages of the investigation until conclusion
• records will include copies of all letters, emails, notes relating to meetings and minutes from phone calls
• material will be held centrally and treated as confidential
• exceptions to this would be if the complainant or (someone acting on their behalf requests access to records through a freedom of information request (FOI) or through a subject to access request (SAR) under the terms of Data Protection Act

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Kick-Off Sports Office: kickoffsports@aol.com who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Pupils name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please provide details of the complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

Appendix 2: Complaints flowchart (check policy for timelines)

