



STOCKPORT COUNTY FOOTBALL CLUB

REPORTING CONCERNS POLICY



Introduction

Stockport County Academy has policies and procedures in place to ensure the highest standards of provision for students, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders. Our partnership with Other professional Organisations involves stringent processes of 'Quality Assurance' to meet important guidelines and promote excellence in all aspects. However, in the event of an issue or incident where concerns are raised, a complaint may be made.

1 Scope of Policy

1.1 This policy enables all people associated to the County Academy programmes to express concerns or dissatisfaction. We will work with all players, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders to:

- Enable people to raise complaints if they are dissatisfied with their involvement with County Academy.
- Enable people to enquire, question or appeal a decision.
- Attempt to reach an agreement at the earliest opportunity.
- Standardise and record any complaint to ensure openness and fairness.
- Escalate a complaint or appeal to relevant authorities and bodies where appropriate.
- Protect the interest of all associated with County Academy programmes; no service user bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably, regardless of the outcome.

1.2 In order to do this, County Academy will:

- Inform all players, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders of the Complaints Policy and its procedures. This policy will be available on the County Academy website.
- Record, track and validate all complaints and appeals. Any records will be kept for two years.
- Forward the complaint/appeal to the relevant persons and/or authorities if the complainant continues to feel dissatisfied or disadvantaged.

- Make every effort to protect the integrity of all those involved, and the County Academy programmes.
- Monitor appeals to inform quality assurance and policy reviews in all areas.

2 Key Principles

2.1 Monitoring and record keeping:

- The Complaints Policy is regularly monitored and reviewed annually, including a report submitted to the EFL if needed.
- Where the complaint is of a serious nature, the CEO of Stockport County will be informed.
- Records will be kept in relation to the nature of the complaint, in line with the County Academy Data Protection policy.
- Records will be kept for a minimum of two years.

2.2 Confidentiality:

- All records and communications will remain confidential in line with the County Academy Data Protection Policy. If the complaint requires disclosure and escalation to other organisations, this will be done in line with data procedures and policies.

3 Complaints Procedure

3.1 A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of someone's experience related to a County Academy programme and associated activities. Complaints can include experiences of participating in programmes offered and staff issues.

3.2 Where possible, County Academy will endeavour to resolve a complaint with a stage 1 'frontline resolution.' This will involve an issue being resolved through a discussion with the player, parent/carer, staff member or other to acknowledge and satisfy their concern, including the outcome being recorded.

3.3 If an investigation is required to resolve a complaint, the complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and a decision made within 30 working days.

3.4 Separate procedures exist for allegations made against staff members (Safeguarding Policy) and for disciplinary issues (Disciplinary Policy). The processes for dealing with issues of this nature will be undertaken according to the relevant policy.

3.5 If any person has a complaint or grievance about any matter, they are encouraged to raise the matter at an early stage with an appropriate member of staff. If the matter is not resolved on the frontline, the complainant may report the complaint to the Academy Operations Manager who will progress the issue appropriately depending on its nature.

3.6 County Academy advise the following procedures:

- Staff are encouraged to approach the person/people in question for an informal discussion and inform their line manager of the details of the discussion.
- Where a complaint includes an allegation against staff, County Academy will adhere to their 'Safeguarding Policy' and ensure appropriate staff members are involved in dealing with the complaint.
- People are encouraged to speak with a senior member of staff and write a letter stating the reasons for concern to the Academy Operations Manager.
- The letter will be managed and discussed by senior staff and a written response will be made within 30 working days.

4 Appeals Procedure

4.1 An appeal is a formal request that County Academy undertake an investigation to arrive at a decision/outcome in relation to the complaint raised.

4.2 If someone is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint and considers themselves to have grounds, they can make a formal appeal. To make an appeal, they must write to the Academy Operations Manager within 30 days of receiving the response to their query.

4.3 The letter should explain the grounds for appeal and have attached, any information or correspondence relevant to the purpose of the appeal.

4.4 Where a member of staff is appealing, the HR staff will provide advice to both County Academy and the staff member to resolve all matters fairly.

4.5 County Academy will acknowledge an appeal in writing within seven days of receipt. The Academy Operations Manager will consider the appeal in consultation with the Academy Manager to establish:

- Whether there are grounds for appeal.
- Whether the decision was taken fairly and correctly in line with County Academy's policies and procedures.
- Whether the appropriate information was considered and communicated.
- Whether any further action is necessary to fairly resolve the issue.

5 Rights and Responsibilities

5.1 County Academy will:

- Make sure all the points raised are fully and impartially considered, with no potential conflict of interest.
- Explain the outcome clearly and ensure all stakeholders involved know what further steps are open to them.
- Respect confidentiality by disclosing only the information that is necessary to consider and respond to an appeal to the necessary recipients.
- Following the outcome of an appeal, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be advised of their right to contact the Academy Manager to review the case with the board of

