



Straffan AFC Complaints Procedure

Aligned with FAI Child Safeguarding Policies

1. Introduction

Straffan AFC is committed to ensuring the highest standards of care and protection for children involved in our club. We strive to maintain an environment where players, coaches, volunteers, and parents feel safe, valued, and respected.

This complaints procedure is developed in line with the **FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy**, **Children First: National Guidance**, and the **Children First Act 2015**.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints or concerns relating to:

- The safety, welfare, or well-being of a child
 - Suspected breaches of child safeguarding policies
 - The conduct of coaches, volunteers, officials, or other persons involved with the club
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3. Principles

- **Best interest of the child is paramount**

- All complaints are treated seriously and fairly
 - Confidentiality is respected (except where information must be shared for safeguarding reasons)
 - Complaints will be resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible
 - The right to be heard and to respond is respected for all parties
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4. Types of Complaints

Minor Breaches or Grievances:

e.g., coaching decisions, team selection, or communication breakdowns.

Serious Breaches:

e.g., bullying, discriminatory behavior, or persistent misconduct.

Child Welfare Concerns:

e.g., emotional or physical abuse, neglect, or any concerns as defined by **Children First**.

5. Procedure for Minor or General Complaints

1. **Informal Resolution (if appropriate):**

- Complainant is encouraged to speak directly to the person involved.
- If unresolved, or if not appropriate, proceed to formal step.

2. **Formal Complaint to Club Children's Officer (CCO):**

- Submit complaint in writing (email or letter) to the **Club Children's Officer**.
- Include relevant details: date, time, individuals involved, nature of the complaint.

3. **CCO Review:**

- CCO may liaise with the Club Chairperson or committee members as appropriate.

- Both parties may be invited to a meeting for clarification.
- Resolution and outcome communicated to complainant and respondent.

4. **Appeal:**

- If unsatisfied, the complainant may submit an appeal in writing to the **Club Committee**.
- A final decision will be made, and parties informed in writing.

6. Procedure for Child Welfare Concerns

If a concern involves the **safety or welfare of a child**, it must be referred **immediately** to the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** and may also be reported to:

- **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)**
- **An Garda Síochána**, if there is an immediate risk

Steps:

1. **Recognise and Record:**

- Record concern factually (time, date, observations, child's words, etc.)

2. **Report to Club DLP:**

- The DLP assesses whether the concern meets the threshold for referral.
- If yes, the DLP makes a report to **Tusla** using the **Child Protection and Welfare Report Form**.
- If urgent, contact **Gardaí**.

3. **Inform FAI National Children's Officer:**

- The DLP will inform the FAI of any serious safeguarding concern.

Note: It is not the role of the club to investigate suspected child abuse.

7. Confidentiality

All complaints and safeguarding matters will be handled in strict confidence, with information shared on a need-to-know basis only. Records will be securely stored in line with GDPR and club policy.

8. Support

Straffan AFC will offer support to those involved in complaints, including children, parents, and volunteers. This may include pastoral support, mediation, or referrals to external services.

9. Contacts

- **Club Children's Officer (CCO):** Laura McCusker and Orla Fallon
 - **Designated Liaison Person (DLP):** [Insert Name, Email, Phone]
 - **FAI Child Welfare Officer:** safeguarding@fai.ie
 - **Tusla:** www.tusla.ie | 0818 776 315
 - **Garda Confidential Line:** 1800 666 111
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10. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually or after any serious incident. Updated versions will be circulated to all members and published on the club website.