

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Active Starz  
Multi-sport Wraparound Sessions for Primary School Children

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Active Starz is committed to providing high-quality, safe and welcoming services. We welcome feedback and take all concerns seriously. This procedure sets out how parents, carers and children can raise complaints and how we will respond.

Principles

- All complaints are taken seriously and treated fairly
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout
- No retaliation against those who complain
- Speedy, transparent resolution
- Clear communication at each stage
- Learning from complaints to improve services

### 2. WHAT CAN BE COMPLAINED ABOUT

Examples of Complaints

- Quality of coaching or teaching
- Staff conduct or professionalism
- Health and safety concerns
- Bullying or inclusion issues
- Billing or payment issues
- Breach of policies
- Handling of safeguarding concerns
- Communication with parents
- Discrimination or unfair treatment

What Cannot Be Complained About

- Individual attendance or behaviour decisions (addressed separately)
- Staff recruitment decisions
- Exclusion from sessions (addressed through disciplinary procedure)
- Formal investigations into safeguarding concerns (separate procedure applies)

### 3. INFORMAL RESOLUTION (STAGE 1)

First Point of Contact

Most complaints can be resolved informally and quickly.

Parents should:

1. Speak to the session leader or coach as soon as possible after the incident
2. Explain the concern clearly – What happened? When? Who was involved?
3. Listen to their response – There may be a misunderstanding or context you're not aware of
4. Suggest a solution – What would resolve the issue?

#### Staff Response

##### Staff should:

- Listen carefully without becoming defensive
- Acknowledge the concern and thank them for raising it
- Explain their perspective or actions
- Take notes if necessary
- Offer an apology if appropriate
- Agree on next steps and any actions to be taken
- Confirm any agreed resolution in writing if complex
- Follow up within 5 working days to confirm resolution

#### Timeline

- Informal complaints should be resolved within 5 working days
- If resolved, no further action needed
- If not resolved, move to Stage 2

## **4. FORMAL COMPLAINT (STAGE 2)**

#### When to Escalate

If the informal resolution does not resolve the concern or if the issue is serious, parents may escalate to a formal complaint.

#### Making a Formal Complaint

Submit to the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Contact: [Name]

Email: [Email address]

Phone: [Phone number]

By: Written or verbal (we will document verbal complaints)

#### Complaint Information Required

Provide as much detail as possible:

- What happened – Clear description of incident
- When it happened – Specific date(s) and time(s)
- Where it happened – Location/setting
- Who was involved – Names of staff and/or children
- Impact – How did this affect your child/family?
- Previous action – What informal steps have you taken?
- Desired outcome – How would you like this resolved?
- Evidence – Any photos, emails, messages (if appropriate)

## Complaint Form

A formal complaint form is available on request. You may also submit complaints via email or letter.

### **5. FORMAL INVESTIGATION (STAGE 2)**

#### Investigation Process

##### 1. Acknowledgement (within 2 working days)

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing
- Confirm the timescale for investigation (usually 10-15 working days)
- Confirm who will investigate
- Answer any immediate questions

##### 2. Investigation (10-15 working days)

The investigator will:

- Review all written evidence provided
- Speak to staff involved
- Speak to other witnesses if relevant
- Review records (incident reports, registers, etc.)
- Gather additional evidence if needed
- Take detailed notes of all interviews

##### 3. Findings and Outcome (within 20 working days)

A written response will be provided including:

- Summary of the complaint
- Summary of the investigation
- Findings
- Actions taken or to be taken
- Why the complaint was upheld/not upheld
- Any apology if appropriate

#### Investigation Principles

- Fair and impartial
- Confidential
- Based on evidence not assumptions
- Respectful to all parties
- Documented thoroughly

### **6. APPEALS (STAGE 3)**

#### Right to Appeal

If you disagree with the outcome, you may appeal within 10 working days of receiving the outcome letter.

### Grounds for Appeal

- New evidence has emerged
- The investigation process was unfair
- The outcome is unreasonable
- The investigator had a conflict of interest

### Appeal Process

1. Submit appeal in writing to management/owner (not the original investigator)
  - Explain why you disagree
  - Provide any new evidence
  - State desired outcome
2. Appeal review (5-10 working days)
  - Senior manager/owner reviews investigation
  - Considers new evidence if provided
  - May conduct further investigation if needed
3. Final decision (within 20 working days)
  - Written response confirming final decision
  - This is final; no further appeals possible

## **7. COMPLAINTS ABOUT SAFEGUARDING**

### Serious Safeguarding Concerns

If your complaint relates to a safeguarding concern (abuse, neglect, harm):

- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- You may also contact the Local Safeguarding Board directly
- You may contact the Police if you believe a crime has occurred
- Your contact details will not be disclosed without your consent

### Investigation

Safeguarding investigations follow a separate procedure and may involve:

- Police
- Local Authority Children's Services
- Other statutory agencies

These investigations are separate from complaints procedures and timescales may be longer.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**

- Complaint details are kept confidential
- Information shared only on a need-to-know basis
- Staff involved will be informed but not all details disclosed

- Complainants' identity protected where possible
- Records stored securely and separately
- Historical records retained in accordance with data protection requirements

#### Data Protection

Personal data collected through complaints is processed in accordance with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

### 9. NO RETALIATION

Active Starz has a strict policy of no retaliation. This means:

- No negative treatment of the complainant
- No negative treatment of the child
- No dismissal of staff for raising legitimate concerns
- No disadvantage to those involved in the process

Any retaliation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

### 10. TIMESCALES SUMMARY

Stage	Action	Timescale
1	Informal resolution	5 working days
2	Formal acknowledgement	2 working days
2	Investigation	10-15 working days
2	Outcome provided	20 working days from complaint
3	Appeal submitted by	10 working days of outcome
3	Appeal review	5-10 working days
3	Final decision	20 working days from appeal

Note: Timescales may be extended if complex investigation needed or parties unavailable.

### 11. VEXATIOUS OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

#### Definition

A vexatious complaint is one that is:

- Persistent and repetitive despite resolution
- Made without any factual basis
- Made to cause disruption or distress
- Malicious in intent

#### Action

- Management may, after investigation, decline to process further complaints from that party
- Legal action may be considered in extreme cases

- Parents will be notified in writing if we take this step

## **12. COMPLAINTS RECORD**

- All complaints are recorded in a Complaints Register
- Record includes: date, who made it, nature, investigation date, outcome
- Register is reviewed monthly to identify patterns
- Annual summary provided to management
- Information used to improve services

## **13. COMMUNICATION**

Throughout the process:

- Clear communication at each stage
- Regular updates if delays occur
- Opportunity to ask questions
- Contact details for investigator provided
- Final outcome communicated in writing

## **14. LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT**

- All complaints reviewed for learning opportunities
- Patterns identified and addressed
- Staff training provided if issues identified
- Policies and procedures updated as needed
- Parents invited to provide feedback on procedure

## **15. POLICY REVIEW**

This procedure will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Last reviewed: [Date]

Date: [December 2025]

Next Review Date: [December 2025 + 12 months]