

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]