



GRUFC Complaints, Disclosure & Disciplinary Policy

1 POLICY STATEMENT & PURPOSE:

The Complaints, Disclosure & Disciplinary Policy is designed to help and encourage all club members, coaches, players, committee members and visitors, to achieve, maintain and follow the standards set by Glossop Rugby Union Football Club (GRUFC) & the RFU in relation to conduct and behaviour both whilst at the club or away, or representing the club in any way.

It is also designed to be a mechanism for the club to support anyone with welfare support needs.

The Complaints, Disclosure & Disciplinary Policy also sets out the process that GRUFC will follow when a complaint or disclosure is received, the reporting, investigation and outcome procedures, including the proposed timelines for each stage. However, these timelines are stated for guidance and may not always be adhered to, depending on availability of individuals, practicalities of arranging meetings and other issues outside of the Clubs control.

Standards set by GRUFC can be found within various documents, including the GRUFC Mission Statement, RFU Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policies, and aim to encourage members, coaches, players, committee members and visitors to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of discipline, behaviour and conduct.

2 SCOPE & ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES

2.1 Scope, Behaviours & Conduct

GRUFC is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all its members, coaches, players, committee members, officials and visitors as well as instilling a safe, family friendly culture and environment.

GRUFC believes that it is important that members, coaches, players, committee members, officials and visitors associated with the club, should always show and be shown respect and understanding, to ensure the safety and welfare of others.

GRUFC shall ensure that all members, officials, playing & non-playing members and spectators, abide by the RFU Code of Conduct which incorporates the spirit of rugby and the laws of Rugby Union [Code of Conduct \(englandrugby.com\)](http://englandrugby.com).

Members, coaches, players, committee members and visitors must:

- a) Conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, so as to not bring themselves, other members or the Club into disrepute.
- b) Display high and appropriate standards of behaviour at all times.
- c) Refrain from being overly drunk, unruly, aggressive or bullying behaviour.
- d) Not use, or condone the use of foul aggressive, abusive or bullying language.
- e) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, member, official, guest and member of the opposition.
- f) Refrain from entering any area that is considered restricted or out of bounds, including but not limited to: areas behind the bar and the drinks store, kitchen, different gender toilets and other restricted areas.
- g) Adhere to the club policy of not taking bringing or taking illegal drugs at any time or under any circumstances whilst at the club or representing the club in any way.

Examples of Unsatisfactory, Serious and Gross misconduct can be found at the end of this document and are by no means exhaustive, but to be used as a guide.

2.2 Complaints, Disclosure & Disciplinary Process & Procedures

- 2.2.1 To ensure that any complaint, disclosure or incident is handled confidentially, GRUFC recommend that the person making the complaint, disclosure or incident, reports it directly to the GRUFC Safeguarding Officer or Chair (names and contact details will be displayed in the clubhouse and on the club website). Any information, statements, meetings and outcome decision, should remain confidential within the Disciplinary Panel and GRUFC General Committee.
- 2.2.2 The complaint or disclosure can be made in writing, via email or verbally.
- 2.2.3 The person to whom the complaint, disclosure or incident was made known to, may take contact details and a brief summary of the complaint or disclosure. This can be done in any format as at this stage it is only an initial brief summary. It may be that

the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, and as per the GRUFC policy, this is acceptable and the complaint or disclosure will still be investigated.

- 2.2.4 The Safeguarding Officer and Chair will review the summary of the complaint disclosure or incident in the format it was initially presented, to determine in the first instance, if it is a potential safety, safeguarding, welfare or disciplinary issue.

2.3 Disclosure or complaint considered relating to a Safeguarding issue

If the complaint, disclosure or incident is considered a safeguarding related matter then the GRUFC Safeguarding process will be followed. (see GRUFC Safeguarding Children and Young People's Policy and Safeguarding Adults Policy: [Safeguarding \(glossoprufc.com\)](http://glossoprufc.com))

2.4 Disclosure or complaint considered relating to a Welfare related issue

If the complaint, disclosure or incident is considered related to a welfare issue (e.g. mental health, financial, housing, homelessness, addiction, dependency etc.) then the following process will be followed:

- a. Offer to pass their details to the Club Safeguarding Officer and they will contact the individual concerned who can provide confidential support, and/or further information of agencies or referrals that may be able to help.
- b. Give the individual the GRUFC Safeguarding Officers details, in order to contact them and then provide confidential support, and/or further information of agencies that may be able to help.
- c. Inform the individual of support information leaflets.
- d. Once all the above support has been given, the Safeguarding Officer will monitor as part of the Safeguarding Policy.

2.5 Disclosure or Complaint considered relating to a Disciplinary related issue

2.5.1 The complaint and all relevant information is to be passed to the GRUFC Safeguarding Officer/Chair in the first instance.

2.5.2 In the event that the GRUFC Safeguarding Officer and / or Chair consider the incident to be of a serious risk or the considered severity of the event, they can, with the approval of the GRUFC General Committee reserve the right to

suspend the individual to whom the complaint is made against, with immediate effect. This suspension will remain in force until the investigation has been completed and the outcome has been determined.

- 2.5.3 If the issue is a complaint, disclosure or incident is considered to be of a potential disciplinary nature and needs further disciplinary investigation, then the following process will be followed:
- 2.5.4 The Complaints and Disciplinary Panel will be notified of a potential investigation within 5 working days, by the Safeguarding Officer or Chair.
- 2.5.5 The Panel will consist of a minimum of 3 current members of the Club, and may include the Safeguarding Officer and at least 2 other members chosen for the specific nature of the complaint. The GRUFC Secretary or other appointed committee member may also be chosen to take minutes of any necessary meetings, but not to make any contributions or have any say in panel meetings.
- 2.5.6 The Safeguarding Officer or Chair will appoint a Lead Investigator from the panel, whose role will be to oversee the investigation, identify all potential parties that may be involved in the investigation.
- 2.5.7 The Lead investigator will ensure that all relevant information and statements are received and collated in a chronological order, kept confidential and the necessary documents are correctly completed, signed and dated.
- 2.5.8 The Lead Investigator will investigate and collate all information about the issue, complaint or disclosure, including but not limited to interviewing the complainant and anyone who may have witnessed the incident.
- 2.5.9 This investigation will take place within 10-14 working days of the complaint being raised.
- 2.5.10 Once the initial investigations have been completed, the Lead investigator will make contact with the person to whom the complaint is against and invite them to either a formal disciplinary meeting either face to face or via an online zoom type platform, as deemed appropriate, which will take place within 10-14 working days. This will be documented fully as part of the process by the Lead Investigator. One member from the Complaints and Disciplinary Panel will be present, In addition, the Club Secretary will be present to record the minutes of the meeting. The person to whom the

complaint is made has the right to be accompanied to any of these meetings if wished, and they must inform the Lead Investigator of the name and relationship of the accompanying person within at least 1 hour prior to any planned meeting (legal representation will not be permitted). The person who is accompanying, may have no say in any of the proceedings and will only be present as a support.

2.5.11 At the disciplinary meeting, the Lead investigator will present the facts of the investigation to the person the complaint is against. Full notes will be taken of this meeting by the Club Secretary or appointed minute taker if appropriate.

2.5.12 An opportunity will be given for the person to whom the complaint is against to explain their version of events and provide any supporting evidence. This will be recorded fully and documented for clarity within the investigation.

2.5.13 The Lead Investigator will present all findings to the Complaints and Disciplinary Panel within 5 working days and discuss all the facts received so far and decide an outcome and what action may be required.

2.6 Disclosure or Complaint considered relating to a Disciplinary issue - NO ACTION REQUIRED

2.6.1 If the decision is that no action is to be taken, then the complainant and the person to whom the complaint is addressed will be notified in writing or by email within 5 working days by the Lead Investigator.

2.6.2 If a suspension has been in force, then the Lead Investigator should ensure that membership and / or roles within the club are reinstated.

2.6.3 The GRUFC General Committee will be informed of the disciplinary issue, any action taken and outcomes. This will be minuted in the committee confidential minutes and a summary entered into a complaints, disclosure and disciplinary log which will be stored securely.

2.7 Disclosure or Complaint considered relating to a Disciplinary issue which potentially relates to UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT/ MISCONDUCT - ACTION REQUIRED

2.7.1 The Complaints and Disciplinary Panel will vote on the necessary disciplinary action to be taken after all the facts have been explained. The GRUFC General Committee will be informed of the disciplinary issue, any action taken and outcomes. This will be minuted in the committee

confidential minutes and a summary entered into a complaints, disclosure and disciplinary log which will be stored securely.

- 2.7.2 The Lead Investigator will inform the person to whom the complaint is made against of the outcome within 5 working days and will also inform the complainant that the issue has been addressed, within 5 working days.
- 2.7.3 This will be in writing or by email and be fully documented within the investigation and a copy of all correspondence will be retained. Within this correspondence, information will be given about the GRUFC disciplinary appeals process and to whom this should be addressed.

2.8 Disclosure or Complaint considered relating to a Disciplinary issue which potentially constitutes GROSS MISCONDUCT - ACTION REQUIRED

- 2.8.1 If the decision is that disciplinary action is to be taken that potential links to gross misconduct, then the following process will be put in force:
- 2.8.2 The Lead Investigator will present all the facts of the incident to the GRUFC General Committee within 7 working days. This can be done in writing or via an emergency meeting, either face to face or via an online zoom type platform, as deemed appropriate. This information will be documented as part of the investigation and may or may not be included in the General Committee minutes if at a regular committee meeting, however they will remain confidential.
- 2.8.3 The GRUFC General Committee will review, discuss and vote on the necessary disciplinary action to be taken after all the facts have been explained.
- 2.8.4 The GRUFC Secretary / Lead Investigator will inform the person to whom the complaint is made against of the outcome within 5 working days and will also inform the complainant that the issue has been addressed, within 5 working days. This will be in writing or by email and be fully documented within the investigation and a copy of all correspondence will be retained. Within this correspondence, information will be given about the GRUFC disciplinary appeals process and to whom this should be addressed.

2.9 Disclosure or Complaint considered relating to a Disciplinary issue - PENALTIES OR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Examples of disciplinary actions that may be taken are as follows, however GRUFC reserve the right to take additional actions should the conditions warrant if not covered within the points below:

- a. Request that the person to whom the complaint has been made is to make a formal apology to either the complainant or the GRUFC General Committee and recognise the reasons for this decision. This is to be done within 7 working days. .
- b. The person to whom the complaint has been made may be suspended from the club for a period of time – this is to be decided by the General Committee based on the seriousness of the offence. If a ban is imposed for a period of time, the start date of the ban will be backdated to the first date of suspension.
- c. The person to whom the complaint has been made may be banned from the club and membership revoked. A person whose membership is terminated in this manner shall remain liable for the full year's subscription or not be entitled to a refund of the subscription paid for the year.

3 DISCIPLINARY APPEALS PROCESS

Any person who has had disciplinary sanctions imposed on them shall have the right to appeal to the Chair of GRUFC or to the Chair's nominated person for a review of the findings of the enquiry and of the penalty imposed.

- 3.1 The GRUFC disciplinary appeals panel may be made up of the Chair, the Chair's nominated person, other independent members of the club who have had no previous link to the investigation, in order to ensure impartiality.
- 3.2 Appeals should be made by way of written correspondence to the Club Secretary within 5 working days of any sanctions notified.
- 3.3 The appellant may request a face-to-face meeting as part of the appeal process and this should be notified within the appeal notice. This meeting may take place via an online zoom type platform if deemed appropriate. The appellant has the right to be accompanied to this meeting if wished, and they must inform the Chair or Chair's nominated person of the name and relationship of the accompanying person within at least 1 hour prior to any planned meeting.

The person who is accompanying, may have no say in any of the proceedings and will only be present as a support.

3.4 Where a face-to-face meeting is requested, the GRUFC Chair shall appoint at least one other club member who was not involved in the original process to attend the meeting alongside the Chair or their nominee, to make up this review and appeals panel. Notes will be taken of this meeting.

3.5 The appeals meeting must be held within 14 working days of the request.

3.6 The review and appeals panel must present a written decision after listening to all the facts of the appeal within 7 working days of the meeting to the GRUFC General Committee.

3.7 Where neither face-to-face, nor online meeting is requested, the Chair or their appointed nominee and the review and appeals panel will review the content of the appeal, the findings of the investigation and sanctions imposed and present their findings within 7 days to the GRUFC General Committee.

3.8 The decision of the disciplinary appeals panel will be sent to the person to whom the complaint is addressed, either in writing or by email within 7 working days by the Lead Investigator of the disciplinary appeals panel. This decision will be final.

4 EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT, UNSATISFACTORY, SERIOUS AND GROSS MISCONDUCT (for guidance)

A person will be subject to disciplinary action if they are found to have acted in any one of the following ways (this list is not exhaustive and is documented for guidance):

4.1 Unsatisfactory Conduct/ Misconduct

- a. Failure to abide by the GRUFC Codes of Conduct
- b. Failure to abide by general health and safety rules, procedures and guidelines
- c. Use of materials or equipment that you are not authorised, requested or trained to use
- d. Failing to deal promptly, efficiently and politely with third parties with whom you have dealings on behalf of GRUFC
- e. Failure to carry out reasonable instructions in relation to GRUFC affairs
- f. Failure to observe or comply with the GRUFC policies, standards, procedures and processes, in particular those around information security and privacy.

- g. Failure to adhere to the GRUFC Safeguarding Policies
- h. Rudeness towards other members, members of the public, officials or visitors
- i. Objectionable or insulting behaviour, bad or inappropriate, abusive or bullying language
- j. Unauthorised or negligent damage or loss to GRUFC property
- k. Misuse of GRUFC facilities – e.g. internet, email or other forms of social media
- l. Smoking or use of e-cigarettes in non-designated GRUFC areas
- m. Bribery offences under the Bribery Act 2010

4.2 Forms of Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying can range from extremes such as violence, to less obvious forms like ignoring someone. Whatever the form, it will be unwanted behaviour, which is unwelcome and unpleasant.

Forms may include:

- a. Physical contact
- b. Jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, obscene gestures and sectarian songs
- c. Coercion for sexual favours
- d. Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking

4.2.1 Bullying may combine a variety of different approaches. It is persistent and often unpredictable harassment and can be experienced from senior club members to coaches, coaches to senior club members, peer to peer, or one group of staff or volunteers to another individual. It is insidious and undermines the ability and confidence of the person who is suffering from it. It can lead to fear, demotivation, isolation, symptoms of stress and poor mental health

4.2.2 The following points need to be taken into account when considering whether the pattern of behaviour constitutes bullying.

- a. Legitimate and effective instruction or communication does not constitute bullying.
- b. Bullying is not about an occasional angry response but is about persistent and deliberate undermining and psychological crushing.

4.2.3 Obvious Bullying

- a. A person using strength and power to coerce others by fear.
- b. Attempting to make others toe the line by singling out, demeaning and devaluing.

- c. Shouting, dominating all around, giving public dressing down.
- d. A personal style that is dominant, overbearing, obsessive, reprimanding, disapproving, humiliating, and punishing.
- e. Using abusive language and aggressive body language.
- f. Personal insult, name calling and snide remarks
- g. Continuous references to someone's sexual orientation, use of homophobic language, spreading rumours or gossip about someone's sexual orientation
- h. Instantaneous rages often over trivial matters.
- i. Spreading rumours, which are often unfounded and spread maliciously.
- j. Never listening to another's point of view.

4,3,4 Less Obvious Bullying

- a. Bullying differs from harassment and discrimination in that the focus is not usually based on gender, race or disability etc. The focus is often on competence, or rather the alleged lack of competence of the bullied person. In reality, the target of bullying is often competent and popular, and the bully is aggressively projecting their own social, interpersonal and professional inadequacy onto their target.
- b. Making life difficult for those who have the potential to do the bully's job or role better than the bully does.
- c. Shouting at staff or volunteers to get things done.
- d. Persistently picking on people in front of others, or in private.
- e. Making jokes or comments, including engaging in banter about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender colleagues/volunteers/people
- f. Deliberately ignoring or excluding individuals from activities.
- g. Keeping individuals in their place by blocking their views or progression.
- h. Insisting that their way of doing things is always right without discussion.
- i. Refusing to delegate because bullies feel they can't trust anyone but themselves.
- j. Punishing others for being too competent, constant criticism, or by removing their responsibilities, often giving them trivial tasks to do instead.

The above list is not definitive, bullying can occur in many different ways. Some are obvious and easy to identify, other types are subtle and difficult to explain

4.3 Serious Misconduct

Please note that where the first offence is sufficiently serious it may be justifiable to move directly to the final written warning stage of the formal disciplinary process.

4.4 Gross Misconduct

If after investigation, it is confirmed that the offence relates to Gross Misconduct, the normal consequence will be summary dismissal without notice and membership revoked: (examples of gross misconduct - the list is not exhaustive),

- a. Theft, misappropriation or unauthorised possession of the assets funds, equipment and / or property of GRUFC, members, employees or visitors
- b. Fraud, including any deliberate attempt to defraud GRUFC, employees or other persons or organisations whilst acting on behalf of the club
- c. Physical violence towards fellow members or visitors
- d. Carrying a weapon on their person, threatening, or using a weapon e.g. knife, firearm etc.
- e. Deliberate damage to property belonging to GRUFC, members, employees or visitors
- f. Serious negligence or breach of health and safety rules potentially causing unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- g. Flagrant disregard of the organisations policies, standards, processes, procedures, regulations or rules of GRUFC
- h. Serious breach of information security which may have financial or reputational consequences, including serious breaches of confidentiality
- i. Serious breach of the GRUFC Safeguarding Policies, code of conduct, which may include serious and deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination of bullying / harassment of a fellow member or visitor, on any grounds
- j. Sexual misconduct whilst at the club or representing GRUFC in any way
- k. Serious incapability whilst at the club or whilst representing the club through alcohol, possession or taking of illegal drugs
- l. Gross negligence
- m. Other acts of misconduct may come within the general definition of gross misconduct.

APPENDICES AS APPLICABLE

Appendix A	Disciplinary Investigation Document
Appendix B	Witness Statement Document
Appendix C	Invite to Disciplinary Hearing Meeting
Appendix D	Disciplinary Hearing Checklist (for use by the panel)
Appendix E	Disciplinary Hearing Meeting Reporting Document
Appendix F	Outcome of Disciplinary Hearing Letter

Appendix G Withdrawal of Disciplinary Proceedings
Appendix H Invite to Appeals Meeting
Appendix I Disciplinary Appeals Outcome Letter
RFU / GRUFC Code of Conduct