



The Elite Swimming Training Programme of the DMasa and Doncaster's Clubs
www.dartes.co.uk

Doncaster Dartes Swimming Club (S.C) Complaints Procedure November 2019

This policy has been developed for use by Doncaster Dartes S.C in conjunction with Wavepower 2016-19, <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/> and it is to be utilised by all involved with Doncaster Dartes S.C and will formalise the complaints procedure.

Doncaster Dartes S.C is committed to safeguarding its children and young people and all those involved with the club, ensuring that the club provides a safe and supportive environment for all. However, it is acknowledged that there may be occasions that there may be cause for complaint, the information within this document is provided with the aim of providing overall guidance for the resolution of complaints and disputes raised internally to Doncaster Dartes S.C

General Guidance

At each step a meeting between relevant parties may be necessary. At any such meeting the following criteria should be upheld:

- Swimmers under 18 should be accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Swimmers over 18 may be accompanied by a parent or friend if required.
- Parents/carers may be accompanied by a partner or friend if required.
- Coaches may be accompanied by a friend or colleague if required.

An agreed written record of the discussion will be made for all parties present at the meeting to sign as an accurate record. A copy will be shared with the parties.



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- **Welfare or Safeguarding Concern**

If the nature of the complaint relates to a safeguarding concern or affects a child's welfare, please refer the issue to one of the Club Welfare Officers. Correspondence to be forwarded to welfare@dartes.co.uk at the earliest opportunity.

The issue will be addressed with reference made to the ASA Child Welfare Complaints Procedure <https://www.slsc.org.uk/workspace/pdfs/child-welfare-complaints-procedure.pdf> within The ASA Handbook <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook/> , this clearly identifies the method for dealing with child welfare concerns when a complaint is received from a parent, carer, guardian or a child.

Concerns about a child, which may reach the level of seriousness of Child Protection or indeed pose potential harm to a child (known as a 'Referral') will be dealt with utilising Wavepower processes, <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/> section 2; Toolbox reference 2.1

- **Disputes and Complaints:**

It is important to understand the difference between a dispute and complaint so for clarity the definitions are as follow;

Dispute: This is a difference of opinion either between individuals, this may be about matters concerning the running of the club or how situations are being managed.

Complaint: A formally expressed dissatisfaction relating to activities undertaken by the club, conduct of individuals or areas of concern where an individual feels further investigation is required to reach a resolution.

The club will be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint giving careful consideration to all complaints raised. It will ensure (where possible) complaints are dealt with in a timely manner to prevent unnecessary distress and conflict within the club. To retain the efficiency and professionalism of the club and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all within it, the club will aim to initially resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding to attain an agreed resolution. Where a complaint involves a child or young person, the interests and wellbeing of the children or young people involved will be placed above all other issues. In all cases, complainants will be provided with sufficient opportunity for discussion of the issues raised, and the clubs assurance that all complaints will be fully investigated to support a final resolution.

In relation to disputes the club requests again that initial actions are taken to resolve these through discussion between the relevant parties and will offer informal support as required. Should this be un-suitable and the initial dispute requires escalation to a complaint it will then follow the process recorded below.



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- **Process**

The following process should be followed if any person associated with the club has a dispute or complaint regarding treatment of any individual or has cause to raise a complaint against any identified actions it feels may impact on the reputation of the club and its members

Step 1. Informal Discussion

Bring the concern to the attention of the Coach, Doncaster Darts Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer in the first instance. These concerns should be actioned in the following manner

- Coaches – Where a concern / complaint relates to the coaching of a young person please arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with the coach to discuss. This can be done via email coaching@dartes.co.uk or alternatively through discussion at the end of the coaching session, Please note coaches are NOT to be approached during a training session as per the clubs “Code of Conduct”
http://www.dartes.co.uk/squads/code_conduct.pdf
- Welfare – Welfare concerns can initially be raised with the welfare representative within each phase, details can be found at <http://www.dartes.co.uk/> alternatively where this is felt to be unsuitable you can request to speak to the welfare officer, this can be done in person or via an email request welfare@dartes.co.uk
- Club Chair – You can request an informal discussion to talk through any concerns and identify if these can be resolved through the discussion process, this can be done in person or via email request chair@dartes.co.uk

To reiterate - The club actively encourages parties to initially have an informal discussion prior to complaints being escalated and will always try to support this in the first instance to resolve issues where possible.

If after talking through the issue and informal attempts at a resolution, things remain unresolved, or, due to the severity of the situation it is unsuitable to follow the previous action, the following steps should be taken.



Step 2. Formal Written Complaint

If the outcome of Step 1 is unsatisfactory to the parties involved, or if a previously reported issue arises again, the issue should be formally put in writing (letter or e-mail) addressed to the Club Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer using the contact contained in Step 1, these details are also recorded on Doncaster Darts S.C website dartes.co.uk

When raising an issue in writing (this includes email), please include the following:

- The nature of the issue
- Any action that has been taken by the club or club representative
- The reasons why the action is disputed, or Complaint raised
- The date and time of the incident
- The names of any witnesses to the incident.
- Your preferred contact details.

Please note – Complaints should be raised at the earliest opportunity following any incident or concern becoming apparent.

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 7 working days and an investigation will be initiated with the intention of offering a resolution. The individuals dealing with the complaint will be identified and throughout the investigation regular dialogue will be maintained with the complainant. When a conclusion is reached, the Chairperson/Welfare Officer will provide a written record of the incident and actions taken/recommended to the complainant and for the club's information and monitoring. The complainant will then receive formal feedback and advised of any action to be taken.

It is to be noted that due to the sensitivity required when dealing with children and young people there may be occasion that actions to be taken are deemed inappropriate to report to the complainant, in these cases actions will be recorded for club reference only, the complainant will be advised of this.

Step 3. Formal Committee Panel/Meeting

This action should only be required when all previous attempts at a resolution have proved unsuccessful, or where a case has reached such severity a formal hearing is required.

At the first available committee meeting, the Club Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer will present a written note in confidence, based on the circumstances of the complaint this will either be to the whole committee or selected sub-committee as appropriate. This will identify the complaint, actions taken and proposed actions going forward.

The committee or independent panel (three members drawn from the club committee or club members as appropriate) will discuss the matter in confidence and offer a solution in writing to the complainant. When a conclusion is reached, the panel will provide a written record of the incident and actions taken/recommended to the complainant and for the club's information and monitoring.



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Step 4. Mediation

If following Step 3 and all other avenues of resolution have been unable to obtain an agreed resolution, an external mediator will be invited to support resolution. The individual will be identified through discussion with the ASA.

This person will be agreed in advance, the individual will be someone who is acceptable to both parties. This may include staff or volunteers within the ASA as appropriate, the individual will then be invited to act as mediator.

The mediator will remain impartial and will keep an agreed record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they are able to provide in their identified role. It is of note that this process should not be interfered with by any other party and discussion with the mediator should only be completed by those directly involved with the complaint. Where it is identified that any individual has tried to impact on this process the complaint will be referred to ASA or Swim England as appropriate.

Final Steps

Where all attempts to formalise an agreement have been exhausted the matter will be deemed to be outside of the clubs capability and therefore the matter will be referred to ASA or Swim England representatives. ASA or Swim England will then assume responsibility for this and the complainant will be advised accordingly.

Appeals Process

Every individual has the right to appeal a decision, this must be completed within 7 days of the outcome and in writing to the Chairperson of the club. All appeals will be carried out by 3 independent persons with the chair of the appeal being appointed by the executive committee. The individuals will not have any involvement in the original issue and will have no prior knowledge. Where appropriate it may be required to seek support external of the club to ensure impartiality. At this time the chair of the appeal will carry out an independent investigation and complete a full report on its findings. Any decision will then be returned to the complainant and will be actioned accordingly. The executive committee will uphold the decision of the independent panel and will not be involved in any way with the investigation. Where it is unsuitable for the appeal to be handled in this way due to any potential conflict or it has been deemed impractical to form an independent panel, the executive committee will file a complaint with the ASA judicial review panel where management of the appeal will then be directed by the ASA. The club will comply with any requests for information and will uphold the decision reached following the ASA appeal outcome.



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Meetings

Throughout this policy reference is made to “Meetings”, these will, in the first instance, be arranged at a mutually convenient time and in a place of mutual choosing. However, where a meeting is required to discuss the findings and any subsequent committee agreed disciplinary action, parties will be provided with 3 dates to meet. Should the individual/s involved decline these dates the meeting will take place in their absence with a clear record being made. The meeting will involve 3 members of the committee with at least one member of the executive committee in presence, in addition to this the meeting will include a minute taker however this will be their sole purpose for attendance and must not involve themselves in the process. This action is in line with the advice and guidance of ASA.

Chairperson note on behalf of Doncaster Darts Swimming Club

Doncaster Darts S.C is an elite swim team which holds all within it to the highest of standards. It aims to provide an engaging and productive environment for its swimmers and a team mentality throughout the club. In order to ensure the requirements of the club are clear any individual involved within Doncaster Darts S.C are required to sign their agreement to the afore mentioned “Code of Conduct”. The club takes this document extremely serious and failure to comply with this will lead to action being taken by the club. The actions of the club will follow all steps as dictated within the complaints policy. Following a complaint being received or an incident occurring, it may be deemed appropriate by the club, that due to the identified concerns, individual /s involved be suspended whilst investigations are completed. Suspension from the club is a serious step and is done without prejudice but may be required to ensure the welfare of individuals involved and the reputation of the club, it in no way implies guilt of an allegation and may be requested of any individual involved within Doncaster Darts S.C. Following the completion of the investigation, any potential actions to be taken are not exhaustive, it is however to be noted that where an individual’s actions are felt to be of such severity they threaten the club or those within it, the club will seek advice from the relevant parties, to action, where appropriate the removal of the individual/s from the club.

This policy was ratified by Doncaster Darts Committee on 4th December 2019 and is effective as of this date.

Appeal process added 16th December 2019 following review of policy