

# Locks Heath Pumas RFC

## Volunteer Problem Solving Policy



### Introduction

At Locks Heath Pumas we hope your volunteering experience is enjoyable and worthwhile. Occasionally, problems do occur, but we will ensure that each situation is dealt with on an individual basis, following this policy. We would encourage you to discuss any problems or issues as soon as they occur. Everybody has the right to feel safe in airing their concerns, and fostering an environment where individuals feel respected and supported is vital to the well-being of all involved in the club.

Volunteers will have different opinions on subjects, and they should challenge and voice their concerns, but problems should never get personal or put the club, its players or its volunteers in jeopardy.

This Problem Solving Procedure will ensure that you know how to deal with problems if they arise. It will help to find the most appropriate solution to the problem.

All complaints, issues and concerns should be dealt with openly, fairly and quickly to:

- protect you
- minimise any disruption
- demonstrate that we respect our volunteers
- protect the reputation of the club

Every effort should be made to discuss the problems informally before a complaint is made. This should be done privately and not in a public forum as this could make individuals feel uncomfortable and upset which goes against everything Locks Heath Pumas stand for. Settling conflicts and grievances informally and privately is crucial to maintaining a positive and respectful team environment. By addressing issues early and discreetly, individuals are more likely to feel heard and valued, helping to prevent misunderstandings from escalating. This approach fosters open communication, strengthens trust among members, and upholds the club's sense of unity and camaraderie. Resolving matters quietly also protects the dignity of those involved and ensures the focus remains on teamwork, enjoyment, and shared values both on and off the pitch.

Any complaints that involve safeguarding concerns will result in an immediate pause in the volunteers time with the club, possibly leading to ending their involvement with the club. In these instances the Safeguarding Lead will initiate the investigation.

### Principles

1. Every effort should be made to discuss the problem informally before a formal complaint is made.
2. All complaints involving volunteers will be dealt with according to this procedure.
3. Written notes will be kept and made available to both parties.
4. All complaints will be treated confidentially and only discussed amongst those who are directly involved in resolving the issue.

## **If a volunteer complains or has concerns**

### **Resolving things informally**

We prefer to resolve issues informally. Very often, discussion of the matter, perhaps with the help of someone external to the situation, for example a committee member or another volunteer, is sufficient to clear things up to the satisfaction of all.

If you have a concern or a complaint to make regarding a volunteer, the behaviour of someone you volunteer with or, in fact, anything at all, you should raise the issue with the Volunteer Coordinator. If for any reason you are uncomfortable raising the issue directly with the Volunteer Coordinator – for example if your complaint is about them – you should speak to the Vice Chair or Youth Chair if complaint is about a Volunteer involved with the Youth team.

Whoever you speak to will ensure that your complaint is looked into, and that any steps needed to rectify the situation are taken. They will also ensure that you are given an explanation of what has happened. This may be done by phone or e-mail.

### **Formal process**

If you are not satisfied after raising a matter informally, or if you think the matter is too serious to deal with informally (for example on-going harassment), then you should raise your concerns formally. To do this, either speak or write to / email the Volunteer Coordinator, explaining the issue, providing full details and asking for it to be dealt with formally.

The Volunteer Coordinator will acknowledge your concern/complaint within seven working days and tell you the timescale for providing you with a response, normally within 21 working days from the date the complaint is received.

Following their investigation, you will receive a formal response to your concern/complaint, which will include:

- details of the investigation carried out
- a decision about whether or not your complaint was upheld or your concern was found to be valid
- the reason for the decision
- any appropriate measures that will be offered, e.g. an apology or help with accessing support from another source
- information about any other actions to be taken as a result of your concerns/complaint.

If, for any reason, more time is required to deal with the issue, you will be told the reasons for this and given a date by which they will respond.

### **Review**

If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint or concerns raised, you may ask for a review. You should write a letter setting out the reasons that you are dissatisfied and send it to the Vice Chair, or Youth Chair if complaint is about a Volunteer involved with the Youth team.

The Vice / Youth Chair will review the case. The Vice / Youth Chair will acknowledge your request for a review within seven working days and the timescale for providing you with a response, normally within 21 working days from the date that the review request is received.

The review will examine:

- the original complaint or issue raised
- the way it has been investigated

- the decision made and any agreed actions

When the review has been completed, the Vice Chair will write to you to:

- tell you the outcome of the review and the reasons for this
- inform you of any actions that we will be taking as a result.

The outcome of this review is final and no further action is allowed under the problem solving procedures.

## **If someone complains about you as a volunteer**

### **Resolving things informally**

The Volunteer Coordinator will discuss the complaint with you. They will:

- try to resolve the matter by talking to you
- find out more from you about the issue and what might be causing any problems
- identify any goals and any changes needed to help you
- offer you extra support and training where necessary
- agree a deadline to review the situation with you

The Volunteer Coordinator will maintain confidentiality regarding your personal experience and any private or sensitive information. They will, however, keep the complainant informed of any measures taken to rectify a situation.

### **Formal process**

If the issue has not been resolved through informal discussions - or where the Volunteer Coordinator thinks that the problem is too serious to deal with informally - they will deal with the issue formally.

The Volunteer Coordinator will:

- issue you with written details outlining the complaint
- you will be given the opportunity to state your case. You will be allowed to be accompanied by a person of your choice at this meeting.
- The Volunteer Coordinator will make recommendations depending on the nature of their concerns and what they find out about the issue, offer further help and/or make changes to your role and how you are managed if appropriate
- the Volunteer Coordinator may involve another member of the committee at this time

In serious cases or where problems remain unresolved after the above attempts have been made, you may be asked to leave Locks Heath Pumas as a volunteer. If we decide to do this, you can appeal and ask for that decision to be reviewed.

### **Review**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the handling of a complaint or problem concerning you, you may ask for a review.

Beginning with writing to the Vice Chair or Youth Chair, the review process is exactly the same as for a review of the handling of complaints and concerns raised by volunteers. See above.

## **Serious incidents**

Any complaint related to safeguarding, or gross misconduct is considered a serious incident.

All complaints relating to safeguarding will be investigated formally and external organisations such as the police may be involved.

There are some occasions when you may be suspended from your volunteering role immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to, acts that constitute gross misconduct.

The following are examples of the type of offence viewed by Locks Heath Pumas as being extremely serious and may be regarded as gross misconduct. They may lead to an immediate formal warning or your being told to step down from your volunteering role without notice

- Behaviour which is damaging to the reputation of Locks Heath Pumas RFC
- Not adhering to Locks Heath Puma's volunteer policies and procedures.
- Falsifying the truth
- Fraudulent acts with the intention of obtaining money, assets, services or information which would otherwise be denied
- Failure to disclose information or to give accurate information to the club when making an application for volunteering
- Theft, misappropriation or embezzlement of the club funds/property whether attempted or actual
- Willful damage to the property of Locks Heath Pumas or its volunteers
- Assault or attempted assault (whether physical or verbal) on a Locks Heath Pumas player, volunteer or associate.
- Sexual/personal harassment
- Carelessness in relation to or willful disregard of health and safety of others
- Discrimination in dealing with Locks Heath Pumas players, or volunteers on the basis of: age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, neurodiversity, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion or marital status
- Gross negligence in the performance of duties.
- Conviction in a court of law that compromises the volunteer's ability to carry on their agreement with Locks Heath Pumas

## **Asking a Volunteer to leave**

The decision to suspend or stop your volunteering role must be confirmed to you in writing. An investigation will take place and you will be informed of the results and decisions made. You will be required to return all Locks Heath Puma branded items that the club has given you, as well as your Volunteer badge.

If you wish, you may appeal these decisions using the review process outlined above.