Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

Complaints Policy

Maldon & Tiptree Football Club

Policy version: 1.0 | Prepared: November 2026 | Status: Approved | Review: November 2027 or sooner if required

Chairman	**Jamil Trofder**
Club Secretary & Welfare Officer	Garry Neave-Houghting
Safeguarding email	garry.mtfc@gmail.com
Safeguarding telephone	07538 973069
General complaints submission	In writing to the Club Secretary or Chairman via the club's published official contact route; if unavailable, ask the Club Welfare Officer to arrange an independent recipient.

1. Purpose and commitment

Maldon & Tiptree FC is committed to fair, accessible, respectful and timely handling of complaints. Individuals raising concerns in good faith must not suffer retaliation. Complaints will be assessed objectively, with welfare and safety taking priority over reputation or sporting interests.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about the conduct or decisions of club officers, employees, managers, coaches, players, volunteers and matchday representatives, insofar as the matter is within the club's authority. It is available to players, parents/carers, spectators, visitors, staff and others affected by club activity. It does not replace FA, league, employment, statutory safeguarding or criminal procedures.

3. Principles

We will act impartially, make reasonable adjustments for accessibility and communication needs, avoid conflicts of interest, share information only where necessary, keep appropriate records and explain outcomes as far as confidentiality permits. An anonymous complaint may be considered where sufficient information exists, especially where safety is implicated.

4. What may be complained about

Examples include poor conduct or service, bullying, harassment, discriminatory behaviour, inappropriate communications, failure to follow club procedures, matchday conduct and unreasonable treatment. Complaints about a referee's decisions, competition discipline or FA-regulated misconduct may fall under separate FA/league rules and will be referred accordingly.

5. Safeguarding and urgent matters

A concern that a child or adult at risk is being abused, exploited or is unsafe must be reported immediately to the Club Welfare Officer, Garry Neave-Houghting (07538 973069; garry.mtfc@gmail.com), or directly to the appropriate statutory agency or Essex FA safeguarding team. Do not wait for the normal complaints process, investigate the allegation yourself, promise secrecy or confront an alleged perpetrator. If someone is in immediate danger call 999; for a non-emergency police matter call 101. Where the concern relates to the Welfare Officer, contact Essex FA safeguarding or the statutory authorities directly. The club will follow relevant FA safeguarding referral requirements.

6. Making a complaint

A complaint should preferably be submitted in writing as soon as reasonably practicable, ideally within 28 days of the event, though older complaints will be considered where justified. Include: your name and preferred contact method; what happened, when and where; people involved; relevant evidence or witnesses; the impact; and the outcome sought. Assistance

Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

will be offered to people unable to submit in writing. A complaint about the Chairman must be directed to an uninvolved club director/committee member or the relevant external body; it must not be investigated or determined by the person complained about.

7. Informal resolution

Where appropriate and safe, minor issues may be resolved promptly through discussion or mediation, with the complainant's agreement. Informal resolution is not suitable for safeguarding allegations, serious discrimination, threats, violence or matters requiring formal disciplinary referral. No one will be pressured to confront another person.

8. Formal complaint process

Stage 1 – Acknowledge: normally within 5 working days of receipt, identify the handling officer and explain next steps. Stage 2 – Triage: assess immediate risk, jurisdiction, conflicts of interest, safeguarding and possible referral to FA, league, police or statutory services. Stage 3 – Investigate: an impartial person obtains relevant accounts and documents and gives the respondent a fair opportunity to respond. Stage 4 – Decision: normally within 20 working days after acknowledgement, provide a written outcome, reasons (subject to privacy), actions and review rights. If more time is needed, explain why and provide an updated target date. These are club service targets, not FA-mandated deadlines.

9. Outcomes and remedies

Possible outcomes include no further action, an explanation or apology, coaching or education, changes to procedures, a behavioural agreement, restrictions on club access, or referral to a formal disciplinary process or external authority. Sanctions must be proportionate, within the club's powers and consistent with applicable contracts, club rules and FA/league requirements.

10. Review or appeal

A complainant or respondent may request an internal review within 10 working days of receiving the outcome, stating a material procedural error, significant new evidence or a demonstrably unreasonable decision. Where practicable, a person not involved in the original investigation will conduct the review and issue a response normally within 15 working days. The reviewer may uphold, amend or remit the decision. External FA/league or statutory routes remain available where applicable.

11. Fairness, conflicts and vexatious conduct

No person should investigate or decide a complaint about their own conduct or where they have a significant conflict. The club will distinguish persistent but genuine concerns from abusive or knowingly false complaints. Any restriction on contact will be proportionate, recorded and must not prevent safeguarding disclosures or lawful whistleblowing.

12. Confidentiality, data protection and records

Complaint records will be held securely, accessed on a need-to-know basis and processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information may be shared without consent where lawful and necessary to protect someone, report a crime, meet safeguarding obligations or comply with FA/league requirements. Records will be retained under the club's approved retention schedule, with safeguarding records handled under the relevant safeguarding procedure.

13. External reporting and escalation

The club may refer matters to Essex FA, The FA, the Isthmian League, police, local authority safeguarding services or other competent bodies where appropriate. This policy does not restrict anyone from reporting directly to these organisations. FA disciplinary complaints must follow the applicable FA reporting channels and time limits.

Docusign Envelope ID: C378E589-969B-890E-833B-61F448954BFE

14. Accessibility, communication and learning

The club will accept reasonable alternative formats, offer support to children and vulnerable complainants, and use age-appropriate communication. Outcomes and anonymised trends will be reviewed to improve training, policies and matchday arrangements. Relevant staff and volunteers will be briefed on this policy.

15. Policy ownership and review

The Chairman is accountable for ensuring the club has an effective complaints process. The Club Secretary and Welfare Officer leads safeguarding referrals, not the determination of complaints in which they have a conflict. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and after a serious incident or material change to FA guidance or legislation.

Complaints handling – quick reference

Step	Club target / action
Submission	Written complaint through the club's official contact route; urgent safeguarding concerns bypass this process
Acknowledgement	Normally within 5 working days
Assessment	Check safeguarding, jurisdiction and conflicts of interest immediately
Written outcome	Normally within 20 working days of acknowledgement, or give an update
Review request	Within 10 working days of outcome
Review response	Normally within 15 working days

Approval and sign-off

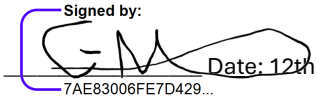
This policy takes effect only after formal club approval. Approval does not certify endorsement by The Football Association.

Chairman: Jamil Trofder

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Club Secretary & Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Date approved: 12th November 2026 Next review due: 12th November 2027

Reference framework (check current versions)

The FA safeguarding and Respect guidance; FA Rules and disciplinary regulations; Essex FA safeguarding/reporting information; Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; relevant statutory safeguarding duties. This club policy is an FA-aligned draft, not an official FA-approved template.