



# Anti- Bullying and Harassment Policy

## 1. Introduction

The Woodford Wells Club [hereafter referred to as 'the club'] is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of personal safety, wellbeing and safeguarding of each committee member, employee, volunteer, coach, and member.

This is developed and sustained through a positive culture of vigilance, implementing learned lessons from incidences and best practice whilst working in partnership with statutory agencies, partner services and organisations and our sport's governing bodies.

This policy covers bullying and harassment that occurs relating to any committee member, employee, volunteer, coach, or member. It describes how incidents of bullying and harassment will be handled and reported.

## 2. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

The club does not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation and expects all committee members, staff, volunteers, coaches, and members to treat each other with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

The club is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains an environment in which the rights and dignity of all those working or participating in any of our activities, events or trips are respected.

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to:

- Promote a positive environment, both physical and virtual, in which people are treated fairly and with respect.
- Make it clear that harassment is unacceptable and that all those working in, with, and for the club have a role to play in creating an environment free from bullying and harassment.
- Provide a framework of support for committee members, staff, volunteers, coaches, and members who feel they have been subject to bullying and/or harassment.
- Provide a clear mechanism by which complaints about bullying and harassment can wherever possible be addressed in a timely way.

Those in positions of authority such as the committee members and managers have formal responsibilities under this policy and are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and procedures on appointment.

All committee members and managers, have a duty to implement this policy and to make every effort to ensure that bullying, harassment, and victimisation do not occur in any of the club's activities, events, or trips. If they do occur, they will ensure any concerns are investigated promptly and effectively.



All those working for and with the club have the right to expect professional behaviour from others, and a corresponding responsibility to behave professionally towards others.

All those working for and participating in the club's activities, events or trips has a personal responsibility for complying with this policy and procedures and must comply with and demonstrate active commitment to this policy by:

- Treating others with dignity
- Discouraging any form of bullying and harassment by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable
- Respect everyone's need and right to an environment that is safe and secure
- Respecting the feelings of others
- Recognising that everyone is important and equal, and that our differences make each of us special and worthy of being valued
- Showing appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions, and progress
- Supporting any committee member, employee, volunteer, coach, or member who feels they have been subject to bullying and/or harassment, including supporting them to speak out and make a formal complaint if appropriate – by doing nothing you are condoning the behaviour

Failure to comply with this policy and procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

### **3. Supporting Children, Parent(s), Carer(s) or Guardian(s)**

In supporting children who are members and participate in any activities, events or trips the club will:

- Let children know who will listen to and support them
- Create an "open door" ethos where children feel confident to talk to an adult about bullying behaviour or any other issue that affects them
- Acknowledge and address at the outset potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) to enable children to speak out
- Make sure children are aware of helpline numbers
- Listen carefully to anyone who reports an incident of bullying and reports will be taken seriously
- Investigate any reported experience of bullying behaviour and will listen carefully to all those involved
- Support children experiencing bullying behaviour and help to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment
- Support and encourage those who display bullying behaviour to develop better relationships
- Ensure that sanctions are proportionate and fair



In supporting the parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s) who are members themselves of have a child(ren) who are members and participate in any activities, events, or trips the club will:

- Advise parents, carers or guardians of the club's anti-bullying and harassment bullying policy
- Discuss any experience by a child of bullying behaviour or harassment with the child's parent(s), carers or guardians
- Consult with the child's parent(s), carer(s) on action to be taken (for both victim and perpetrator of the bullying or harassment and agree on these actions together
- Provide information and signpost to advice on coping with bullying and harassment from other agencies and organisations

#### 4. Definitions

The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits harassment related to nine protected characteristics which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) also makes it unlawful to pursue a course of conduct which you know or ought to know would be harassment, which includes causing someone alarm or distress.

Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) staff are entitled to a safe place and system of work.

In this policy and procedure "Complainant" refers to the individual experiencing the bullying or harassing behaviour; "Respondent" and/or "Perpetrator" refers to the person against whom the complaint is brought.

The term "parties" refers to the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is brought.

The following definitions and examples of bullying and harassment may be helpful in determining whether bullying and/or harassment has taken place.

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour from a person or group that is unwanted and makes you feel uncomfortable, including feeling:

- frightened
- less respected or put down
- made fun of
- upset

Examples of bullying behaviour could include:

- someone spreading false rumours about someone
- someone who keeps putting a colleague down in meetings



- a manager does not let a member of staff go on training courses, but they allow everyone else to
- a manager keeps giving a particular staff member a heavier workload than everyone else

The bullying might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- happen face-to-face, on virtual/social media, in emails or phone calls
- happen at work or at work social events
- not always be obvious or noticed by others

## Upward Bullying

Bullying can also happen from staff towards a more senior colleague or committee member - this can be called 'upward bullying' or 'subordinate bullying'. It can be from one member of staff or group of employees.

Examples of upward bullying can include:

- showing continued disrespect
- refusing to complete tasks
- spreading rumours
- doing things to make you seem unskilled or unable to do your job properly

It can be difficult if you're in a senior role to realise you're experiencing bullying behaviour from your staff. It's important to consider the real reasons for the behaviour. For example, there might be a wider issue with the culture of the organisation. Where any instances of this occur the General Committee and managers will work together to identify the cause of the issue and address it.

Bullying itself is not against the law, but harassment is. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

## Harassment

Harassment is when someone harasses another person in relation to the relevant protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act (Section 26), these being age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Harassment because of pregnancy or maternity is treated differently and could be [direct discrimination](#). The law on harassment does not cover marriage and civil partnership. As with bullying, the person being harassed might feel emotions including:

- disrespected
- frightened
- humiliated
- made fun of
- offended
- threatened

For it to count as harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:

- violated the person's dignity, whether it was intended or not
- created a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment

Harassment also includes:

- unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect as referred to above
- where an individual rejects or submits to the conduct of the perpetrator who then treats the individual less favourably than if the individual had not rejected or submitted to the conduct.

In deciding whether conduct has the effect referred to above each of the following must be taken into account

- the perception of the complainant
- the other circumstances of the case
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

Harassment can include:

- a serious one-off incident
- repeated behaviour
- spoken or written words, imagery, graffiti, gestures, mimicry, jokes, pranks, physical behaviour that affects the person

It is still against the law even if the person being harassed does not ask for it to stop.

The law on harassment also applies to:

- a person being harassed because they are thought to have a certain protected characteristic when they do not
- a person being harassed because they're linked to someone with a certain protected characteristic
- a person who witnesses harassment because of a protected characteristic and is upset by it

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment can happen to men, women and people of any gender identity or sexual orientation. It can be carried out by anyone of the same sex, a different sex or anyone of any gender identity. [Sexual harassment](#), is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. This can be written, verbal, imagery, physical or sexual assault. For example, someone making sexual comments or trying to touch someone against their will

Examples could include:

- harassment because of a person's sex, for example a male boss regularly putting down a female employee because she's a woman
- being treated unfairly because they've received or stood up against this type of harassment

## **Racial Harassment**

In the workplace, racial harassment may take the form of actual or threatened physical abuse or it may involve offensive jokes, verbal abuse, language, graffiti or literature of a racist nature or offensive remarks about a person's skin colour, physical characteristics, or religion.

A racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. It may also include repeated exclusion of a person from an ethnic or religious



minority from conversations, patronising remarks, unfair allocation of work or pressure about the speed and/or quality of their work in a way which differs from the treatment of other members of staff.

For further information refer to the following website:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/racist-and-religious-hate-crime-prosecution-guidance>

## **Stalking**

Stalking may also be a form of harassment and may be characterised by any of the following repeated and unwanted behaviours:

- Following a person
- Contacting or attempting to contact a person by any means
- Publishing any statement or other material –
  - Relating or purporting to relate to a person, or
  - Purporting to originate from a person
- Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication
- Loitering in any place (whether public or private)
- Interfering with any property in the possession of a person
- Watching or spying on a person including through the use of CCTV or electronic surveillance

Legitimate, constructive, and fair criticism of performance or behaviour of a member of staff, volunteer or coach at work is not bullying or harassment. However, it is unacceptable to condone bullying behaviour under the guise of a particular management style. Effective management obtains results whilst ensuring that staff are treated with dignity and respect. For further information refer to the following websites:

[ACAS](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

<https://www.gov.uk/report-stalker>

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **Committee Members and Managers**

Every committee member and manager has an obligation to prevent harassment / bullying and to take immediate action once it has been identified whether or not a complaint has been made.

Allegations of harassment or bullying, received either informally or formally, must be dealt with promptly and sensitively.

It is important that committee members and managers recognise that sexual harassment is any sexual advance unwanted by the recipient or behaviour which causes offence to the recipient. Similarly, racial harassment is behaviour which is racially offensive to the recipient. Committee members and managers must therefore



take care to ensure that they do not prejudge situations based on their own sexual or racial attitudes and perceptions.

It may not always be appropriate for a committee member or manager to be involved with specific complaints. For example, if the complainant is female and wishes to speak to a female, but the manager is male, or, if the complaint relates to the conduct of the committee member or manager. The following procedure sets out the alternatives for such instances.

### **Staff, Volunteers, Coaches and Members**

Every member of staff, volunteer, coach, and member has a personal responsibility NOT to harass or bully other anyone. Where member of staff, volunteer, coach, or member becomes aware of harassment or bullying occurring, they should bring the matter to the attention of General Manager.

Staff members, volunteers, coaches and members will be

## **6. Procedure for Dealing with Bullying or Harassment**

The club's Grievance Policy and Procedure will be followed in respect of addressing allegations of bullying and/or harassment, and where the allegation involving a member of staff is proven, the MTW Disciplinary Policy and Procedure with respect to the respondent.

Proven cases of bullying and/or harassment will always be treated as a disciplinary offence, and the club's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may be invoked at any stage.

In any allegation, it is not the intention of the respondent that is key in deciding if harassment or bullying has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by reasonable normal standards and is disadvantageous or unwelcome to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

In considering reasonable normal standards, the provisions included in the Equality Act 2010 will be taken into account.

A flowchart of the following informal and formal procedures is outlined in Appendix A.

### **6.1 Informal Procedure**

Any committee member, employee, volunteer, coach, or member who feels that they are being subjected to harassment or bullying may attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance.

The complainant should keep a record of any incidents, detailing when, where, what occurred, and witnesses (if any).



In some cases, it may be possible and sufficient for them to explain clearly to the person(s) engaged in the unwanted activities that the behaviour is unwelcome, that it offends or makes them uncomfortable:

- If at the initial informal discussion stage, the circumstances are too difficult or embarrassing to approach the respondent alone, the complainant may wish to be accompanied by a colleague
- the complainant may wish to write a letter/email to the respondent
- Alternatively, or subsequently if the complainant has no success, they may wish to talk to someone in order to obtain another perspective on the situation and to ensure that someone else knows about the unacceptable behaviour. At this stage the complainant has the option of speaking to a colleague, their line manager or any other manager at MTW, or to an HR Officer.
- If the allegation is made against the line manager, the next in line manager should be approached.
- A final option is to make a formal complaint without following the informal approach.

Where the steps noted above are unsuccessful or inappropriate, the complainant should raise the matter informally and in confidence with the General Manager.

Alternatively, the matter may be raised with a member of the General Committee (if felt necessary, this could be of the same gender as the complainant identifies with).

In the first instance the General Manager, with advice from the HR provider, if necessary, should try and resolve the matter informally. This should be done by following the informal Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Separate meetings should be convened with both parties. In the case of a bullying or harassment allegation it is inappropriate that both parties meet to try and resolve the situation until investigations have been concluded and conclusions drawn. Either party is entitled to bring a representative or colleague to these meetings.

If, and only if it is agreeable to the complainant, it may be relevant for the club's HR provider to facilitate a meeting between both parties to give the complainant the opportunity to talk to the respondent about their offending behaviour.

The informal action outlined above may be appropriate in many cases and will often be sufficient to resolve matters.

A formal complaint should only be considered as a final option if the unacceptable behaviour begins again or in exceptional circumstance where the nature of the incident(s) warrants a more formal approach.

A file note must be provided by the General Manager / Investigating Officer, following the conclusion of this stage of the procedure.

The HR provider will help to resolve difficulties by providing independent confidential advice and support. Intervention such as professional mediation or counselling can be provided at any stage in the procedure if the situation warrants it.





Should the bullying and/or harassment continue, the HR provider must be consulted before formal action is taken.

The General Manager will discuss the matter with the complainant and agree a course of action. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative or work colleague at these meetings. The respondent will also have the right to state their version of events to the General Manager and to also be accompanied by a representative or colleague.

The complainant must be assured that they will not be discriminated against or victimised for raising the complaint. Confidentiality will be observed throughout and the need for any disclosure of the details of the case will be discussed and agreed.

At any stage of the process the complainant, the General Manager, or the accused respondent may feel that they need the help of an independent person before deciding on the best course of action.

The club will seek the advice of a suitable trained person who can give confidential advice and assistance, including:

- advising on the nature of harassment
- offering guidance on resolving harassment problems, including acting as an independent broker
- if the situation cannot be resolved informally then the complainant has the right to pursue their complaint formally via the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Where the General Manager considers that there may be evidence of harassment, they may consider it appropriate to undertake a full investigation of the circumstances.

In this case an independent investigation officer will be appointed to undertake this investigation. Best practice in relation to confidentiality will be maintained during this investigation; and both the complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to have their say. The investigator will also interview and take statements from any appropriate witnesses to the alleged harassment.

Where there is evidence that bullying and/or harassment has occurred, prompt and corrective action will be taken, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

The club take bullying seriously and recognise harassment is a serious offence which may result in summary dismissal.

## **6.2 Formal Procedure**

Formal action will only be entered into if, after monitoring, the informal action has not been acceptable to the complainant. The purpose of the formal stage is to ensure that the respondent stops the unwanted and unacceptable behaviour.

The formal Grievance Procedure will be used to investigate the case of the complainant and provide a resolution. Should the grievance hearing find there is a case to answer, the formal Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked, at an appropriate stage.



A thorough investigation must be undertaken with care and sensitivity. The General Committee together with the General Manager will appoint an 'investigating officer', and the HR provider will ensure that both the complainant and the respondent are supported by different people.

Investigations into allegations of bullying and/or harassment should be as thorough and impartial as possible. The club will protect the rights of both the respondent as well as the complainant and, therefore, confidentiality is crucial.

The investigating officer will explain the Formal Grievance Procedure in full to both the complainant and the respondent.

The investigating officer will:

- Interview the complainant and prepare a written statement for them to sign. Establish what the complainant wants to happen as a consequence of reporting the incident
- Interview and prepare written statements from all witnesses for each to sign.
- Advise the respondent of the allegations against them and the disciplinary procedure if necessary.
- Interview the respondent confidentially, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish and prepare a written statement for them to sign.
- A copy of the complainant's written statement may be given to the respondent who should be given an opportunity to reply to the allegations.
- Following the initial interviews, the investigating manager will formulate their report including their conclusions.
- If, after conducting the investigation, it is still unclear as to who to believe and there is a conflict of evidence, a further detailed investigation should be undertaken.
- The investigating manager should talk again to all witnesses in an effort to ascertain whether or not the alleged incident occurred. The investigating manager only has to have a "reasonable belief" based on their thorough investigation.
- The investigating manager will formulate their final report including their conclusions.
- If the complaint is valid the investigating manager will take the appropriate and prompt action to stop the bullying/harassment.
- Where there is a case to answer the formal Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked.

### **6.3 When Harassment at work could be a crime**

There may be situations where the General Manager thinks the alleged harassment at the club could be a crime. For example, if an employee tells the General Manager, they've been:

- physically attacked
- sexually assaulted
- the victim of a hate crime, for example racist or homophobic abuse
- threatened with violence

The General Manager will talk to the complainant about whether they want to report it to the police and support them if they choose to report it. Before doing this, the General Manager should:



- speak with the HR provider
- get specialist advice, for example from a relevant charity or helpline
- consider [getting legal advice](#)

The General Manager should not put any pressure on the complainant to make any particular decision. If they do not want to tell the police, they do not have to. In most cases, the General Manager should support the decision of the complainant. However, in certain circumstances they may decide that the incident is so serious that they advise the complainant of the need to inform the police, either by themselves or by the General Manager. This might include if the General Manager or the complainant think there's likely to be:

- an ongoing risk to their safety or the safety of others
- an increased risk to their safety because they're a vulnerable person, for example they have a mental health condition

Before telling the police, the General Manager should talk with the complainant. They should also let the complainant know once the police have been informed.

## 6.4 Monitoring

Monitor the ongoing relationship between both individuals after the incident will be the responsibility of the General Manager or a member of the General Committee.

Following a formal bullying or harassment complaint, either party may be concerned about working with or participating in a sporting activity with the other again. Due regard of such views should be taken into account when offering counselling or mediation.

If either the complainant or the respondent believes they have not been dealt with fairly, they should raise their concerns via the Grievance Procedure for employees, volunteers, or coaches and via the Complaints Procedure for members.

## 6.5 Support Services and Organisations

[ACAS \(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service\)](#) - provide guidance on discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. You can contact the ACAS Helpline for free and impartial advice, whether you are an employer, employee or representative. The telephone number is 0300 123 1100; Textphone: 18001 0300 123 1100. It is available Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. You can also use the ACAS Helpline Online tool.

[Samaritans](#) - A charity who can provide emotional support for workers who are struggling to cope and need somebody to listen to them. The telephone number is 116 123 (free number) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

[Citizens Advice](#) – give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward, whoever they are, and whatever their problem.



[Victim Support](#) - Victim Support is an independent charity. We are dedicated to supporting people affected by crime and traumatic incidents in England and Wales, and we put them at the heart of our organisation. Tel: 0808 16 89 111.

[Stop Hate UK](#) - Stop Hate UK is one of the leading national organisations working to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties. Tel: 0800 138 1625 24-hour helpline.

[Stop Hate UK – Call Out Hate](#) - A service provided by Stop Hate UK that advises and supports those affected by or witnessing Hate Crime towards young people under 18. **Confidential 24-hour support for young people under 18 experiencing or witnessing a Hate Crime** - Tel: 0808 801 0576 Text: 07717 989 025

[NSPCC](#) Helpline 0800 800 5000

[Childline](#) – 0800 1111

[Kidscape](#) – Help with Bullying – Parent Advice Line 07946 682785

[Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

[SupportLine](#) - Provides a confidential telephone helpline offering emotional support to any individual on any issue. The Helpline is primarily a preventative service and aims to support people before they reach the point of crisis. It is particularly aimed at those who are socially isolated, vulnerable, at-risk groups and victims of any form of abuse. SupportLine is a member of the Helplines Association. SupportLine also provides support by email and post. Tel: 01708 765200 - Email: [info@supportline.org.uk](mailto:info@supportline.org.uk) – Post: SupportLine, PO Box 2860, Romford, Essex RM7 1JA

[Police](#) - To contact the police:

- call 999 if you or someone else is in immediate danger
- call 101 if it's not an emergency

To report a crime online, visit [Police.uk](https://www.police.uk)

## 7. Monitoring and Review

The club is committed to striving for excellence in the provision of all its activities, events, and trips. We do this by regularly reviewing our policies, procedures, and practices across all aspects of the organisation. The General Committee will review this policy and procedures bi-annually to ensure it continues to reflect legislation and guidance. Any amendments to the policy and supporting procedures will be submitted to the General Committee for approval.



## 8. Linked Policies and Procedures

This policy is linked to the following policies, procedures and documents and therefore should be read in conjunction:

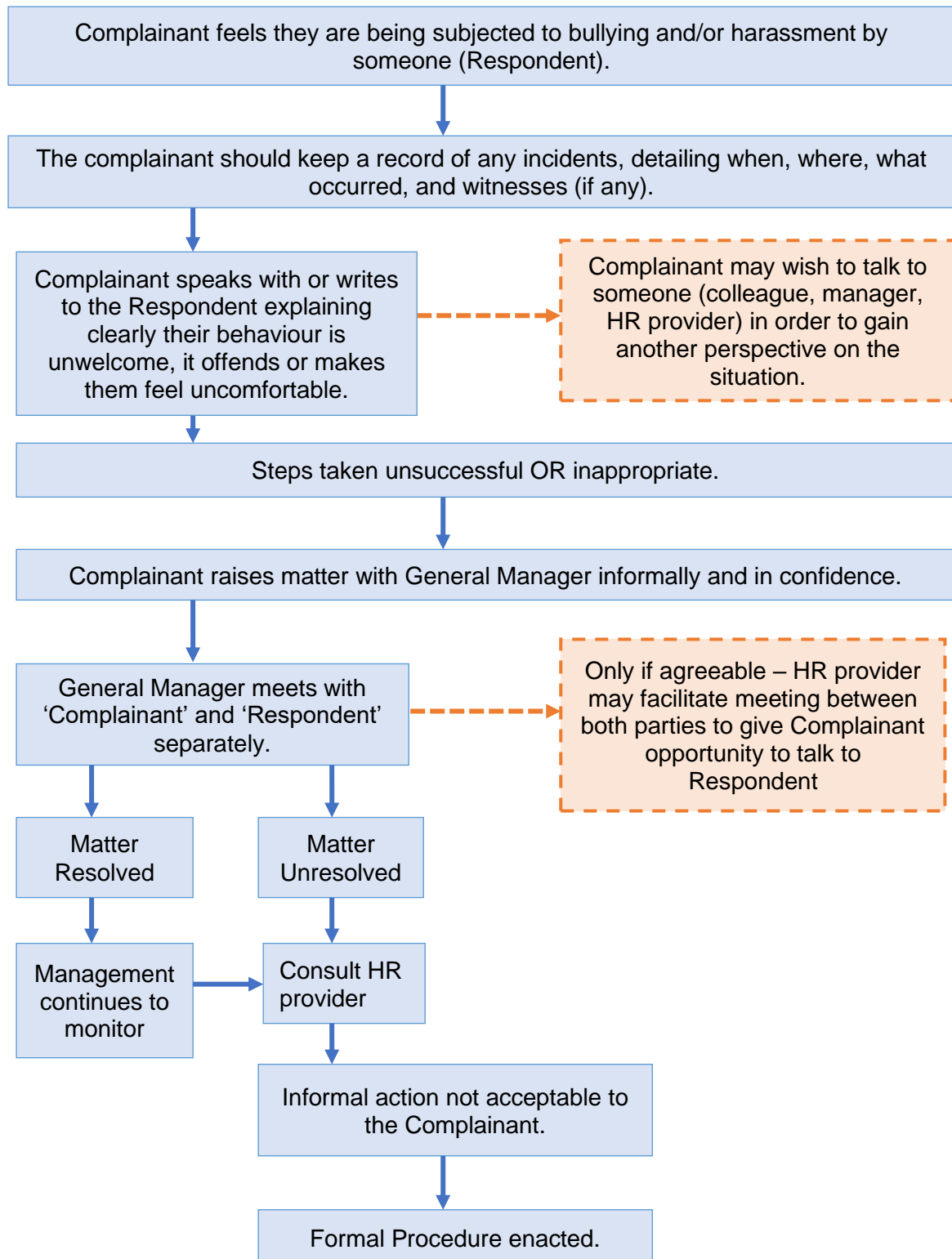
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

<b>Date of Last Review</b>	August 2024	<b>Owner</b>	Committee
<b>Review Period</b>	Bi- Annual	<b>Date of Next Review</b>	August 2026

## Appendix A

### The Woodford Wells Club Bullying and Harassment Procedural Flowchart

#### Informal Procedure



## Formal Procedure

