

# **VEXATIOUS, UNREASONABLE & MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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Approved by: Club Director – Kristina Ondon Tukilush

## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

London Sport Academy (LSA) is committed to treating all concerns and complaints seriously, fairly and promptly.

However, on rare occasions, individuals may raise complaints:

- repeatedly, without new evidence
- aggressively or abusively
- dishonestly or maliciously
- based on assumptions, accusations or personal interpretation
- in a manner intended to harass or pressure staff
- outside official communication channels
- on social media or public platforms

These behaviours can place significant strain on club resources, create distress for staff and gymnasts, and undermine a positive training environment.

This policy outlines how LSA will identify and manage vexatious, unreasonable or malicious complaints.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1 Vexatious Complaint**

A complaint that:

- is obsessive, persistent, or harassing
- continues despite full response being provided
- lacks any evidence
- repeatedly reopens the same issue
- uses a pattern of unreasonable communication

### **2.2 Malicious Complaint**

A complaint that:

- contains knowingly false allegations
- is intended to harm the reputation of a coach, gymnast or the club
- includes fabricated or distorted statements
- accuses staff or club of discrimination or misconduct without evidence

## 2.3 Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

Includes:

- aggressive, abusive, disrespectful or intimidating messages
- excessive volume of communication
- demanding immediate responses
- refusing to follow club procedures
- bypassing official channels (e.g., WhatsApp or social media attacks)
- making speculative allegations (“I feel”, “I believe”, “it seems”) presented as fact

## 3. EXAMPLES OF VEXATIOUS OR UNREASONABLE CONDUCT

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Repeatedly raising the same concern after it has been addressed
- Accusing the club of racism, favouritism, discrimination without evidence
- Using WhatsApp, group chats or social media to criticise the club
- Targeting staff with aggressive or disrespectful communication
- Insisting on outcomes that are not possible or reasonable
- Demanding policy changes based on personal preference
- Flooding the club with messages across multiple platforms
- Misrepresenting communications or taking messages out of context
- Threatening complaints to BG to force the club’s decision
- Harassing the administrator, coaches or Director
- Contacting staff outside working hours repeatedly

## 4. HOW LSA WILL MANAGE SUCH COMPLAINTS

When behaviour is considered unreasonable, LSA may take one or more of the following steps:

### Step 1 – Formal Warning

The parent/guardian will receive a written notice stating that:

- their communication is inappropriate
- all further communication must follow the official Complaints Procedure
- staff will not respond to messages outside those channels

### Step 2 – Restriction of Communication

LSA may impose communication limits, including:

- only email communication permitted
- communication allowed only with the Director or Welfare Officer
- set response times (e.g., within 10 working days)
- refusal to engage with repeated issues already resolved

### Step 3 – Suspension of Access

If behaviour continues:

- parent may be restricted from entering the training venue
- parent may be removed from WhatsApp / communication groups

## Step 4 – Membership Review

In cases of ongoing or severe misconduct, LSA may:

- suspend the gymnast temporarily
- initiate a formal disciplinary process
- terminate membership

This is always a last resort but may be necessary to protect staff and other families.

## 5. COMPLAINTS RAISED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Any complaint, accusation or negative statement made via:

- WhatsApp groups
- private messages to other parents
- social media posts or comments
- screenshots or indirect remarks (“indirects”)

is considered automatically vexatious and will not be investigated until:

- it is submitted formally through the Complaints & Grievance Procedure
- the social media content is removed

Public criticism of the club, staff or gymnasts is a breach of:

- Social Media & Online Communication Policy
- Parent Communication & Behaviour Policy
- Conduct & Discipline Policy

## 6. SAFEGUARDING EXCEPTION

If a concern involves safeguarding or risks to a child, it will ALWAYS be taken seriously regardless of the behaviour of the complainant.

However, safeguarding does not excuse:

- aggression
- harassment
- false allegations
- public accusations

Safeguarding concerns must still be reported via appropriate channels.

## 7. WHEN A COMPLAINT WILL NOT BE INVESTIGATED

LSA may decline or close a complaint when:

- it contains false or misleading statements
- it is based on assumptions rather than facts
- it repeats issues already addressed
- it concerns decisions that are not open to parent influence

(e.g. coaching decisions, space allocation, training groups, language use)

- communication is abusive or disrespectful
- the purpose appears to be pressure, harassment or retaliation

## **8. RECORDING & EVIDENCE**

LSA will keep detailed internal records:

- all messages received
- behaviour logs
- screenshots of aggressive or inappropriate communication
- summaries of meetings and responses

These records may be shared with:

- British Gymnastics
- safeguarding authorities
- legal advisors (if necessary)

## **9. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy works together with:


- Complaints & Grievance Procedure
- Parent Communication & Behaviour Policy
- Social Media & Online Communication Policy
- Conduct & Discipline Policy
- Inclusion & Equality Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy


If behaviour breaches multiple policies, multiple actions may be taken.

## **10. CONTACT DETAILS**

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