

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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