

Whistleblowing Policy

Taunton Pickleball

5th October 2025

1. Policy Statement

Taunton Pickleball is committed to fostering a culture of openness, accountability, and integrity. We recognise that from time to time, individuals may become aware of serious wrongdoing or risks within the club that they feel unable to report through normal channels. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a clear and confidential procedure for any club member, coach, volunteer, or parent to raise such concerns without fear of reprisal or detriment.

This policy is not for addressing personal grievances or complaints about unfair treatment, which should be dealt with under our standard Complaints Procedure. This policy is for raising serious concerns about potential wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the act of raising a serious concern about potential wrongdoing, malpractice, or a risk that is in the public interest. Examples of such concerns include, but are not limited to:

- A **criminal offence** has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
- Someone is failing to comply with a **legal obligation**.
- The health and safety of an individual is **endangered** (e.g., a serious health and safety breach).
- **Abuse or neglect** of a child or adult at risk (this should also be reported under the Safeguarding Policy).
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.
- Breach of financial regulations, fraud, or misuse of club funds.
- Serious breach of the club's rules or constitution.

3. Who can be a Whistleblower?

This policy applies to anyone with a connection to Taunton Pickleball UK, including:

- Current and former members.
- Coaches and volunteers
- Anyone else involved in club activities.

4. How to Raise a Concern

We encourage individuals to raise concerns as early as possible so that we can take appropriate action.

Step 1: The Designated Whistleblowing Officer

The primary point of contact for whistleblowing concerns is the group Leader, Sylvia Jackson. This role is chosen due to the position's authority and direct access to decision-making at the highest level of the club.

Step 2: Making the Disclosure

Concerns should be raised in writing (email is preferred) and should include:

- Your name and contact details (if you wish to remain anonymous, this can be stated).
- The nature of the concern and why you believe it is a serious issue.
- The name(s) of the individual(s) involved.
- All relevant dates, times, locations, and any supporting evidence or documents.

Step 3: Anonymity and Confidentiality

We will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. We will not disclose your name without your consent, unless a serious risk or legal obligation requires it.

While we will investigate concerns raised anonymously, it can make a full investigation difficult. We encourage individuals to leave their contact details so that we can ask for further information if needed.

5. How We Will Respond

1. **Acknowledgement:** We will acknowledge receipt of your concern in writing within **7 working days**.
2. **Assessment:** The Chair (or designated Committee member) will assess the concern to determine if it falls under the scope of this policy.
3. **Investigation:** If the concern is valid, a full and confidential investigation will be launched. A small, impartial panel from the Committee may be appointed to handle this.
4. **No Detriment:** We guarantee that no whistleblower will be subject to any form of retaliation, harassment, or disadvantage for raising a concern in good faith. If you believe you have been subjected to such treatment, please report it immediately.
5. **Feedback:** While we will not be able to share details of the investigation to protect the privacy of others, we will inform you of the outcome and the action taken, where appropriate and legally permissible.

6. External Reporting

If you feel that your concern has not been adequately addressed by the club, or if you believe the matter is too serious to be handled internally, you have the right to report it externally. Relevant external bodies include:

- **The Police:** For criminal offences.
- **Pickleball England (National Governing Body):** For matters related to sports governance and integrity.

We encourage you to use the club's internal process first, but we respect your right to go to an external body at any time.

7. Policy Review

This Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed annually by the Committee of Taunton Pickleball to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and compliant with best practices.