

Mushin Martial Arts

Complaints Policy and Procedure



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This policy explains how Mushin Martial Arts (“the Club”) handles complaints about our services, facilities, communications or the conduct of any individual associated with the Club. It applies to all students, parents, staff, volunteers and third parties.

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure covers complaints relating to:

- The Club’s buildings, equipment or facilities
- Written information, publications or communications
- Payments, refunds or financial arrangements
- Any aspect of conduct or behaviour (including safety, professionalism, discrimination or intimidation)

It applies equally to:

- Complaints from adults or children
- Complaints by email, letter, telephone, in-person or anonymously

It does not override any statutory safeguarding obligations or regulatory requirements.

2. Definitions

Complaint

Any expression of dissatisfaction, whether oral or written, about actions, omissions or decisions of the Club or its personnel.

Complainant

The individual or organisation making a complaint.

Working day

Any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday in England.

Responsible Officer

The Club Secretary (or their delegate) who oversees complaint handling.

3. Principles

- **Accessibility**
You may raise a complaint by any reasonable means. We will support reasonable adjustments (e.g. translation, large print, advocacy).
- **No Retaliation**
You will never be disadvantaged, harassed or bullied for making a complaint.
- **Equality**
Complaints will be handled without discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 (protected characteristics).

- **Fairness & Impartiality**
Investigations will be led by individuals not directly involved in the matter in dispute. Affected parties can respond before any decision is reached.
- **Confidentiality**
Details will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, except where we are legally obliged to disclose (e.g. to police, Local Authority Designated Officer, NSPCC).
- **Safety & Welfare**
Any safeguarding concern (especially involving children or vulnerable adults) takes priority and will be referred immediately to the appropriate authority.

4. How to Complain

1. **Informal Route**
Discuss the issue with your instructor, the Welfare Lead (Suzanne Hick), or any Club officer. Many concerns can be resolved by direct conversation.
2. **Formal Route**
Submit your complaint in writing or by email to secretary@mushin.club. Provide:
 - Your name and contact details
 - Details of the incident or service issue
 - Dates, times and any witnesses
 - Desired outcome or remedy
3. **Anonymous Complaints**
We accept these but may be limited in investigation without sufficient detail.
4. **External Bodies**
If you prefer, you may contact:
 - Police (999 / 101)
 - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via your social services department
 - NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
 - Childline (for under-18s): 0800 1111

5. Investigation Process

- **Acknowledgement**
We will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days (or sooner if urgent).
- **Investigation**
A designated investigator or panel will gather evidence, interview relevant parties and review documents. You may be asked to review draft findings to ensure accuracy.

- **Timescales**

We aim to conclude investigations within 20 working days of acknowledgement. If delays arise, we will update you every 10 working days.

- **Safeguarding Escalation**

Any allegation of harm, abuse or serious misconduct will be referred immediately to statutory authorities, and the Club will cooperate fully.

6. Communication & Updates

- You will be assigned a named contact for progress reports.
- Updates will be provided at least every 10 working days.
- At conclusion, you will receive a written outcome:
 - Summary of findings
 - Decisions and any actions taken
 - Information on how to appeal

We will not disclose information if doing so would place anyone at risk; in such cases, we will explain how your concerns have been addressed in general terms.

7. Outcomes and Remedies

Possible outcomes include:

- Informal resolution (e.g. apology, explanation, change in practice)
- Formal disciplinary action under the Club's Constitution
- Changes to Club policies, contracts or arrangements
- Referral to external agencies (e.g. LADO, Police, Social Services)
- Closure of the complaint where no further action is warranted

8. Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal in writing within 14 days of the decision. Appeals will be heard by a Review Panel made explicitly for the review who were not involved in the original investigation. The Panel's decision is final.

9. Record Keeping and Review

- All records of complaints, investigations and outcomes will be retained in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.
- We will review this Complaints Policy every two years or sooner if required by law or organisational change.

10. Contact

For questions or to submit a complaint, contact:

Mushin Martial Arts

Email: secretary@mushin.club

Website: <http://mushin.club>

Last reviewed: 07 August 2025