Whistleblowing Policy

Issue: 1
Issue Date: November 2026
Review Date: November 2027
Responsible: Hitchin Netball Club Committee

The Committee is collectively responsible for ensuring this document is implemented, reviewed and updated as required.

Approval

This document was approved by the Hitchin Netball Club Committee at its meeting on 7 November 2026 and the approval is recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

Purpose

This policy explains how concerns about serious wrongdoing within Hitchin Netball Club (HNC) can be raised and how the Club will respond.

HNC is committed to ensuring that genuine concerns can be reported safely, appropriately and without fear of unfair treatment.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone involved in HNC activities, including players, parents and carers, volunteers, coaches, Committee members, officials, visitors and spectators.

Whistleblowing relates to concerns about serious wrongdoing or malpractice that affect others or the wider interests of the Club. This may include:

- Safeguarding or welfare concerns
- Financial irregularities, fraud or misuse of Club funds
- Illegal, unethical or unsafe behaviour
- Serious breaches of Club policies or Codes of Conduct
- Attempts to conceal serious wrongdoing

Personal complaints, disagreements or concerns about an individual's own treatment should normally be raised under the Club's Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Concerns about the immediate safety or welfare of a child or young person must be reported in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures and should not be delayed while the whistleblowing process is followed.

Policy Statement

HNC encourages a culture of openness, accountability and responsible reporting.

Anyone who raises a genuine concern will be treated fairly and with respect. The Club will not tolerate victimisation, harassment or retaliation against someone for raising a concern in good faith.

The Club will:

- Take genuine concerns seriously
- Respond promptly and fairly
- Treat information sensitively and share it only where necessary
- Take appropriate action where wrongdoing is identified
- Refer matters to external organisations or authorities where required

Statutory whistleblowing protections apply where the relevant legal requirements are met. The Club's commitment to fair treatment applies to everyone covered by this policy, whether or not they qualify for statutory whistleblowing protection.

Procedures / Implementation

Raising a Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as reasonably possible with an appropriate person, such as:

- Club Chair
- Club Safeguarding Officer
- Committee member with responsibility for governance

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

If the concern involves the person who would normally receive the report, it should be raised with another appropriate Committee member. Where a concern cannot appropriately be raised or resolved within the Club, it may be reported to England Netball or another relevant external authority.

Anonymous concerns may be raised, although providing contact details may make it easier for the Club to investigate and seek further information.

Safeguarding Concerns

Any concern relating to the safety or welfare of a child or young person must be handled in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the appropriate emergency services or statutory authorities should be contacted without delay.

Handling of Concerns

The Club will:

- Acknowledge the concern where contact details have been provided
- Consider the nature and seriousness of the concern
- Decide who is appropriate to consider or investigate the matter
- Take appropriate action or refer the matter externally where necessary
- Provide an update or outcome to the person raising the concern where appropriate and possible

Information will be treated sensitively and shared only with those who need to know, so far as reasonably possible and subject to safeguarding and legal obligations.

Protection for People Raising Concerns

No person raising a genuine concern will be treated unfairly simply because the concern is not ultimately substantiated.

The Club will not tolerate retaliation, harassment or victimisation arising from the raising of a genuine concern.

Deliberately false or malicious allegations may be addressed under the Club's relevant procedures.

Responsibilities

Everyone involved with HNC has a responsibility to support a culture in which genuine concerns can be raised safely.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring concerns are handled appropriately, fairly and consistently.

Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed annually by the HNC Committee, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, Club operations, or England Netball guidance.

The Committee will monitor implementation and compliance. All updates will be documented and communicated to members and volunteers.

References and Supporting Documents

Hitchin Netball Club documents

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Club Codes of Conduct

External guidance and documents

- England Netball – Report a Safeguarding Concern
- GOV.UK – Whistleblowing for employees