Springwater Golf Club

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. Springwater Golf Club (the "Organisation") is committed to creating an open and honest environment where individuals feel confident to speak up about concerns in the public interest.

1.2. We recognise whistleblowing as an essential part of good governance and safeguarding practice. We encourage the early reporting of concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or behaviour that may place adults or children at risk.

1.3. Where concerns are raised under this policy, we will seek to ensure they are considered fairly and appropriately and that individuals are not subjected to harassment, victimisation, or other detrimental treatment as a result.

2. Purpose & Scope

2.1. This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals to raise concerns at an early stage.
- Provide a clear and accessible process for reporting whistleblowing concerns.
- Explain how concerns will be handled in a fair and proportionate way.
- Reassure individuals that they will be supported and protected when raising concerns.
- Support a positive safeguarding culture for all adults and children.

2.2. This policy applies to anyone involved in or connected with the Organisation, including but not limited to members, volunteers, committee members and officers, coaches and officials, employees and contractors, parents, carers, and guardians, other participants and stakeholders.

2.3. This policy does not apply to personal complaints or grievances relating solely to individual treatment, selection decisions, service issues, membership matters, or disputes that do not involve wrongdoing or risk in the public interest. These should be raised through the appropriate complaints or disciplinary procedure.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

3.1. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information that an individual reasonably believes shows wrongdoing, malpractice, or danger, and which they reasonably believe is in the public interest to disclose.

3.2. For the purposes of this policy, whistleblowing concerns are those that relate to the Organisation, its activities, or individuals connected with the Organisation.

3.3. Examples of whistleblowing include:

- **Criminal offences**, including fraud, bribery, assault, or any other unlawful activity.
- **Failures to comply with legal obligations**, including statutory or regulatory requirements.
- **Miscarriages of justice**, whether actual, ongoing, or likely to occur.
- **Health and safety risks**, including conduct that places any individual at risk of harm or safeguarding concerns involving children or adults at risk.
- **Environmental damage** connected to the Organisation activities or operations.
- **Deliberate concealment** of any of the matters listed above.

3.4. Disclosures must be made with reasonable belief in the accuracy of the information. Individuals are not required to prove the allegation.

4. Raising Concerns

4.1. If there is an immediate risk of harm, the emergency services should be contacted without delay by calling 999.

4.2. For advice or to report concerns about a child where there is no immediate risk, the NSPCC Helpline can be contacted on 0808 800 5000.

4.3. All other concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals are encouraged to provide enough information to help the concern be understood and considered, such as what has happened, when and where it occurred, and who was involved.

4.4. Concerns should be raised with one or more of the appropriate contacts listed below, depending on the nature of the concern.

- The Club Secretary
- The Club Professionals
- Any Member of the Club Committee
- The Club Welfare & Safeguarding Officer

4.5. Where a concern relates to one of the contacts listed above, or the individual does not feel able to raise the concern with that person, the concern should be raised with an alternative appropriate contact listed in this policy.

4.6. Anonymous concerns will be considered where sufficient information is provided, although anonymity may limit the ability to investigate or provide feedback.

How We Will Respond

4.7. The Organisation will acknowledge receipt of a concern as soon as reasonably practicable and, where possible, within five working days.

4.8. An initial assessment will be carried out within seven working days, where possible, to determine whether the concern falls within the scope of this policy, whether any immediate action is required, and the appropriate way for the concern to be handled, including any safeguarding considerations.

4.9. Where appropriate, the Organisation may arrange for the concern to be investigated. Any investigation will be conducted in a fair and proportionate manner and, where possible, by a person who is independent of the matters raised and who has relevant experience.

4.10. Possible outcomes may include no further action, informal resolution, training or guidance, changes to procedures or practice, disciplinary action, or referral to an external body.

4.11. The individual raising the concern will be kept informed of progress and, where appropriate, the outcome, subject to confidentiality, data protection, and safeguarding requirements. Where feasible, updates will be provided at reasonable intervals, for example every twenty working days, taking into account the nature and

complexity of the matter, and the individual will normally be informed when the process has concluded.

5. Confidentiality & Data Protection

5.1. The Organisation will take reasonable steps to protect the identity of individuals raising concerns under this policy. Information will be shared only where necessary to investigate the concern, for safeguarding purposes, or where required by law, and only with those who need to know. Where disclosure is necessary, the Organisation will seek to explain the reasons and provide appropriate support. All information will be handled, stored securely, and managed in accordance with data protection legislation.

6. Protection for Whistleblowers

6.1. The Organisation will take all reasonable steps within its control to help ensure that any individual who raises a genuine concern under this policy is not unfairly subjected to harassment, victimisation, or other detrimental treatment as a result of doing so.

6.2. Where appropriate, the Organisation may provide support such as a welfare contact, reasonable role adjustments, or signposting to other reporting routes or independent advice, and will seek to keep individuals informed of the general steps taken in response, subject to the limitations outlined in this policy.

7. External Advice

7.1. If an individual believes that their concern has not been handled appropriately, or reasonably believes that it is not suitable to raise the concern to the Organisation, they may seek advice from, or report the concern to, an appropriate external body. This may include the Police, Local Authority safeguarding services, regulatory bodies, or specialist whistleblowing charities.

7.2. External organisations that may be able to provide advice or support include:

- **NSPCC**

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Website: https://www.nspcc.org.uk

- **Sport England**

Phone: 03458 508 508

Website: https://www.sportengland.org

- **Protect** (UK whistleblowing charity)

Phone: 020 3117 2520

Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk

7.3 Other external guidance links include:

- **ACAS Whistleblowing Guidance:**
- https://www.acas.org.uk/whistleblowing-at- work

- **GOV.UK whistleblowing information:**
- https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

7.3. Individuals must ensure they do not disclose personal or confidential information unlawfully when raising concerns externally.

8 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, or best practice.

9. Appendix – Reporting Overview



1. **A concern is identified.**
2. **The concern is raised with an appropriate contact within the Organisation, if safe to**
3. **The Organisation acknowledges the concern and considers any immediate or**
4. **The appropriate response or pathway is identified.**
5. **The concern is considered or investigated, where appropriate.**
6. **Feedback is provided where possible, and any learning or improvements are implemented.**