



Version Number:	Version 1
Document Name:	Complaint Handling Process
Effective Date:	1 st November, 2018
Document Status:	

Complaint handling principles

You should apply the following principles:

- **Treat** complaints seriously
- **Act** promptly
- **Treat** people fairly and listen to both sides of the story
- **Stay** neutral
- **Keep** parties to the complaint informed
- **Try to Maintain** confidentiality if possible
- **Protect** against victimisation
- **Keep** accurate records
- **Make** decisions based only on information gathered not personal views
- **Disciplinary** action should be relative to the breach

Complaint options and steps

An organisation's Member Protection Policy describes options and procedures for dealing with complaints.

Where possible, less serious complaints should be resolved informally at the level they occur (e.g. club). An example of a less serious complaint is a coach showing favouritism towards their own child in team selection. However, the circumstances of some complaints may require more formal processes, such as a player missing out on team selection because of race or religious beliefs. Referral to an external agency may be required for very serious issues like suspicion of harm against a child.

There are occasions when a club would benefit from the support of their regional or state sporting organisation to deal with a complaint, for example if a fair process can't be guaranteed because the person being complained about is also responsible for dealing with complaints at the club. Whether such support is available or necessary depends on your sport's constitution and policies.

Escalating a complaint

Escalating a complaint to an external agency is a good option when your organisation's policies or constitution directs that this type of complaint be dealt with at the state or national level, and:

Please note that all Burnside Hockey Club (BHC) members are treated in a fair and equitable way, irrespective of their sex, race, marital status, origin, beliefs on matters such as religion and politics, disability, sexual preference, age or carers responsibilities.

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- There is a possible conflict of interest (or close relationship) between the people on the management committee and any of the parties to the complaint
- It is beyond the skills of the committee and specific expertise or experience may be required to manage the complaint
- The complaint has not been able to be resolved at the club level
- The issue is more serious than first thought

Understand that the person complaining can contact an external authority (e.g. an anti-discrimination agency) at any stage in a complaint process.

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