

Code of Conduct Breaches and Complaint Procedures

Guidelines

Underlying principles are fairness, equality, safety and welfare taking priority, reliance on evidence rather than opinion, timeliness and confidentiality (ie only disclosing information about the complaint to those who need to know)

- 1) Complaints should be formalised in writing and submitted to the Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary or Welfare Officer. Junior members should report complaints to any adult who should then put the complaint in writing and submit it to any of the above committee members.
- 2) Straightforward breaches of the Code of Conduct can be dealt with immediately by the coach in charge (if it is a coached session) or by any club official if occurring outside of a coached session. The coaches and officials have a range of options for dealing with the breach depending on its seriousness eg asking the paddler to leave the session, issuing a verbal warning, informing parents etc. If the coach or paddler involved wish to take the issue further they should submit written details (letter or email) of the event to the Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary or Welfare Officer and it will be dealt with in the same way as any other formal complaint.
- 3) The committee member receiving the written complaint should acknowledge the complaint in writing and inform the complainant of the complaints procedure within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. They should ensure that the complainant wishes to pursue the route of making a formal complaint before proceeding.
- 4) If it appears that urgent action is required pending the outcome of the complaint investigation, the committee member who has received the complaint should discuss it immediately with the executive officers of the committee, in order to agree an appropriate action. For other complaints the committee member who has received the complaint should discuss it with the Chairperson within 4 working days.
- 5) The Chairman will appoint a suitable investigator, or if necessary, two investigators. If the complaint involves the Chairperson his role will be taken by the Vice-Chairperson. The investigator would normally be a committee member but could be any club member. The Chairperson will insure that the investigator agrees to conduct the investigation in accordance with these guidelines. If the complaint involves any under 18 year olds the Club Welfare Officer should be involved, as well as the child's parents.
- 6) The chairman will be responsible for tracking the progress of the complaint and ensuring it is dealt with in a timely manner.
- 7) Investigator/s should meet with the complainant within 10 working days of being appointed, to gather further details re events and the substance of the complaint. An accurate written record of the interview should be kept.
- 8) Investigator/s should then contact the person/s complained about to inform them of the complaint and arrange a meeting within a further 5 working days. Information about

the details of the complaint should be discussed at this meeting and information regarding the event gathered from the person/s complained about. An accurate written record of the interview/s should be kept.

- 9) Dependent on information gathered so far the investigators may need to gather evidence, interview witnesses, look at policies and guidelines etc. Again accurate written records should be kept.
- 10) Investigators should briefly summarise the complaint and their findings in writing including any evidence and any areas of dispute.
- 11) The outcome of the complaint should then be discussed with the Chairperson who should read all the written documents. Usually together they will be able to decide which parts of the complaint, if any, should be upheld, and which cannot be upheld. This should be documented in the summary.
- 12) The investigator/s and Chairperson together should decide what action needs to be taken as a result of an upheld complaint. There would be a range of options open to them depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint eg apology to the complainant, verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, suspension from a particular session , venue or competition for a specified time, etc. In some circumstances eg complicated or very serious complaints the chairman and investigator/s may wish to discuss the complaint with the committee for a consensus opinion on action to be taken. When this happens any members of the committee who are involved in the complaint would be asked to leave the committee meeting, and the principle of only revealing as much information as the committee need to know will apply. The result of the complaint investigation may also need to be discussed by the committee if it has brought up implications for any of the club policies or usual procedures.
- 13) Any decisions regarding consequences of an upheld complaint should be documented in writing.
- 14) The outcome of both upheld and dismissed complaints should be conveyed to both the complainant and person/s complained about in writing, with an invitation to discuss the investigation and decision with the investigator/s, if they are unhappy with the outcome. If the complaint involves a child the parents will be informed as well as the child. This stage should be completed within a further 5 working days.
- 15) There may be circumstances when several people need to be informed of the outcome of the complaint eg coaches at particular sessions etc
- 16) All written documentation relating to the complaint should be kept in file by the chairman for future reference.
- 17) The time from receipt of a written complaint to completion of the investigation procedure should normally be no more than 25 working days.