



## TOOL 15 - Dealing with issues and complaints

Expectations about behavior are met

# Welcome

### Why is it important to have a complaint process?

Having a complaint process sends a clear message to members that your club takes issues seriously and will act on any breach of your policies or your Code of Conduct. It should also give your management committee confidence to take action and not ignore problems.

### Complaint tips for clubs

- **Follow your sport's policies** and seek clarification from your state or national sporting organization (or an external authority) if you are unsure about what to do.
- **Try to resolve less serious complaints informally.** Many club complaints concern team matters. In the first instance the coach should try to resolve such complaints by talking with players and/or parents. An example of a less serious complaint is a coach showing favoritism towards their own child in team selection.
- **Some complaints may require more formal processes.** Administrative and more serious issues are usually dealt with by the management committee (as this is often the only process available at the club level). For example, a player missing out on team selection because of race or religious beliefs. The person complaining should be told that they can also seek confidential advice from federal or state anti-discrimination agencies about discrimination and harassment.
- **There are occasions when a club would benefit from the support of their regional or state sporting organization to deal with a complaint.** For example, if a fair process can't be guaranteed or because of the seriousness of the complaint. Whether such support is available or necessary depends on your sport's constitution and policies.
- **Referral to an external agency is necessary for very serious issues** like suspicion of harm against a child. If a complaint involves physical or sexual assault the victim should be supported and encouraged to report the incident to the police. Your club should cooperate in any investigation undertaken by an external agency.



Project developed in collaboration

Collaboration leader:



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## EVERYONE WINS!

Welcome, involve and value everyone in sport



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- **Make sure that a fair, just and transparent process is followed.** In the absence of a club having a tribunal or grievance committee it is important that your committee follows natural justice principles:
  - ✓ Treat complaints seriously and 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 victimization
  - ✓ Keep accurate records
  - ✓ Make decisions based only on information gathered, not personal views
  - ✓ Disciplinary action should be relative to the breach

Play by the Rules has developed an interactive complaint handling tool to help clubs understand the general principles of and processes for dealing with complaints ([www.playbytherules.net.au/about-complaints/complaint-handling-tool](http://www.playbytherules.net.au/about-complaints/complaint-handling-tool)).

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Collaboration leader:

 VicHealth

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Making sport inclusive, safe and fair.

**EVERYONE WINS!**  
Welcome, involve and value everyone in sport