



Ocean Grove Cobras Junior Football Club

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Last Updated: January 2022

PURPOSE

To ensure that complaints raised by members (including members of the committee), volunteers, stakeholders or community members are dealt with in a prompt, fair and equitable manner.

OUR COMMITMENT

OGCJFC has a responsibility and commitment to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by all members of the club. It is therefore necessary to have a complaints procedure in place when there are concerns raised regarding conduct of a member of the club, and that these complaints are managed and resolved fairly and in accordance with the AFL Victoria member protection policy. The club is committed to having two members of the committee undertake roles of complaint handlers (normally the President and Vice-President). These two committee members may be required to undertake complaint handling training by "Play By The Rules" as part of being appointed to these roles.

The OGCJFC are committed to:

- Providing a positive environment for all club members.
- Resolving complaints fairly in accordance with AFL Barwon and AFL Victoria guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION

Principles (as detailed by 'Play By The Rules')

The club will manage complaints in a fair, just and transparent manner, following clear processes and procedures.

This club will ensure it:

- **Treats** complaints seriously
- **Acts** promptly
- **Treats** people fairly and listen to both sides of the story
- **Stays** neutral
- **Keeps** parties to the complaint informed
- **Try to Maintain** confidentiality if possible
- **Protects** against victimisation
- **Keeps** accurate records
- **Makes** decisions based only on information gathered not personal views
- **Disciplinary** action should be relative to the breach.



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- The club's Complaints Handler is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the club's area of responsibility.
- For serious misconduct – including concerns of child safety please refer to the club's child safety policy and procedure. Other serious offences or incidents may need to be referred through other appropriate channels (i.e. AFL Barwon).
- For bullying concerns please refer to the clubs Anti-Bullying policy and procedures.
- The Complaints Handler, with the support of club officials will act proactively where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Boards, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
- All complaints, ensuing procedures, and outcomes are fully documented.
- The Complaint Handler may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor or the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of, or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes have not been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the Complaints Handler believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.

THE INFORMAL PROCESS

- A complaint is received by the Complaints Handler.
- The Complaints Handler initiates contact to clarify concerns and makes contact with both parties seeking resolution or taking action to resolve concern.
- The expectations regarding expected behaviour as contained within the clubs Code of Conduct are addressed.
- The issue is monitored for appropriate changes in procedure or behaviour. Members of the Executive Committee are informed of the concerns and work with the Complaints Handler to monitor, and take further action if required.
- If issues are resolved no action is to be taken but concerns documented and monitored.
- If concerns continue a formal process is instigated.



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ESCALATING A COMPLAINT

Escalating a complaint to the governing league (AFL Barwon) or appropriate external agency may be required in the following circumstances.

- 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.

SANCTIONS

If the club's code of conduct has been breached the following sanctions may apply:

- A formal reprimand or warning.
- Suspension from attendance at matches.
- A suspended match suspension.
- Other as deemed appropriate.
- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.

This document has adopted material and guidelines from Play by The Rules and Leisure Networks.

Play by the Rules is supported by the Australian, state and territory governments.

The information on Play by the Rules is not intended as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.

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