



Grievance & Complaints Resolution Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Castlemaine Football Netball Club (CFNC) is committed to following a safe, clear and supportive process for all parties involved in a grievance/complaint. We recognise the importance of having clear mechanisms in place to resolve identified issues and to assist in maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour across our club.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline the CFNC approach to managing any grievances or complaints that are made in relation to the club and/or people affiliated with CFNC
- reinforce the importance of identifying and addressing any behaviours occurring within CFNC that are inappropriate or do not meet club standards
- build responsibility for all CFNC Junior club members to support positive behavioural expectations across the club
- ensure that any grievance or complaint that is made relating to CFNC is managed according to a process that is fair, prompt and clear for all parties involved
- build a shared understanding amongst all members of the CFNC regarding support and resolution processes the club uses regarding grievances and complaints.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of CFNC and all supporting volunteers (including, but not confined to, coaches, team managers, practice and game day helpers, and any others affiliated with the club).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Bendigo Junior Football League (BJFL) Code of Behaviour regarding unacceptable behaviour of parents/carers, officials and coaches, and with other AFL, League and club policies.



POLICY

It is understood that from time-to-time members and others affiliated with CFNC may have grievances or complaints that need to be resolved in the interest of maintaining behavioural standards and positive relationships. This policy recognises that and holds in intent the following principles:

- All complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively
- The best resolution is one that is reached cooperatively and informally (where possible)
- When necessary, people have the right to have their grievance/complaint addressed through an established, formal process that is timely and based on fairness and respect
- A person making a complaint or airing a grievance will not be disadvantaged in any way as a direct result
- Where a formal complaint is received by the Club Committee/President it will be considered in a timely and confidential manner and documented together with the steps towards resolution

■ Definition - Grievance

A feeling of resentment over something believed to be wrong or unfair.

Web Reference: humanrights.vic.gov.au – ‘grievances’

■ Definition – Informal Complaint

A complaint made regarding the behaviour of another person which is likely resolvable without the need for a formal process.

Characteristics of less serious complaints include behaviour or decisions that are typically:

- *Out-of-character for the person about whom the complaint has been made*
- *One-off*
- *Not entrenched*
- *Low risk of harm/impact on other people*

Web Reference: playbytherules.net.au – ‘Complaint Handling Processes’

■ Definition – Formal Complaint

A complaint made regarding the behaviour of another person which is considered serious and requires a formal process to establish the facts and the most suitable resolution.

Characteristics of serious complaints may include:

- *Unlawful behaviour*
- *Repeated pattern or entrenched behaviour (such as bullying)*
- *More than one person impacted upon*
- *More than one person perpetuating the behaviour*
- *Person complaining unable to address the issue/power imbalance/conflict of interest*
- *Person complaining wants formal disciplinary measures imposed*
- *Has been unsuccessfully resolved at an informal level*

Web Reference: playbytherules.net.au – ‘Complaint Handling Processes’



■ Making/Receiving a Complaint

Any club member, parent/carer, coach, team manager, practice and game day helper, or committee member who believes that inappropriate behaviour has occurred by another person affiliated with CFNC is encouraged to address the issue and/or report their concerns.

Reports can be made to team coaches, team managers or members of the committee and a determination about whether the complaint is best to be made as an informal or formal complaint can be made at this time. If it is to be a formal complaint, the concerns should be identified in a written document provided to the CFNC President (or head of the relevant club division e.g. CFNC Junior Football president) or delegated member of the committee where the President is unavailable or if the complaint relates to the President.

■ Resolution Procedure – Informal Complaint

Determining a Resolution Strategy

Where an informal complaint is received by a coach, team manager or committee member, the person raising the issue should be supported to determine and implement the most suitable resolution strategy. Options may include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ The complainant discussing the issue with the person the grievance/complaint is about
- ✓ Information, support and/or reinforcement of expectations provided by a coach, team manager or committee member to the person the complaint is about
- ✓ A facilitated discussion between the complainant and the person the complaint is about
- ✓ A generic, club-wide reminder being issued regarding the concern
- ✓ Further discussion with the President (or delegate in their absence)

In determining the most suitable resolution strategy, consideration must be given to the complainants age, the age of the person the complaint is about, any power imbalances that exist in the relationship between the parties, the nature of the complaint, the likely effectiveness of strategy options, and the need for support throughout the process. If the coach, team manager or committee member supporting this process is uncertain, they should seek additional support from committee members and/or the President.

■ Resolution Procedure – Formal Complaint

Resolution Process

Where a formal complaint is received by the club, the President (or delegate) will coordinate the club response. This will involve:

- a) Acknowledging receipt of the written complaint within 7 days
- b) Convening a three person 'Resolutions Panel' (consisting of the President, a committee member, and a team coach, team manager or another committee member who each do not hold a conflict of interest regarding the complaint) to develop a strategy to resolve the issue. This strategy will include a plan for:



- Establishing the facts

This may include meeting with the complainant (and parent/carer where necessary), meeting with the other party/s who the complaint is regarding (and parent/carer where necessary), meeting with any relevant witnesses, meeting with all parties together and/or referring the matter to another body.

NB: At any stage during this process, any party involved can seek advice and have independent support during meetings.

- Determining an outcome

The Resolutions Panel will determine whether the complaint has been substantiated or is unsubstantiated. They will provide this determination in written form to the complainant and other party/s involved.

- Seeking resolution to the complaint

This may be applicable to any or all of the parties to the complaint and could involve a range of options such as an apology or acknowledgement of the issues of the complaint, the building of knowledge or skill for those involved, use of facilitated sessions such as mediation, use of counselling support, development of a Safety Plan, or suspension or exclusion from the club.

- Finalising the complaint

The Resolutions Panel will determine when the complaint has been formally resolved and finalise the response. This will include ensuring any outstanding resolution strategies are completed, confirming the finalisation with all parties involved, and recording the complaint finalisation as part of documentation kept.

- c) If a suitable resolution to the complaint cannot be supported, or there is dissatisfaction with the handling of the complaint or new information arises, the matter can be re-referred to the club to arrange a secondary review of the complaint from an independent person

The complaint can also be referred to an external body for additional support or when a specialised determination or follow-up is required. Examples of external bodies may include the Equal Opportunity Commission, Victoria Police, Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH), Bendigo Junior Football League, a specialist mediator, counselling/psychological services, etc.

- d) The Resolutions Panel will also be responsible for monitoring the progress of a resolved complaint to ensure all parties manage their responsibilities regarding the issue addressed

- e) The President (or delegate on the Resolution Panel) is responsible for ensuring complete and accurate records are kept of the complaint and the club response/actions are noted



COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our club members in the following ways:

- Available publicly on the CFNC website
- Through posts on Team App
- Included in staff committee induction processes
- Included in our Policy Handbook (under development)
- Discussed at committee meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information sessions as required

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the BJFL Code of Behaviour and the CFNC Policy Handbook (under development).

In addition, this policy has been informed by references and additional information from:

- Fair Play Code (Victorian Government)
- Code of Conduct for Community Sport (Victorian Government)
- Play by the Rules (www.playbytherules.net.au)
- VicSport (www.vicsport.com.au)
- Australian Human Rights Commission (www.humanrights.gov.au)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to adapt to new research and policy settings from CFNC, and to ensure that the policy remains up-to-date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with players and parents/carers
- end of season feedback surveys
- review of grievance and complaint resolutions

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed and agreed to by the club committee.

Policy Created: **February 2022**

Next Scheduled Policy Review: **February 2024**