

Complaints Management

Policy & Process

Purpose

The following policy has been developed to provide guidance in relation to complaint handling within the Brighton Districts and Old Scholars Football Club (BDOS).

Context

BDOS takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. Our club will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- all complaints will be taken seriously
- both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story)
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account
- decisions will be unbiased and fair
- any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

More serious complaints may be escalated to the South Australian National Football League.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our club will report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our club, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. Secretary, Member Protection Officer, President) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem
- ask what the complainant would like to happen
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the club will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation)
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour)
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state and/or national body or from an external agency (e.g. State Department of Sport or anti-discrimination agency)
- referring the complaint to the SANFL; and/or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency

In situations where a complaint is referred to the South Australian National Football League and an investigation is conducted, the club will:

- co-operate fully
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on SANFL recommendations

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an antidiscrimination commission or other external agency.

Disciplinary Measures

Our club will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements
- Be fair and reasonable
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach
- Be determined by our Constitution, By Laws and the rules of the game

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- verbal and/or written apology
- counselling to address behaviour
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our club
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently
- a fine; or
- any other form of discipline that our club considers reasonable and appropriate

Appeals

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions of or disciplinary measures imposed by our club to the South Australian National Football League. Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision maker/club.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy is subject to regular review at a maximum interval of two (2) years. For the purposes of carrying out and giving effect to this policy, the Treasurer or President may from time to time prepare, adopt or vary, and otherwise issue to members of BDOS, guidelines and directions relating to any aspect of this policy

Document Version Control

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