

Kinvara Hockey Club

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure

Kinvara Hockey is committed to providing a fun and safe environment for those who wish to play recreational and competitive hockey. However we know that things can go wrong. If you are unhappy about any aspect of our service we would like to hear from you, we have a procedure that you can use. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future as well as a chance to put things right for the person, people of organisation (s) that has/have made a complaint.

Kinvara Hockey Club have rules and procedures that make sure everyone knows how complaints and disciplinary matters are dealt with to help ensure everyone involved in our sport are able to participate for fun, safely and in the spirit of fair play.

The complaints and appeals procedure allows all participants and the parents of young participants who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way and put an open process of investigation into action.

1. Our policy aims

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure that everyone at Kinvara Hockey Club knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

2. Our standards for handling complaints

- We can receive complaints by letter or email.
- We treat all complaints seriously.
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times.
- We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.
- We will treat your complaint in confidence within Hockey Ireland. We will deal with your service complaint promptly.

- We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days where we have a return address and you can expect to have a full reply within 20 working days.

3. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Kinvara Hockey Club.

- The behaviour of our leaders and volunteers (Code of Conduct for Leaders, Code of conduct for Parents, Code for conduct for Committee)
- The behaviour of players (Code of Conduct Players)

Our complaints policy does not cover:

- Anonymous complaints.
- Complaints regarding umpiring decisions.
- Child Protections Concerns (see Reporting Procedures)

4. Procedure for dealing with complaints

Complaints and appeals in relation to young people, their sports leaders and their parents involved in any of the events under the direct control of Hockey Ireland should be dealt with under the 'Code of Ethics complaints and disciplinary procedures'.

In respect of allegations or suspicions of abuse, refer to the Child Protection Policies for instructions on handling complaints relating to child protection.

- Complaints should be dealt with as much as possible verbally at source locally. In the first instance, a parent/guardian, coach or player may raise a concern or complaint verbally directly with the person to see if the issue can be addressed satisfactorily in an informal manner. This may be done with the assistance of another person if this is helpful.
- If this is not the preferred method, or does not reach a satisfactory conclusion, complaints may be lodged in writing to the Club at kinvarahockey@gmail.com
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about the issue, event, other parties involved, times, locations, witnesses, etc.
- The complaint should be responded to within 5 working days

- The Club Chairperson, or a person nominated by the Club Chairperson, will convene a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying.
- The disciplinary committee should consist of a representative of the club committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club. The members of the complaints committee should be independent from the circumstances of the complaint.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the children's officer/designated person should be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct. It should, within 10 working days, inform the Club Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process.
- Kinvara Hockey Club aims to send a full response within 20 working days of receiving each complaint. We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received about our service within the timescales set out above. However, in a limited number of cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex or requires further breakdown, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case we will keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform you of next steps.
- The disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee.
- Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers.
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/ carers.

5. Appeal Procedure

- If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee).
- Any appeal should be made in writing within 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Club Committee. The appeals committee should consult with the Club Children's Officer in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct.
- The appeals committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.
- Any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter may register a complaint with the National Governing Body, Hockey Ireland.

6. Remedies

When we get things wrong we will act to:

- accept responsibility and apologise
- explain what went wrong and why, and
- put things right by making any changes required
- learn lessons from mistakes and change policies and practices where proportionate and sensible to do so.

7. Redress

The action we take to put matters right (i.e. redress) in response to a service complaint can include any combination of the remedies set out in the list below.

The 3 general principle we follow is that complainants should, so far as possible, be put in the position they would have been in, had things not gone wrong. The remedy applied needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service, and take into account what redress people seek when they complain.

An apology is generally the most appropriate action, but other action may also be necessary in some circumstances.

List of remedies

- A full apology, explaining what happened and/or what went wrong;
- remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant;
- provide the service required in first instance (immediately, if appropriate)
- putting things right (for example a change of procedure to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others);
- training or supervising staff; or a combination of both;
- Or any other action that may resolve the matter.

