

This Club Complaints Policy template has been prepared for use, if desired, by clubs affiliated to Special Olympics Ireland.

Each club must have a complaints policy and handling procedure in operation for their club. It is important that this template is used only as a guide.

Each club should edit and modify the template as required to suit their club's own specific needs.

**INSERT CLUB
NAME**

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Review Date: __/__/_____

Signature: _____

Club Chairperson

Introduction

Insert Club Name is committed to ensuring that the Club operates at a high standard and that all feedback positive or negative will be taken on board so that the Club can continue to improve.

The Club will treat a complaint as “Any clear expression of dissatisfaction with the running of the club, which calls for a response”.

A complaint will be deemed unreasonable for the following reasons:

- The complaint is considered vexatious due to its nature
- The complaint is considered to have unreasonable demands
- There is unreasonable persistence or an excessive number of complaints submitted by the person making the complaint.

Safeguarding Incidents/Concerns - Complaints relating to safeguarding or matters that give rise to child protection or welfare concerns should follow the reporting procedures in place for Special Olympics clubs and events – documents can be found on the Special Olympics Ireland website [Safeguarding and Ethics | Special Olympics Ireland](#)

What you can expect from the Club:

When dealing with a complaint the Club will:

- Listen and respond to all views and feedback.
- Treat any complaint seriously whether received verbally or by written means.
- Deal with the complaint quickly and politely.
- Handle complaints sensitively and with due consideration for confidentiality of all involved.
- Respond accordingly – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where things have gone wrong, and information on any action taken etc.
- Inform any person named in a complaint of the complaint and allow the individual(s) the right to reply.
- Ensure that no complaint made in good faith will have any negative impact on any individual.
- Learn from complaints and use them to improve.
- Keep records of complaints for a period determined as per Special Olympics Ireland Guidance for Clubs concerning GDPR and relevant legislation.

What the Club expects from you:

You have the right to complain but in doing so it is expected that you will:

- Be polite and courteous in your dealings with the Club. The Club will not tolerate any action or complaint, which is aggressive or abusive.
- Follow the steps outlined in the complaints handling procedure below.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process
- Support your complaint by providing information relevant to your complaint. Please provide as much information as possible and let us know how you would like to be communicated with, providing relevant contact details.

Confidentiality:

It is expected that both parties (Club and complainant) will:

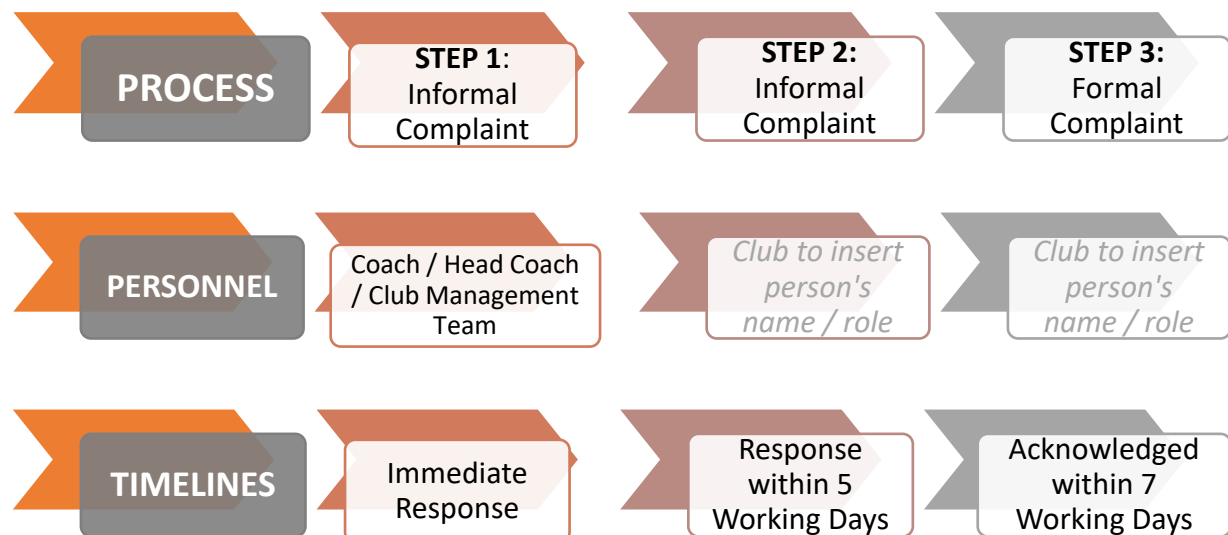
- Ensure every attempt is made to maintain confidentiality throughout the process
- Limit the number of people involved in the process as much as possible.
- Discuss information regarding the complaint with those directly involved in the complaint or handling process only.
- Anonymise information where possible when investigating a complaint.

Other Reporting Procedures & Policies

A variety of issues may arise within a club setting and there are some, which the Club cannot deal with under this policy. If your complaint does not fall under this Complaint Policy, the Club will advise you if there is another process available to you. Items excluded from this policy include:

- Safeguarding Incidents/Concerns
- Complaints regarding Sports Rules - Please refer to the Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport - [Official Sports](#) | [Special Olympics Ireland](#)
- Data Breaches
- Complaints relating to the behaviour of a Special Olympics Ireland staff. Complaints should be raised with your club who in turn may contact the relevant Special Olympics Ireland Regional or Central Office Director. Contact details for the offices are available here - www.specialolympics.ie/contact

Complaints Handling Procedure



We recommend that, where possible, complaints should be resolved through informal means as outlined in Steps 1 and 2 below. It is anticipated that the majority of complaints may be addressed successfully and informally.

In dealing with a complaint, the club will adopt the following steps.

Step 1 - Informal Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with some aspect of the running of the club and you feel able to, please express this to the person with whom you are dealing with, who will try to resolve the complaint and provide an immediate response.

Many people within the Club e.g. Coach / Head Coach may be able to respond to straightforward or simple complaints, while a member of the Club Management Team may better address more specific or detailed complaints.

If you remain dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint, you may contact (please insert the name of the person you have nominated as the Complaints Administrator), about your complaint –please see Step 2 below.

Step 2 - Informal Complaint

Informal complaints may be made via a phone call, email or a face-to-face meeting. The Club will strive to respond to informal complaints within 5 working days.

In raising the complaint to (please insert the name of the person you have nominated as the Complaints Administrator), informal resolution will still be an option for resolution if Step 1 has not yet taken place or if you are unhappy with the response. The person receiving the complaint may consult with other members of the CMT, whose role is to facilitate informal resolution without recourse to an investigation or formal proceedings e.g. Chairperson, Sports Officers.

Otherwise, the complaint will move into the Formal Complaint Process.

Step 3 - Formal Complaint

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing and addressed (please insert the name of the person you have nominated as the Complaints Administrator), In making your complaint, please briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable and preferably using the Club's Complaint Form. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 working days and will confirm whether the issue(s) raised in the complaint is/are within the Club's control.

Where an investigation of a complaint is required, you will be informed who has been appointed to address the complaint, the steps involved in the process and the expected timelines.

Following the investigation into the issues raised, you will receive the outcome in writing along with any decision(s) or recommendation(s) arising from the investigation.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The CMT may vary this procedure for good reason i.e.:

- This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chairperson should not also have the Chairperson as the person reviewing a request for appeal.
- Timelines may need to be extended due to the availability of the parties involved, for example, during the summer period parties may be away on holidays and unavailable to meet to discuss / resolve the complaint.

Any variations to the procedure will be communicated as soon as possible to all parties.

Appeal Process

If you remain dissatisfied, you may submit an appeal to the (please insert the name of the person you have nominated as the Complaints Administrator), within 10 working days of receiving the outcome from Step 3 – Formal Process.

Your request for appeal will be reviewed by an Appeals Panel consisting of three members. Your request for appeal will then be acknowledged within 7 working days. This acknowledgement will provide a date for when the Appeals Panel's decision on your request will be issued.

The Appeals Panel may consist of any three of the following club personnel:

Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer

Sports Officer
Membership Officer
Club Safeguarding Officer

If a conflict of interest arises between any of the above and the nature of your complaint; the Club may avail of the services of an external party to review your complaint. This will be advised to you.

The following are grounds for an appeal:

- You feel you were treated unfairly.
- The outcome was biased.
- The evidence did not support the findings.
- The handling of the complaint did not follow the club's policy and procedure.