



## Sylvania Heights Football Club Complaints Procedure

---

All complaints will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to another person without the complainant's consent except if law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint.

Individuals and organisations may also pursue their complaint externally under anti-discrimination, child protection or other relevant legislation.

If you wish to remain anonymous, the Sylvania Heights Football Club (SHFC) may have difficulty assisting you to resolve your complaint. Procedural fairness (natural justice) means that the SHFC is required to provide the person/people you have complained about with full details of the complaint so they have a fair chance to respond.

### INFORMAL APPROACHES

#### **Step 1: Talk with the other person (where this is reasonable and appropriate)**

In the first instance, you (the Complainant) should try to sort out the problem with the person or people involved (respondent) if you feel able to do so.

#### **Step 2: Contact a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)**

Talk with the club MPIO or a member of the club Executive or other club committee person if:

- the first step is not possible/reasonable;
- you are not sure how to handle the problem by yourself;
- you want to talk confidentially about the problem with someone and obtain more information about what you can do; or
- the problem continues after you tried to approach the person or people involved.

The SHFC MPIO can be contacted via email – [mpio@sylvaniaheightssoccer.org.au](mailto:mpio@sylvaniaheightssoccer.org.au) . Refer to the SHFC website to access a full list of contact details for current Club Committee.

The MPIO or committee person will:

- take confidential notes about your complaint;
- try to find out the facts of the problem;
- ask what outcome/how you want the problem resolved and if you need support;
- provide possible options for you to resolve the problem;
- act as a support person if you so wish;
- refer you to an appropriate person (e.g. Mediator) to help you resolve the problem, if necessary;
- inform the relevant government authorities and/or police if required by law to do so;
- maintain confidentiality.

#### **Step 3: Outcomes from initial contact**

After talking with the MPIO or committee person you may decide:

- there is no problem;
- the problem is minor and you do not wish to take the matter forward;
- to try and work out your own resolution (with or without a support person such as a MPIO); or
- to seek a mediated resolution with the help of a third person (such as a mediator); or
- to seek a formal approach.

## **FORMAL APPROACHES**

### **Step 4: Making a Formal complaint**

If your complaint is not resolved or informal approaches are not appropriate or possible, you may:

- make a formal complaint in writing to either the SHFC MPIO, SHFC Executive Committee member or Sutherland Shire Football Association (SSFA) MPIO or SSFA committee person.
- approach a relevant external agency such as an anti-discrimination commission, for advice.

On receiving a formal complaint and based on the material you have provided, the MPIO or committee person will decide whether:

- they are the most appropriate person to receive and handle the complaint;
- the nature and seriousness of the complaint warrants a formal resolution procedure;
- to appoint a person to **investigate** (gather more information on) the complaint;
- to refer the complaint to mediation;
- to refer the complaint to a SHFC Disputes and Discipline Committee;
- to refer the matter to the police or other appropriate authority; and/or
- to implement any interim arrangements that will apply until the complaint process set out in these Procedures is completed.

In making the decision(s) outlined above, the MPIO or committee person will take into account:

- whether they have had any personal involvement in the circumstances which means that someone else should handle the complaint;
- your wishes, and the wishes of the respondent, regarding the manner in which the complaint should be handled;
- the relationship between you and the respondent (for example an actual or perceived power imbalance between you and the respondent);
- whether the facts of the complaint are in dispute; and
- the urgency of the complaint, including the possibility that you will be subject to further unacceptable behaviour while the complaint process is underway.

### **Step 4a Appointment of Complaint Handler**

If necessary an appropriate person will be appointed by the SHFC Executive Committee to handle the complaint to the extent of the following steps as necessary;

- put the information they've received from you to the person/people you're complaining about and ask them to provide their side of the story;
- decide if they have enough information to determine whether the matter alleged in your complaint did or didn't happen; and/or
- determine what, if any, further action to take. This action may include referral to further investigation or disciplinary action in accordance with the Soccer Activity Constitution and Rules.

### **Step 5: Investigation of the complaint**

In the event that the matter to be dealt with requires further investigation the SHFC Executive Committee will appoint a senior member of the committee or other person considered appropriate in the circumstances, to investigate the complaint

- A person appointed under Step 5 will conduct an investigation and provide a written report to the Disputes and Discipline Committee who will determine what further action to take;
- If the complaint is referred to the police or other appropriate authority, the SHFC will use its best endeavours to provide all reasonable assistance required by the police or other authority.
- The SHFC Chairman (President) may appoint a person to investigate a situation or complaint in the absence of a formal complaint if there is prima facie information that indicates a situation should be investigated.

### **Step 6: Documenting the resolution**

The complaint handler or appointed investigator will document the complaint, the process and the outcome. This document will be stored in a confidential and secure place. If the complaint is escalated and dealt with at a district or state level, the information will be stored in associated district or state office.

### **EXTERNAL APPROACHES**

There are a range of other options available depending on the nature of your complaint. If you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against, you can seek advice from your State or Territory anti-discrimination commission without being obliged to make a formal complaint. If the commission advises you that the problem appears to be harassment within its jurisdiction, you may lodge a formal complaint with the commission.

Once a complaint is received by an anti-discrimination commission, it will investigate. If it appears that unlawful harassment or discrimination has occurred, the commission will conciliate the complaint confidentially. If this fails, or is inappropriate, the complaint may go to a formal hearing where a finding will be made. The tribunal will decide upon what action, if any, will be taken. This could include financial compensation for such things as distress, lost earnings or medical and counselling expenses incurred.

If you do lodge a complaint under anti-discrimination law, you may use an appropriate person (e.g. an MPIO as a support person throughout the process. It is also common to have a legal representative, particularly at the hearing stage of a complaint.

You could also approach another external agency such as the police.