



## MCAJFC Complaint Handling Procedure

Complaints or Grievances can arise for many reasons, some minor, some more serious. Often complaints are raised as a result of a: Misunderstanding, Poor communication, or a Lack of communication They often occur when there is a lack of Club: Policy, Process, or Direction, that sets the standards required or describes how things are done or where the required rules or behaviours (Rules / **Code of Conduct**) have not been documented and communicated. Complaints are also more prevalent where this is a lack of Understanding as to how the Club Operates. Training as to Club Processes and expected behaviours, for both volunteers and parents, can help address this issue.

A complaint should not necessarily be seen as a bad thing as it can often be an opportunity for our Club to identify unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the **Codes of Conduct**, address safety concerns or lack of understanding and generally raise awareness within the Club. All complaints are to be treated seriously and will give due consideration and respect for all involved.

**Types of Complaints:** Complaints can range from relatively trivial to very serious. Serious complaints may require the involvement of, or reporting to, agencies external to the Club, including Mediators, but also Police or Government Agencies or Sport Governing bodies. The table below provides general guidance on how complaints are categorised at MCJ AFC.

Category 1 Complaints - Managed within the Club:		Category 2 Complaints - Managed with the Aid of External Agencies:	
Nature of Complaint	Responsibility for Processing	Nature of Complaint	External Agency Involved
Favoritism by a Coach or Manager	Club Registrar	Physical abuse or Harm to a Child	Queensland Police Qld Govt – Child Protection Agency
Emphasis on Winning at all costs	Club Registrar	Sexual Abuse	Queensland Police Qld Govt – Dept of Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
Team Selection Issues	Club Registrar	Use of Illicit Drugs	Queensland Police
Fighting (Unnecessary rough conduct - Players)	Club Registrar (AFLQ – SC)	Theft / Fraud	Queensland Police
Bullying	Club President	Complaint requires third party involvement (see Note 1)	External Mediator (MPIO)
Abuse of a Club or AFLQ Official	Club President or AFLQ representative	Complaint processed at Club level, but not dealt with to the satisfaction of the Complainant.	AFLQ
Parent Expectations not met	Club President		
Canteen – Health Standards not met	Volunteer Coordinator		
Minor issue with a Volunteer’s behaviour or performance, i.e. bad language, racial vilification, discrimination, etc...	Volunteer Coordinator		



While it is not possible to list every type of possible complaint, the above table provides some form of guidance as to what constitutes a serious complaint that requires notification and involvement from an external agency.

**NOTE 1:** Where a Category 1 complaint is not dealt with to the satisfaction of those involved or if the complainant elects to involve an external party the complaint then becomes a Category 2 complaint.

Our Club will respond to all complaints as quickly as possible and will endeavor to act in the best interests of all parties involved, fairly and effectively as possible.

**Terminology:** Terms used in this Procedure:

- Complainant – Person making the Complaint.
- Complainee – The Person the complaint is being made about.
- Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). For MCJAFc the Club Secretary is the MPIO.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to describe how formal complaints received will be handled by MCJAFc.

**Process:** For Category 1 complaints, effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the level it occurs For Category 2 complaints, once the facts are documented, a more formal process will be applied.

**Category 1 Complaint Handling Process:**

<p>Step 1 - Lodging a Complaint</p>	<p>All complaints are to be lodged in writing to the Club Secretary using the MCJAFc Complaint Form (available on Club Website). Submission via email is preferred to ensure prompt actioning of the complaint.</p>
<p>Step 2 - Official Complaint Received</p>	<p>Once the complaint is received, the Club will appoint an Investigating Officer - IO (see Cat 1 - Responsibility for Processing). The IO will research the complaint and develop an action plan. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the IO made need to gather more information to better understand the complaint, including witnesses. All complaints are to be processed as quickly as possible.</p>
<p>Step 3 - Complainee's Response</p>	<p>It is at this point that the Complainee is to be alerted that a Complaint has been received relating to them. The IO is to provide the Complainee with details of the complaint and document the Complainee's version of events (response). Once this information has been gathered and documented the IO is to advise the Complainee of what the process is from this point.</p>



<p>Step 4 - Develop Action Plan</p>	<p>Once the IO has fully researched the complaint and interviewed all relevant parties, he/she is to develop an Action Plan. This Action Plan may involve one or more of the following action to address the complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking with the Complainee about their behaviour;</li> <li>• Monitoring the Complainee to observe the reported behaviour;</li> <li>• Mentoring the Complainee on how to improve his/her behaviour;</li> <li>• Mediation between the aggrieved parties;</li> <li>• Requiring the Complainee to complete "Play By The Rules" on-line training;</li> <li>• Requiring the Complainee to complete an accredited coaching course or other form of further education;</li> <li>• Issue of a written warning to the Complainee about their behaviour;</li> <li>• Taking disciplinary action (refer disciplinary procedure);</li> <li>• Suspending the Complainee from his/her duties for specific period;</li> <li>• Dismissing the Complainee from the Club;</li> <li>• Other actions as appropriate to the complaint, or</li> <li>• a combination of any of the above.</li> </ul> <p>Any decision taken is at the discretion of the Club, relevant association or tribunal (as applicable) – See step 5.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> The person making the complaint <b>DOES NOT</b> determine how the complaint is managed or what (if any) action or sanction is applied by the Club or Association.</p> <p>Where a coach, other team official or volunteer identifies that an error in their behaviour has occurred or where a misunderstanding may have occurred, it can be beneficial for the team official to acknowledge this and offer an apology as this can often result in clarifying and resolving the matter without further action (subject to the Complainee's acceptance of the apology).</p> <p>If the IO requires assistance with the management of a complaint, they should contact the Club President, who in turn will identify additional resources or contact AFLQ (or other relevant body) for further assistance.</p>
<p>Step 5 - Approval by Club Committee</p>	<p>Prior to any notification of a proposed action being communicated to a Complainee, the IO is to present the recommended Action Plan to the Clubs Executive Committee. If the Complainee is a member of the Executive Committee that person is to be excluded from involvement in this process step. The Executive Committee is to either approve or amend and approve the Action Plan.</p>
<p>Step 6 - Communication to Complainee</p>	<p>Once approved the IO is to communicate the approved action to the Complainee. If any subsequent issues arise from the conduct of this process step they are to be forwarded to the Club President for resolution.</p>
<p>Step 7 - Communication to Complainant</p>	<p>Once the Complainee has been advised the IO is to advise the Complainant of the outcome of the Complaint Handling Process. If any subsequent issues arise from the conduct of this process step they are to be forwarded to the Club President for resolution.</p>



**Respectful Communication:** It should be stressed that all interactions with both the Complainant and Complainee (and any other parties) should be conducted with the utmost respect for all involved. Dealing with these types of issues is never easy, and is made more difficult when we are dealing with people who have volunteered their time. The skill of the IO is therefore critical in communicating to everyone that the outcome is not personal and should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and grow. It should be stressed that the end goal of the process is to make the MCJ AFC a better club and the playing of Junior football a more positive experience for all involved.

**Documentation:** Upon closure of the complaint, all records are to be scanned and passed to the Club Secretary for retention (both Electronically and Hardcopy).

## **Category 2 Complaint Handling Process:**

Although club officials and others who work and volunteer in sport are not mandatory reporters, in the event that a child discloses, or parent/volunteer becomes aware of, an incident involving physical or sexual abuse it is important that this is reported immediately. In these instances the Club President will immediately alert the Police and AFLQ. The Police will in turn advise what other Government agencies also need to be advised.

If a child is at immediate risk of serious harm call NSW Police by dialing triple zero (000).

Reports of child abuse or neglect or concerns for child welfare can also be reported to the Qld Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.