



Carlow Cricket Club

Complaints Policy 2024

Purpose of Complaints Policy

Carlow Cricket Club recognises that from time to time, the relationships between some of its stakeholders may become strained such that intervention is required to achieve resolution of conflicts, disputes or differences.

This policy sets out the steps for raising and dealing with concerns and complaints.

It aims to:

- support people to resolve minor issues on their own
- give clear guidance on how complaints should be made, dealt with and resolved
- make sure the approach taken to dealing with complaints is fair and consistent

Carlow CC recognises the importance of resolving any such conflicts, disputes, or differences as soon as possible, and with the involvement of the parties to the dispute.

Upon registration, all Carlow CC members sign an agreement to abide by the Club's '*Code of Conduct*'. Where complaints involve an alleged breach of the '*Code of Conduct*', the matter will be passed over to the Disciplinary Committee of Carlow CC (see Disciplinary Policy). All other complaints will be managed by the Club Committee.

This policy document sets out how formal complaints should be made and what will happen when they are made.

Values of Carlow Cricket Club

Most people involved cricket participate with good intentions.

Members are expected to do their utmost to treat each other with respect and comply with our policies and rules. Despite this, problems sometimes arise.

Children and young people must be cared for and treated with respect, and their welfare is placed at the centre of everything we do.

When complaints are made, Carlow CC acknowledges it is important to everyone involved to respond quickly, fairly and thoughtfully to address issues. People are entitled to raise concerns or complaints and to have them addressed promptly and fairly. No one should be punished or victimised for raising a concern, or a complaint, in good faith. This policy is centred on equity, dignity, respect and maximising the potential of all people involved with cricket.

The following principles should be kept in mind by all parties when applying this policy:

- Treating others respectfully
- Treating others fairly and equally, and in a way that preserves dignity
- Addressing problems informally and face to face, wherever possible
- Maintaining relationships and keeping each other safe

Carlow CC further commits to take complaints seriously, through its additional commitment in the following respects:

Safety: You should not be harassed, bullied or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

Equality: you should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation or political persuasion.

Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation. However, the Club will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare. Issues affecting children will be treated very seriously.

Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible. Sometimes we have to discuss complaints with other organisations. If we are worried about a risk to a person or to the public, we might need to pass on our concerns to an outside agency. If necessary, we will get advice from other organisations such as Cricket Leinster, the Gardai, and Tusla.

Scope of Complaints Policy

This Complaints Policy should be read in conjunction with the Carlow CC's Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct.

Who can make a complaint?

Complaints can be made by or about anyone involved in Carlow CC. This includes:

- volunteers
- players
- supporters
- club members
- service providers
- families/friends of participants
- the Club Committee

What can complaints be about?

Complaints may be made about things such as:

- actions or decisions of organisation members or officials
- processes not being managed well (or at all)
- disagreements between members
- unprofessional or upsetting behaviour
- delays or failure to communicate about matters affecting a person

Complaints may involve:

- organisation management issues
- conflicts of interest (including favouritism)
- off-field unsporting behaviour
- disrespectful behaviour
- bullying
- sexual harassment
- discrimination
- abuse of power
- health and safety risks
- offensive/insulting language or behaviour

What is not covered by this policy?

This complaints process does not apply to:

- specific judgement decisions made by official umpires during matches
- team selection decisions
- eligibility to play
- serious complaints that may be a breach of Carlow CC's Disciplinary Policy (e.g. unethical, dishonest or illegal behaviour, harassment (sexual, racial or otherwise), bullying, health and safety risks, unlawful discrimination, and offensive/insulting language or behaviour. Such serious complaints will be dealt with through the Discipline Policy

If you are unsure whether the Complaints Policy applies to your situation, the Club Chairperson can provide guidance.

Safeguarding issues

If your complaint is about a threat to, or abuse of, a child or vulnerable person your complaint will go immediately to the Carlow CC's Children's Officer. The Children's Officer will respond according to the club's safeguarding policy which is on the club web site.

If your complaint is about aggressive, abusive or discriminatory behaviour and language such as racism or homophobia, the application of this policy may depend on the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

It might be appropriate for you to approach the person or persons in question to discuss the issue. Where this is not appropriate you should report the matter to the Club Chairperson who will consider a range of options with you from mediation to formal written complaint under our complaints procedure which can be seen on our website.

Complaints Process

The management of a complaint may depend on the following:

- preference of the complainant
- nature and seriousness of the complaint
- failure to resolve a complaint using low grade intervention

Regarding complaints which involve persons under the age of 18 years, the Children's Officer will need to be informed.

Informal vs Formal Process

If you have a complaint, it is often best to start by having a conversation with someone who has a responsible role within the club, such as your captain, a coach, or a committee member. They may be able to help to resolve your problem.

If your complaint needs to be investigated further, you will normally be asked to put your complaint in writing so that it is clear what the issues are.

Informal Resolution

People are encouraged where possible to raise concerns directly with the person who has behaved in a way causing concern. It can be helpful to discuss the issue with a trusted friend or family member for another point of view and support before raising the concern directly with the person.

‘Self-managed’ informal resolution needs to be approached respectfully. The parties involved should have a chance to be heard and feel safe to be able to say what they want to say, keeping in mind the need to find ways to resolve issues and be able to work with one another in future. It is open to any party to have a support person involved. A support person might assist, for example, in raising the complaint with the person initially or joining a conversation between the parties.

Sometimes it is not possible to raise the concern directly. This may apply in situations where

- there are safety concerns
- the issue is too serious to try to resolve in this manner
- the complainant wishes to remain anonymous

In these situations, a formal written complaint can be made by completing Carlow CC’s *Formal Complaint Form*.

Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should be made in writing, as soon as possible after the event(s) by using the attached Complaint Form.

Processing A Formal Complaint

- The completed Complaint Form should be delivered to a member of the Club Committee.
- The Club Committee will review the complaint at the following Committee meeting.
- The Committee will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and to outline proposed steps that will be taken to address the complaint.
- The Committee will also notify the individual against whom the complaint has been made, that it has received a complaint made against that person, again outlining the proposed steps to be taken to address the complaint
- The Committee may choose any of the following options to address the complaint:
 1. seek further information from the complainant in relation to the complaint
 2. ask the respective parties if they are agreeable to a mediation meeting

3. launch a formal investigation
 4. refer to matter directly to the Disciplinary Committee
 5. refer to matter directly to an external authority eg gardai, Tusla, Cricket Leinster
- The Committee will inform each of the parties involved in the complaint of how it proposes to address the complaint.

Formal Investigation

Should the Committee decide to launch a formal investigation, the investigation will proceed according to the following steps:

1. Complainant's written Statement/Allegation
 2. Respondent's response to (1).
 3. Complainant's reply to Respondent response (2)
 4. Respondent's response to Complainant's reply (3)
- The Committee will assess the above submissions. The Committee may also choose to obtain statements from other third parties.
 - The Committee will then make recommendation(s) or form an opinion.
 - In arriving at a recommendation or decision, the Committee will need to exercise care so that findings are justified on basis of facts and are made on the balance of probabilities.
 - The Committee will communicate its findings to the respective parties in writing.
 - This communication from the Committee should detail the following:
 1. the process followed
 2. the facts and any evidence relied upon
 3. the decision (upheld or not upheld)
 4. the reasons for the decision
 5. any penalty/sanction or outcome

Outcomes

The Committee may consider any of the following outcomes:

Upheld

- action taken to correct wrong doing (warning, restriction/conditions applied, suspension, expulsion)
- action taken to seek redress
- mediation between parties
- apology given/sought

Not upheld

- complaint is dismissed
- mediation between parties

Referral

- invoke Carlow CC Disciplinary Policy
- referral to a civil authority eg Gardai, Tusla
- referral to Cricket Leinster

Appeals

Members may choose to appeal the decision of the Committee. Appeals must be lodged with the Chairperson of Carlow CC, within 4 weeks of the decision being made.

The Appellant will then be invited to attend in person at an Appeal Hearing, convened by the Club Committee.

The Committee will appoint 3 people to hear the appeal. The Appeal panel will not be comprised of any members who participated in the original decision.

The Appellant will submit their grounds for appeal to the Appeal panel.

The Appeal Panel will then decide whether to uphold the Appeal, or not.

Appealing the Appeal

Members who are dissatisfied with the decision of the Appeal Panel, have the option of seeking resolution outside of the club, through Sports Dispute Solutions Ireland.

Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland was established by the Federation of Irish Sport (“the Federation”) in response to the increasing prevalence of sporting litigation and the recognition, as endorsed by the High Court, that the courts are not the appropriate forum for the resolution of such disputes. SDSI is an independent specialised dispute resolution service for Irish Sport offering both a mediation and arbitration facility. Members who choose to use of SDSI, will be responsible for their own costs.

Complaint Form – Carlow Cricket Club

*(This form is to be used for the purpose of lodging a **Formal Complaint** only)*

Your Contact details: Name:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

Affiliation (Club/Organisation):

Regional Sports Organisation: Cricket Leinster

National Sports Organisation: Cricket Ireland

Age: Under 18

18 Years or over

If you are making a complaint for someone else:

Name of person complaining on behalf of:

Contact details of person complaining on behalf of:

Complainant's role/status (highlight which applies):

Participant Administrator (volunteer)

Other volunteer – provide details:

Coach/Assistant Coach

Administrator (volunteer)

Parent

Other – provide details:

Supporter

Details of person complained about:

Name:

Club/Organisation:

Age:

Under 18

18 Years or over

Role/status (highlight which applies):

Player

Administrator (volunteer)

Other volunteer – provide details:

Coach/Assistant Coach

Parent

Other – provide details:

Spectator

Nature of complaint (tick as many as relevant):

Club/Organisation management issue

Bullying

Physical abuse/Assault

Unfair decision

Sexual harassment

Coaching issue

Racism

Verbal abuse

Discrimination

Details of incident(s):

Date(s) of incident(s):

Location of incident:

Match or at Training

Other – provide details:

Description of incident/Complaint (use additional sheets if required):

Details of any witnesses:

(1) Name:

Contact details:

(2) Name:

Contact details:

(3) Name:

Contact details:

*Action taken so far (if any) to attempt to resolve matter, or ensure safety (Use additional sheets if required): *If relevant:

Agency contacted (including the Police):

Who:

When:

Advice provided:

Complainant:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

This record and any other documentation must be kept in a confidential and safe place.