

Hickling Bowls Club: Grievance Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair, transparent, and timely process for resolving grievances within the club. The club is committed to maintaining a respectful, safe, and inclusive environment for all members, volunteers, committee members, and visitors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Club members
- Committee members
- Volunteers
- Coaches and officials (e.g., team captains)
- Visitors participating in club activities

3. Guiding Principles

All grievances will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality
- Confidentiality where practicable
- Respect for all parties involved
- Timely resolution
- Freedom from victimisation or retaliation

4. What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a concern or complaint relating to:

- Behaviour of members or officials
- Bullying, intimidation, or harassment
- Discrimination
- Breaches of club rules or codes of conduct
- Unfair treatment
- Club operations or administration

Issues involving criminal conduct should be referred immediately to the appropriate authorities.

5. Informal Resolution

Members are encouraged, where appropriate and safe to do so, to raise concerns directly with the person involved in an attempt to resolve the matter informally.

A committee member may assist by facilitating discussion between the parties.

5A. Requirement to Follow the Grievance Process

To ensure grievances are handled fairly, consistently, and efficiently, members must use the procedures outlined in this policy when a matter cannot be resolved informally.

Once a member has attempted informal resolution, or where informal resolution is inappropriate, any ongoing concern must be submitted through the formal grievance process. Members must not pursue grievances by repeatedly sending emails, letters, messages, or other communications to individual members, committee members, volunteers, or officials outside of the process established by this policy.

The Club Committee may direct a member to submit their concerns through the formal grievance procedure where repeated direct communications are occurring. Continued refusal to follow the grievance process, or conduct that is considered excessive, unreasonable, intimidating, harassing, or disruptive, may itself be treated as a breach of the Club's Code of Conduct and may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

The purpose of this requirement is to:

- Ensure all parties are treated fairly.
- Avoid unnecessary distress or disruption to members and volunteers.
- Enable concerns to be considered by the appropriate club officers or committee.
- Promote timely and effective resolution of disputes.
- Maintain a respectful and harmonious club environment.

6. Formal Grievance Process

Step 1 – Submit a Written Complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the complainant should submit a written grievance to the Club Secretary or Chairperson, including:

- Details of the issue
- Date(s) and location(s)
- Parties involved
- Any witnesses
- Desired outcome

Step 2 – Acknowledgement

The club will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 7 days.

Step 3 – Investigation

The committee, or a designated grievance panel, will:

- Review the complaint
- Speak with relevant parties
- Consider available evidence
- Maintain confidentiality as far as possible

Step 4 – Decision

A decision will be made as soon as reasonably practicable and communicated in writing to the parties involved.

Possible outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Mediation
- Apology
- Education or counselling
- Warning
- Suspension of privileges and removal of membership from the club
- Other disciplinary action consistent with club rules

7. Appeals

A member may appeal a decision within 14 days of receiving the outcome by submitting written reasons for the appeal.

The appeal will be reviewed by an independent panel or committee members not previously involved.

The appeal decision will be final, and no further correspondence will be considered or responded to.

8. Confidentiality

All participants in the grievance process must maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those who need to know for the purpose of resolving the matter.

9. Protection from Retaliation

The club will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who:

- Makes a grievance in good faith
- Assists in an investigation
- Acts as a witness

Retaliation may result in disciplinary action.

10. Record Keeping

The Club Secretary will maintain secure records of formal grievances, investigations, outcomes, and appeals in accordance with privacy requirements.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Club Committee every two years or as required.

Adopted by: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____