

## Child Protection – Complaint Procedure

### 1. Clarify basic details of the allegation

- a. Listen and be supportive.
- b. Reassure the child that what has occurred is not their fault:
  - (i) be honest and explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening
  - (ii) avoid suggestive or leading questions – ask the child “What happened?” and “Then what happened?”
- c. If another person makes the complaint, ask the person to:
  - (i) explain their reasons for suspecting abuse (observation, injury or other)
  - (ii) provide the names and contact details of all people involved, including witnesses.

### 2. Report allegations of a serious or criminal nature

- a. Report any incident of a serious or a criminal nature to the police or child protection authority immediately.
- b. If the child's parent/s are suspected of committing the abuse, report the allegation to the relevant government agency.

### 3. Protect the child and make sure the alleged offender is not victimised

Take action to ensure the child's/children's safety (e.g., move the alleged offender to a non- child related position, supervise the alleged offender or remove/suspend them from their duties while the matter is being investigated).

Make sure the individual accused of the offence is not victimised. If they're stood down, make it clear that this does not mean the person is guilty and that a proper investigation will be undertaken before decisions are made.

### 4. Follow the child protection authority or police requirements

Further clarify and investigate allegation (if requested to do so). Provide information and assist in investigations as appropriate.

- a. The police or child protection agency may undertake an investigation. They may also
- b. request that the state sporting organisation undertake their own investigation (this should be done by an independent person with appropriate investigative expertise).
- c. The club should provide information and assist with the investigation as appropriate.
- d. Individuals/clubs should not try to investigate the incident themselves.

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## 5. Manage the situation

You must manage the situation while an investigation is being conducted (internal or external)

- a. Do not talk to the alleged victim, the family or alleged perpetrator about the complaint while the investigation is underway. If you are asked for information, your response should be confined to the complaint process and timeline.
- b. Take action to enquire the ongoing safety of members, particularly children, until the authorities have completed the investigation. This may involve providing extra supervision or removal of a person from their position pending the outcome of the investigation. If the person is in a paid position, seek advice from your national sporting organisation or a lawyer.
- c. Restrict what other members and their families are told. If there are enquiries, they should be handled by one person such as the club president. Discussion should focus on the process rather than the people.
- d. If an alleged perpetrator has been removed from their position the most you should tell others is that he/she is unable to attend for a time.

## 6. Implement disciplinary action as required

Implement any disciplinary action recommended by the police, child protection authority or National sporting organisation. The action should be immediate.

Check with the relevant state government authority to see if you need to forward a report (e.g. the Office of the Children's Guardian requires notification of relevant employment proceedings).

## 7. Review and evaluate

Once the issue has been resolved, review and evaluate your club's processes and procedures. Could the matter have been handled more sensitively? Efficiently? Quickly? Use this information to update your club's policies and guidelines.

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