

Complaint and Grievance Policy



At Williamstown Cannons we seek to create an environment and framework of organisation and procedures which minimizes the number of complaints and grievances likely to occur. However, given that the Club is involved in selecting, ranking and excluding in its activities, it may happen from time to time that a member or their parent has a complaint or grievance. This policy is intended to aid as a guide in the process of resolving complaints and grievances.

This policy defines the difference between a complaint and a grievance as follows:

- A complaint is a general expression of dissatisfaction with a situation or the behaviours of another person or persons within the club. Generally a complaint will be able to be managed by Coordinators.
- A grievance is a more specific and serious feeling of wrong doing that relates to harassment, discrimination or vilification by a person or persons within the Club or external to the Club. A grievance will generally be managed by the Club Committee.

This policy is comprised of three parts:

- a) Club measures to minimize the opportunities for complaints and grievances to occur.
- b) The procedure for managing complaints.
- c) The procedure for managing grievances.

The Club does not approve of using the Complaints and Grievance Policy to seek to change Club policies. Those who disagree with Club policies should make appropriate submissions to the Club Committee who have the authority to review all Club policies.

Written complaints should be made to Club Secretary at secretary@williamstowncannons.org.au and marked for attention to the relevant Coordinator or head of the relevant Subcommittee.

A. Minimizing the Opportunities for Complaints and Grievances to Occur

The Williamstown Cannons Basketball Club shall take the following measures to minimize the opportunities for complaints and grievances to occur.

- Maximizing information available to all participants about the rules and procedures to follow and having copies of relevant rules, policies and procedures available for consultation when required.
- Publication of codes of behavior from Basketball Victoria and other sources and using other opportunities to ensure participants are aware of the requirements of these codes.
- Requiring thoughtfulness, fairness and integrity from all administrators involved in organization selection of teams and appointment of coaches. Personnel should not make judgments which involve their own self interest or the interests of family members. Such judgments, even within a persons' normal decision making area, should be referred to other people.
- Avoiding conduct which creates too much pressure on participants or unanticipated disappointments such as excessive expectations, sudden changes without adequate explanation, deprivation of opportunities without preparation or counselling.

B. Procedure of Managing Complaints

A complaint is a general expression of dissatisfaction with a situation or the behaviours of another person or persons within the club. Generally a complaint will be able to be managed by Coordinators.

1. Any person who feels unhappy with the behavior of another member should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the other party in a calm, rational and orderly manner. Ensure that you talk only about facts, try to refrain from being emotional and do not use defamatory statements.
 - a. The Club encourages participants or their parents/guardians in the case of children, to approach coaches in a respectful manner at a mutually convenient and appropriate time, if there is a game/training issue such as court time, court role, style of coaching or problems with team mates. ***This conversation should not take place immediately before or after a game or training.***
 - b. In the case of administrative decisions, such as team selection, which are perceived as being unjust or unwise, the appropriate Coordinator should be approached.
2. Should the person be unable to resolve the matter with the other party and wish to take further action, they should raise a complaint either verbally or in writing with the appropriate Coordinator to attempt to resolve the matter.

In the case of a complaint regarding an administrative decision, where the complainant is unable to resolve the issue with the Coordinator, then the complaint should be brought to the attention of the relevant head of the Subcommittee by way of a written complaint.

3. When receiving a complaint, it is important that complaints are handled in a fair, just and transparent manner following relevant Club and Association policies and procedures.
 - a. Treat complaints seriously
 - b. Act promptly – try to discuss and resolve the issue within two weeks
 - c. Treat people fairly and listen to both sides of the story
 - d. Stay neutral
 - e. Keep parties to the complaint informed
 - f. Try to maintain confidentiality wherever possible
 - g. Protect against victimization
 - h. Keep accurate records
 - i. Make decisions based only on information gathered and not on personal views
 - j. Disciplinary action should be relative to the breach

4. The Coordinator or Subcommittee will attempt to mediate the matter within two weeks of receiving the complaint. This may include discussions/meetings/statements between affected parties and involve other relevant people, if appropriate.
5. In coming to a judgment about a complaint, those who are handling the complaint (either the Coordinator or the Subcommittee) shall ensure:
 - a. That all parties have had an opportunity to present their viewpoints
 - b. That no party with a vested interest has a vote in the final decision
 - c. That any defamatory statements are ruled out of order
 - d. That efforts are made to find relevant evidence
 - e. As much expertise as is reasonable is obtained by any Coordinator or Subcommittee hearing the complaint.
6. Should a mediation process between the parties resolve the complaint, then no further action is required.
7. Any person who feels dissatisfied with an action or outcome from this complaint handling and mediation process should raise the matter in writing by way of lodgment of a written grievance with the Club Committee who will review the process and determine whether there is a need for any further action to be taken.

C. Procedure of Managing Grievances

A grievance is a more specific and serious feeling of wrong doing that relates to an unjust decision, harassment, discrimination or vilification by a person or persons within the Club or external to the Club. A grievance will generally be managed by the Club Committee.

1. The Club Committee will only receive grievances in writing and should include the grounds for the grievance being one of the following:
 - a. A lack of proper process in the attempt to settle the complaint
 - b. A failure to implement the rules, policies or procedures of the Williamstown Cannons Basketball Club or Basketball Victoria
 - c. A serious infringement of natural justice
2. The Club Committee will initially assess a grievance on the basis of the written information submitted by the complainant and also the relevant Coordinator or Subcommittee. Should the Club Committee determine that the grievance is vexatious or trivial then the complainant should be notified in writing and the grievance closed.
3. Once the Club Committee has determined a grievance to be legitimate and in need of action, they will convene a Grievance Panel. The Panel should consist of three people who are impartial to the event and may include but is not limited to; the appropriate head of the Subcommittee, members of the Club Committee and external parties as deemed necessary.
4. The following will apply to Grievance Panel hearings:
 - a. The Panel must meet within 2 weeks of being formed;
 - b. The Panel will invite all parties in the matter to be heard;
 - c. All parties will be advised in writing of the outcome of the Panel hearing, once the recommendations of the Panel are ratified by the Club Committee.
5. The Club notes that harassment or bullying is determined from the point of view of the person receiving the harassment or bullying.
6. All internal processes for hearing a grievance should be completed within one month of the initial grievance being lodged with the Club Committee.
7. The Williamstown Cannons encourages all its participants to accept the decisions reached within the Club. However the Club acknowledges its participants may appeal decisions within the Club to Basketball Victoria under the provisions of the Member Protection By-Law. If there is to be an appeal to Basketball Victoria, then the complainant should advise the Club Committee of such an appeal in writing.