



Grievance Procedure

October 2017

The Club recognises that there may be occasions when a member or parent/guardian of a member may feel it necessary to raise an issue regarding particular matters within the Club. Further, the Club may also have an occasion when they feel it necessary to raise an issue regarding behaviour or actions of a swimmer, parent/guardian, Coach or Committee Member. This guidance is written to assist in ensuring that members do so in an appropriate manner.

This procedure is to be used where the Club is approached by a swimmer or parent/guardian who is concerned or unhappy with an event or incident that has taken place at the Club. It is intended as a guide for any complaint to the Club.

If at any time a parent/guardian or child wishes to address a complaint to the whole Club Committee this must be done via the Club Welfare Officer or Chairperson. They will then consider whether this would mean discussing other children at Committee Level. The Club adheres to the confidentiality policy recommended by the ASA and involves people in issues only on a 'need to know' basis. If the Chairperson or Club Welfare Officer considers it would be inappropriate to discuss at the Committee they will explain the situation and agree to try to resolve outside the Committee. If however, there is only their child involved and the parent/guardian and child are happy and request it goes to the whole Committee then this could be the agreed course of action. This may then delay a response if there is not a planned Committee Meeting for a few weeks.

Step One – Informal Resolution Locally

Timescale: Immediate or as soon as practical

Format: Verbal

A parent/guardian or child may draw to the attention of the Coach or Committee Member of the Club, a concern or complaint about an issue.

The Coach or Committee Member must first assess whether it is appropriate for them to resolve it. In general terms if it is minor in its nature and if the Coach or Committee Member is able to address the concern, they will do so. Ideally, if possible, the Coach or Committee Member will consult the Club Welfare Officer before embarking on a course of action.

Confidentiality must be maintained on a 'need to know' basis. i.e. only the Coach (or Coaches concerned), Club Welfare Officer and the child's parents/guardians may need to know of a concern and no one else. Sometimes the issue may need to be discussed in the extended team of Coaches (for example a child causing distress to another during Club sessions or galas) or with the Chairperson. The important factor, and a requirement of the ASA, is to keep the information restricted to as small a circle as possible. The parent/guardian or child will be asked to respect this and not to discuss with other parents/guardians or children poolside.

Step Two – Resolution through Club Welfare Officer

Timescale: 14 days where practical

Format: Written (maybe reported verbally, but will be documented)

The Club Welfare Officer or the Club Chairperson may have matters referred to them for example through Step One or may have matters brought directly to their attention. Full details of the

complaint from the parent/guardian or child should be put in writing to the Club Welfare Officer or Chairperson within 7 days of the incident occurring.

The primary role of the Club Welfare Officer will be to resolve to the mutual satisfaction of the Club, child, parent/guardian if at all possible.

The Club Welfare Officer will consider the nature of the complaint and if they are able to address the concern. It is anticipated that the Club Welfare Officer will be able to address issues such as minor Club rule infringements, poor practice and bullying. Guidance and support may be obtained from the ASA Independent Child Protection Officer (ICPO) at any time. The Club Welfare Officer will explain the planned course of action and document the complaint. They will have 14 days to give a written response. If the Club Welfare Officer decides the matter requires a full discipline hearing, one will be arranged in accordance with the ASA rules.

If the nature of the complaint falls outside the club's responsibility; for example a social media incident between 2 or more club members, the Club Welfare Officer will consider whether it is having an effect within the club. If so, they may suggest some steps to protect and help the child/children during this time. It is important to remember that the club cannot take responsibility for things that happen outside of club activities. There may be help and guidance that can be offered and further organisations to be put in touch with, but this is in the form of giving guidance and not taking responsibility.

If, on receipt of the written response, the parent/guardian or child is still dissatisfied with the explanation they have a further 7 days with which to lodge a formal written complaint to the Club. This needs to be addressed to the Chairperson and Club Welfare Officer.

If the Chairperson and Club Welfare Officer feel that the matter has been satisfactorily dealt with; they will then provide a further written response to the parent/guardian within 14 days of the receipt of the letter. The response will detail why the Club feels the matter is at an end.

Child Welfare Complaints

Step Three – National Level – The ASA Independent Child Protection Officer

Timescale: Intervention 3 days

Format: Written (maybe reported verbally, but will be documented)

Where one party remains unhappy that a problem has not been resolved at Step One or Two.

Within 3 days of a child welfare complaint being brought to the attention of the ASA ICPO, consideration will be given to section 2 (i) of the Protocols For Child Safeguarding Investigations found in the ASA Handbook.

The ASA ICPO will liaise with the Club Welfare Officer to ensure that the Club is handling the child welfare issue correctly. The Club Welfare Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the Club follows the ASA ICPO's guidance. It is entirely a matter for the ASA ICPO as to the level of involvement and the guidance given.

At any point throughout the ASA ICPO's involvement the issues will be kept under constant review and a decision may be taken to:

1. Implement a referral to a statutory agency under section 2 (ii) of the Protocols For Child Safeguarding Investigations or

2. Appoint an independent investigator to complete a fact-finding investigation under section 2 (ii) of the Protocols For Child Safeguarding Investigations or
3. Make a formal complaint under the ASA Judicial Regulations under section 2 (iv) of the Protocols For Child Safeguarding Investigations or
4. Take such action as recommended by the ASA ICPO (eg. A direction that an individual be required to submit to a risk assessment or that the ASA file a complaint against the Club or an individual).

The above timescale provides an indication that within 3 days of being notified of a child welfare issue, the ASA ICPO will decide the level of his/her involvement and will inform all parties accordingly. The ASA ICPO will have the child's welfare as the main concern and will try to resolve the issues with that main concern in mind. As a guide the ASA ICPO will try to achieve a successful resolution or to decide other appropriate action or to have concluded and closed the file within three months of the original referral.

Where a three month conclusion is not possible, eg. because of the involvement of a statutory agency, the ASA ICPO will seek to keep the child (through their parent, guardian or carer) informed of progress being made.

The ASA ICPO's final report as to the steps taken, closing the file and/or recommendation as to alternative action is final.

In the case of a decision being taken under ASA Child Protection Regulations 241 et al there shall be a right of appeal to the Independent Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Appeals Panel against a decision of the Chief Executive.

Non Child Welfare Complaints

Step Three – National Level – The ASA

Timescale: 7 days where practical

Format: Written (maybe reported verbally, but will be documented)

Where one party remains unhappy that a problem has not been resolved at Step One or Two.

Within 7 days of a complaint being brought to the attention of the ASA, the ASA will decide the level of their involvement. All parties will be notified.

The ASA will liaise with the Club Welfare Officer or Chairman to ensure that the Club is handling the issue correctly. The Club Welfare Officer or Chairman are responsible for ensuring that the Club follows the ASA guidance. It is entirely a matter for the ASA as to the level of involvement and the guidance given.

At any point throughout the ASA involvement the issues will be kept under constant review and a decision may be taken to:

1. Appoint an independent investigator to complete a fact-finding investigation or
2. Make a formal complaint under the ASA Judicial Regulations or
3. Take such action as recommended by the ASA or that the ASA file a complaint against the Club or an individual.

The above timescale provides an indication that within 7 days of being notified of an issue, the ASA will decide the level of his/her involvement and will inform all parties accordingly. The ASA will

have children's welfare as the main concern and will try to resolve the issues with that main concern in mind. As a guide the ASA will try to achieve a successful resolution or to decide other appropriate action or to have concluded and closed the file within three months of the original referral.

Where a three month conclusion is not possible, the ASA will seek to keep all parties informed of progress being made.

The ASA's final report as to the steps taken, closing the file and/or recommendation as to alternative action is final.

Notes

Guidance and support may be obtained from the ASA or ASA ICPO at any time.

If the swimmer or parent / guardian is dissatisfied with the final response from the Club then they have the right to appeal to the ASA.

Matters of child protection will be referred, where appropriate, immediately to the appropriate statutory authority and to the ASA ICPO.

Confidentiality must be maintained on a 'need to know' basis. All parties are asked to respect this rule.

Discipline action against a parent/guardian, swimmer, Coach or Committee Member may be taken if this guidance is not followed when communication a concern or grievance or engages in communication that contravenes the Club Code of Conduct.