



## Athenry Football Club Complaint Resolution Process

**Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction over something believed to be wrong or unfair.

**Grievance:** An official statement of a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair.

A **compliant** is raised by a member of the club, a parent of a member of the club, or a volunteer with the club in regard to a situation relating to the club and to which the club has some level of control over.

### 1. Principles

- It is recognised that perceived grievances are best resolved as close to the source as possible.
- It is recognised that perceived grievances are best resolved informally through direct contact between the relevant parties.
- The further the process goes the more difficult it becomes to find an amicable solution.
- A formal grievance resolution / disciplinary process will only be initiated where grievances cannot be resolved informally through informal discussion and / or mediation. If the problem cannot be resolved through direct contact between the relevant parties the club will offer to mediate.

### 2. Mediation

- Mediation is an informal grievance resolution process facilitated by a mediator.
- In the event that the situation cannot be resolved through informal discussion and the relevant parties agree to enter into a mediation process, the club will appoint a mediator. The mediator's job is to help the parties resolve the problem through a process that encourages each side to air disputes, define the issues clearly, and agree on a satisfactory solution.
- The mediator will normally be an existing officer of the committee, or a nominated 3rd party who has the relevant skills in this area to help ensure a satisfactory outcome.
- If a satisfactory solution can be reached through mediation the complaint resolution process is therefore complete. The agreed solution will be noted and monitored to ensure implementation.
- If a solution cannot be reached through mediation a formal complaint can be made to the club.
- If a complaint involved suspected abuse or criminal offence, then any internal club process will be stopped, and details passed on to the appropriate statutory authority as soon as possible.



### 3. Formal grievance resolution / disciplinary process

- Where grievances cannot be resolved informally or through mediation Athenry FC will entrust resolution / disciplinary matters and investigations to a disciplinary subcommittee.
- A disciplinary subcommittee is a three-person committee normally made up of at least one officer of the committee, the Child Welfare Officer if the grievance relates to a child member, and another member(s) of the club that may have experience in this area.
- All formal complaints are required to be made to the club Secretary and / or Child Welfare Officer in writing.
- Athenry FC will review any submitted complaints within 5 working days and respond in writing within 7 working days.
- If informal approaches to resolution have not been attempted and are warranted the club will suggest these approach to all relevant parties.
- If a complaint involved suspected abuse or criminal offence, then any internal club process will be stopped, and details passed on to the appropriate statutory authority as soon as possible.

#### Disciplinary Process / Problem Resolution Steps

Step 1 : Complaints and/or concerns brought to club secretary in writing.

Step 2 : Convene Disciplinary Subcommittee.

Step 3 : Disciplinary Subcommittee review complaint and make decision on appropriateness of formal process.

Step 4 : Disciplinary Subcommittee arranges a hearing and inform all parties in writing, and affords the opportunity to reply and ensure access to fair process.

Step 5 : Disciplinary Subcommittee hears the facts and evidence of case of and decides if a rule or regulation has been infringed.

Step 6 : Disciplinary Subcommittee informs all parties in writing of sanctions, if any, according to the rules.

#### Possible Sanctions

A disciplinary committee may recommend the following sanctions:

- An instruction
- A reprimand
- A warning
- A suspension from membership
- An expulsion ban from the club and club activities



#### 4. The Disciplinary Committee (Terms of reference)

- The disciplinary subcommittee is authorised to recommend sanctions for any breach of the rules.
- The committee should have the final decision.
- The disciplinary subcommittee shall be a three-person subcommittee with at least one officer.
- Members of the disciplinary subcommittee shall decline to participate in any hearing concerning a matter where there are grounds for questioning their impartiality.
- The members of the disciplinary subcommittee shall ensure that disclosures made to them remain confidential to the disciplinary body unless they are of a criminal nature in which case they must inform the statutory authorities.
- The members of the disciplinary subcommittee of the club may not be held personally liable for any deeds or omissions relating to any disciplinary procedure.
- The disciplinary subcommittee shall notify any member or official of any disciplinary charge being brought against them.
- The disciplinary subcommittee shall set a date for a hearing giving at least seven days' notice unless a shorter period is necessary due to the nature of the offence. Any person charged shall be entitled to attend and present or be represented at a hearing if they so wish.
- The disciplinary subcommittee shall determine the procedures for the hearing and nominate one of their members to act as Chairperson. The disciplinary subcommittee may adjourn a hearing and reconvene if necessary.
- The disciplinary subcommittee shall ensure a copy of its decision is sent to all parties to the procedure within 7 days.

Peter Gilhooley  
(Chairperson Athenry Football Club)