

Ranelagh Gaels

Disputes & Complaints Resolution Process

January 2024

Purpose

To provide a process which if followed correctly, facilitates the investigation and resolution of disputes among members or complaints raised by members of Ranelagh Gaels (the Club).

Scope

- All club members can engage in the process. The process may also apply to parents, guardians, coaches and other persons who are connected to the Club (individuals connected to the Club).
- This process applies to internal disputes only. Other channels should be used when dealing with inter-club issues.
- The process may highlight child protection or welfare issues but will not in any way attempt to replace the role of the Club's Child Protection Officer.
- Legal matters will be directed to the appropriate authority (e.g., An Garda Síochána, TUSLA)
- This process is not intended for frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the focus and efforts of the Club. Disputes are often complicated by allegations that may be exaggerated or inflated, especially where personal relationships between members have broken down. Unfounded allegations can be very damaging to a person's personal or professional life.

Guiding Principles

- The Club expects and requires its members to behave to the highest possible standards when engaged in Club related activities.
- The Club is comprised of a cross section of the community consisting of many personalities, backgrounds, skill sets and circumstances. Dispute and complaint resolution is needed to address problems in a timely manner and in an effort to foster a strong sense of community and one of collaboration and teamwork.
- The best outcome is one where the parties involved resolve the issues or complaints among themselves and reach an acceptable pathway to move forward.
- In the spirit of fairness, all parties should have been listened to and feel their concerns have been given consideration.
- It is essential for the protection of all members and for the integrity of the process that strict confidentiality is maintained throughout.
- As a club we need to confront issues in a mature fashion and ensure we take the learnings from issues and channel these learnings into improvement. Doing this will only make the Club stronger as a player and member community.
- The operation of this process will be in line with the GAA constitution which grants the power to the Executive Committee to investigate and process alleged breaches of the Constitution or Official Guide by Club members within the Club pursuant to

sections 5.11.1, 5.11.2, 7.14 and 7.15 of the GAA Constitution, Part III of the LGFA Official Guide and Part IV of the Official Rules of Camogie Association.

Dispute Resolution Process

The following details the steps of the dispute resolution process. Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for the flow chart for more information.

If the Chairperson is a party to the complaint, the Club Vice Chairperson will undertake all the responsibilities fulfilled by the Chairperson under this policy while the resolution process is ongoing.

Step 1 – Filing a complaint

- A member or individual connected to the Club (“the complainant”) who wishes to make a complaint should approach the relevant member or individual connected to the Club with whom the issue arises (“the respondent”) with a view to resolving the complaint with them directly. Most issues should be resolved between the parties themselves.
- Where the complainant is unable to resolve the complaint with the respondent or wishes to complaint directly to the Executive Committee, they should approach or [write to the Club Secretary](#) with a view to resolving it. The Secretary informs promptly the Club Chairperson about the complaint.
- If the Secretary is a party to the complaint, the complaint must be filled with the Club Chairperson. In that instance, while the resolution process is ongoing, the Chair will undertake all the responsibilities fulfilled by the Secretary under this policy. with a view to resolving it.

Step 2 – Initial review by appointed Officers

- After advising the respondent of the filing of the complaint, the Club Chairperson appoints two Officers of the Club (“the appointed Officers”) to handle the complaint. Consideration will be given to avoid conflicts of interest with the individuals appointed and relating to the matter at issue or the parties involved. Consideration will also be given to gender balance to minimise unconscious bias.
- The appointed Officers will initially explore with the complainant whether there is any possibility or desire to resolve through informal resolution.
- In the event that informal resolution is deemed unlikely by the appointed Officers or the complainant, the appointed Officers will undertake an investigation.
- If there is any suggestion of any form of child protection issues, the [Child Protection Officer is notified](#) immediately by the appointed Officers. Similarly, certain actions, such as assaults and threats, are of criminal nature and can be referred immediately to An Garda Síochána.

- While every dispute is unique, the appointed Officers will aim to resolve complaints quickly and fairly. The appointed Officers will exercise judgement in relation to collecting all the facts available to them and do so within a timely fashion.
- When the appointed Officers believes they have obtained sufficient information, they write an initial review report based on the template found in [Appendix A](#) which is submitted to the Club Chairperson.
- The appointed Officers may recommend:
 - no further action,
 - a further investigation by the Dispute Committee, or
 - further action by the Dispute Committee, including taking disciplinary action as outlined in the [Sanctions](#) section below.
- The initial review report will be circulated to all parties, including the Complainant and the Respondent.

Step 3 – Referral to the Dispute Committee

- If the initial review report recommends the need for further action or investigation, or if either of the parties is dissatisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Dispute Committee.
- The Dispute Committee (“the DC”) will be composed of no less than three members, and not more than five. The Chairperson will be a member of the DC and will chair any hearing that is held.
- The DC will follow the procedures set out by the applicable Code (GAA, LGFA or Camogie), including:
 - The DC will consider the recommendations made by the appointed Officers and will carry out any further investigations or hearings that may be required to bring the process to a conclusion in an equitable manner.
 - The DC will notify the parties in writing of the process, the basis of the complaint, and of other relevant information.
 - If hearings are to be held, the DC will give timely notice of the date and venue of hearings and advise the parties of their right to present evidence on their own behalf and to ask questions
- As far as possible, the identity of the parties, and details of the complaint, will remain confidential to the Club Chairperson, the DC, the appointed Officers, and the Club Secretary who will be communicating to the parties. Ratification and any discussion by the Executive should as far as possible be on a no names’ basis.
- It is the responsibility of the DC to decide on an appropriate sanction, if appropriate and necessary.
- The decision of the DC will be communicated in writing by the Club Secretary to the respondent. The Executive Committee is also informed. If a sanction is imposed, it will commence from the day following the receipt by the respondent of the written decision of the DC.

- If the respondent accepts the sanction, they are expected to meet all the requirements determined by the DC and in that event the matter is considered closed.
- The complainant will be informed by the Club Secretary of the conclusion of the resolution process related to their complaint.

Step 4 – Appeal to the County Hearing Committee

- If the respondent does not accept the decision, they can appeal in writing to the County Hearing Committee through the Dublin County Board within seven days of being notified of the decision.
- If this course of action is followed, it will be a matter for the County Hearing Committee. However, the County Board may still decide as part of that process that the Club' Executive Committee take disciplinary action against the respondent.

Sanctions

- As a volunteer-based organisation, the goal is to avoid any sanctions where possible and attempt to reach accommodations to the greatest extent.
- Nonetheless, the following sanctions can be applied in case where misconduct has been determined to have taken place:
 - A verbal warning to desist from offending behaviour
 - A written warning to desist from offending behaviour
 - A ban from coaching (in the case of coaches)
 - A ban from playing in and / or attending games
 - A ban from club social events
 - Suspension of membership
 - Termination of membership
- Any sanction imposed by the DC applies to the Club only.

Record Keeping

- All documents relating to investigations will be passed to the Club Secretary for archiving in a secure manner, i.e. restricted access., and comply with GDPR and other applicable legal requirements.
- Once the resolution is complete in respect to a complaint, executive members involved in the process must dispose of all copies of documents related to the investigation they had kept on paper or on their personal computers, email account or cloud-storage device.

For more information

Reference Documents

[GAA Code of Conduct](#)

[LGFA Code of Behaviour](#)

[Camogie Code of Behaviour](#)

[GAA Official Guide Part I containing the Constitution and Rules of the GAA](#)

[GAA Official Guide Part II](#)

[LGFA Official Guide](#)

[Official Rules of the Camogie Association](#)

[Ranelagh Gaels Club Constitution](#)

Contact Information

Club Chairperson: chairperson.ranelaghgaels.dublin@gaa.ie

Club Secretary: secretary.ranelaghgaels.dublin@gaa.ie

Club Child Protection Officer: childrensofficer.ranelaghgaels.dublin@gaa.ie

Appendix A – Initial Review Report Template

DATE

CONFIDENTIAL

To: NAME, Chairperson
From:

Re: Initial review into the complaint made to

Dear CHAIR,

The purpose of this initial review was to determine if there was any credence to the allegations of.....where it is alleged.....

Background details of how the investigation was conducted.

Dispute Details and Facts:-

- It should be made clear there was no suggestion of any child protection issues and on this occasion, CCO was not asked for any input in the matter.
- There was(list of key facts obtained)

Our conclusions:-

- We feel that (list of findings i.e. what the subcommittee believe what has in fact happened. For example, a mentor falling short of Give Respect, Get Respect GAA ethos.

Recommendations:-

- SANCTION is deemed appropriate
- In order to learn from this
- CLUB SECRETARY will communicate these recommendations to the County Board, once ratified by you as Chairman at the next Officers Meeting scheduled for DATE

Sincerely,

Name 1, Executive Committee

Name 2, Executive Committee

Appendix B - Dispute Resolution Process Flow

