



COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE POLICY

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COMPLAINTS HANDLING AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This policy is an approved policy of the Gawler Little Athletics Centre, Incorporated, adopted from South Australian Little Athletics Association (SALAA) Complaints Handling and Grievance Procedure policy and members are required to adhere to this policy.

Lodging a Complaint

- Complaints may be lodged with the Committee of Gawler Little Athletic Centre:
 - In person
 - By telephone
 - By facsimile, email or letter

- Complaints should detail the name, address, email and contact phone number(s) of the complainant, together with a brief description of the problem.

- Only complaints where the complainant has identified him/herself will be dealt with under this policy. It is expected however that the validity of anonymous complaints will be assessed, and corrective action taken, if necessary.
(Anonymous complaints will be assessed by committee meeting and corrective action taken based on committee vote.)

- The Committee will not disclose the identity of the complainant if that complainant requests that his/her details remain confidential unless required as a legislative requirement. However, in some cases, it may not be possible to resolve a complaint unless the complainant agrees to the disclosure of his/her identity.

Complaint and Responsibility Referral

- If a complaint relates to behaviour or an incident, person or operation at Gawler Little Athletics Centre, then the complaint should be reported to and handled by the Committee in the first instance. If the complaint is unable to be satisfactorily resolved at Committee level, the matter may be referred to the SALAA to be dealt with.
- If the behaviour or an incident that occurred at the state level or involves people operating at the state level, then the complaint should be reported to and handled by the CEO of SALAA.

Complaint Handling Process

Minor Verbal Complaints

- If the complaint is of a minor nature and it is believed that a Committee member can deal with the matter on the spot to attempt resolution, then the complaint will immediately be referred to that person, who will address the complainant's concerns in a detailed and complete manner, outlining how or why the situation or incident occurred, being clear on what solutions can be offered.
*(The Committee member will be required to complete a written report to document the complaint and action taken Refer **Appendix A**)*
- If the complaint requires further investigation, the complainant will be advised of the course of action and provided with a target date for a response.
- Following discussion and/or investigation, if the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, it must be documented by the complainant and forwarded to the Committee as a written complaint.
- If it is determined that the complaint has arisen due to an error by the Committee, the matter will be referred to the President to investigate an appropriate course of action.
- All written complaints will be forwarded to the President.

- Written acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent to the complainant along with an explanation of the procedure to be applied. A target date for providing a response will also be advised.
- If the complaint is about another person, that person should also be told about the procedure and the target date for resolution.
- All complaints should aim to be resolved within 14 days. If the outcome of the investigation is delayed, the complainant will be contacted, and where applicable the person who is the subject of the complaint, to keep them informed as to the progress.
- The President or their appointee will review the complaint and investigate as they consider appropriate. This may include contacting/interviewing witnesses and/or other persons involved. Written records will be kept of all meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation. (*Refer **Appendix B***)
- Once all of the relevant facts have been established, the President will produce a written response to the complainant. Such response will include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it and where applicable and appropriate, the action the Committee will take to resolve the complaint.
- Prior to writing to the complainant to report the outcome of the investigation, the President will discuss the complaint and the findings with the Executive Committee (Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer).
- Following the response from the President, if the complainant remains unsatisfied; the complainant may refer the matter to the Committee or directly to SALAA.
- If the complainant remains unsatisfied following any further investigation and review by the Committee, the complaint will be considered a dispute and the matter will be automatically referred to SALAA.

- The President will ensure that all complaints are recorded in the Complaints Register, detailing the name of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the resolution/action taken.

Sanctions

- The Committee may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:
 - a direction that an individual makes a verbal and/or written apology;
 - a written warning;
 - withdrawal of any award, placing, records, achievements bestowed in any event or activities held or sanctioned by the Gawler Little Athletics Centre;
 - demotion or transfer of the individual to another location, role or activity;
 - suspension of membership or the right to participate or engage in a particular activity (or activities);
 - a recommendation that the Committee terminate the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
 - in the case of a coach or official, a direction that the Gawler Little Athletics Centre disallows that subject from that role for a period of time or permanently; and
 - Any other action or direction that the Committee considers to be appropriate *(Any sanction **will only be imposed** once tabled in the minutes of a Committee Meeting and voted upon - the President [or delegate] will be responsible for imposing the sanction.)*

Mandated Reporting

Who is required to report child abuse?

Any person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, a non-Government organisation that provides **sporting or recreational, services wholly or partly for children**, being a person who:

- is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or
- holds a management position in the relevant organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children;

are mandated notifiers.

What are reporting responsibilities?

As a mandated notifier you must make a report if you have any reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse and you need to make that report without delay.

As a mandatory reporter you need to be aware that:

- it is your personal responsibility/obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect- it is not the responsibility of your manager or employer.
- you do not have to prove that abuse has occurred.
- your notification needs to be accompanied by a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which your suspicions are based.
- you are immune from civil liability for reporting your suspicions in good faith.

Are there penalties involved for failing to report?

Yes.- There may be a penalty for failing to meet the mandated notifier obligations.

Can anyone stop me from making a report?

No-A person must not threaten or intimidate, or cause damage, loss or disadvantage to, a person to whom this obligation applies because the person has discharged, or proposes to discharge, his or her duty.

Are there any exemptions?

No -There are no exemptions from this obligation, even for visiting sporting teams, coaches, and officials.

What if I am wrong and child not abused?

The reporting person is immune from civil liability.

Will my identity be revealed?

No (unless a court deems it necessary).

Am I obliged to tell the family that I have notified

No.

Can I be called to attend Court to give evidence?

Yes - but this is an exception rather than the rule.

Does my obligation end once I have made a report?

No -A person does not necessarily exhaust his or her duty of care to a child by giving a notification under this section. You may also have an obligation under your organisations Child Safe or Member Protection Policy to make an internal report to the organisation.

Child Abuse Notification Procedures:

How do I make a report?

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately by dialling **000**.

To make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, call the 24-hour **Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78** or report on line.

The following information is to be reported:

- Name and description of child
- Address or description of his/her whereabouts
- When the child was last seen
- If known, approximate age, Centre details/School and if any siblings
- If known, whether a language or sign interpreter may be required or an Aboriginal Agency should be involved
- All available information relevant for the safety and welfare of child

- Details of events, conversations or observations that led to the report.
- Your contact name and telephone number.

Committee members receiving a complaint of or reporting a child abuse matter, will be required to complete a Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation (*refer Appendix C*) and any matter discussed with other members will need to be recorded on a Confidential Record of Meeting (*refer Appendix D*). It will be the responsibility of the President of the Gawler Little Athletic Centre to store and maintain confidentiality.

These records and any notes must be kept in a confidential and safe place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.

Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse:

Physical Abuse refers to allegations of physical harm caused to a child by another person. Some signs and symptoms may include unexplained:

- Bruising
- Lacerations or welts
- Burns or scald
- Fractures, sprains or dislocations.

Sexual Abuse occurs when someone in a position of power to the child uses that power to involve the child in sexual activity. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour, promiscuity
- Marked changes in behaviour or mood, tantrums, aggressiveness, withdrawal, self-destructive behaviour
- Allusions to problems at home, not wanting to return home
- Fear and loss of trust
- Physical symptoms including bruising or bleeding in the genital area.

Emotional Abuse refers to harm caused to the child by excessive or unreasonable demands as well as failing to provide the psychological nurturing necessary for development. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Severe verbal abuse or threats of abuse
- Being physically or socially isolated as punishment
- Feelings of worthlessness about life and self
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Behavioural disorders such as disruptiveness, bullying, aggressiveness

Neglect refers to the failure to provide the basic necessities of life including food, clothing, shelter, emotional security, medical care and adequate supervision of the child's growth and development. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Poor standard of hygiene, inadequate clothing for the weather conditions.
- Malnutrition, complaints of hunger, hiding food.
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Lack of appropriate supervision - either supervised or under supervised when engaging in certain activities
- Extreme longing for adult affection.

Recognition of Abuse or Neglect:

When considering the likelihood that an injury, behaviour or disclosure of a child may be related to or caused by abuse or neglect, it is very important to remember that one sign in isolation may not necessarily indicate abuse or neglect.

Recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect means forming a genuine concern or well-founded suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur in the future.

Being Alert To Abuse or Neglect:

Concerns about abuse or neglect can be raised in a number of ways, such as:

- A child, a parent, a work colleague, a sibling or another adult may tell about something that has happened, their fears, or how they feel about being placed in certain situations
- Marked changes in a child's physical appearance or condition, their behaviour or family circumstances may arouse suspicion
- Observations in the interactions between an adult (Parent/Carer/other adult) and a child may raise concerns

It is recommended that a record be kept of events which give rise to concern, including conversations and observations. A notebook or a diary, that is kept in a secure place, preferably under lock and key, is an appropriate place to record any concerns.

If a member has a genuine concern that a child in their care has been, or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, then the situation must be dealt with quickly, carefully and with an open mind. If there is uncertainty about whether to notify or not, concerns should be discussed with the Centre's Child Safe Officer, the Little Athletics SA Chief Executive Officer or their appointed representative.

Listen And Clarify:

If a child tells you about abuse listen attentively and later record the child's exact words (as well as you can recall), the time and place the allegation was made and who, if anyone, was present. Do not prompt the child for further details or ask questions as this may lead to contamination of evidence.

As the child talks to you:

- Observe the demeanour of the child
- React calmly to the information the child provides
- Listen actively and be non-judgmental
- Do not ask questions, for example, "did they/she/he doto you"
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you, for example, "I am pleased you told me about these worries .."
- Do not make promises you cannot keep, particularly about telling others (for example: Police, Parents etc.) about the information, or about what will happen next.
- Reassure and support any colleagues who are present

You should:

- Provide comfort and care to the child, recognise that they may be fearful about the consequences of their action and confused about the situation
- Reassure the child that this is not their fault and they have not done anything wrong
- Not confront the alleged offender.

Authorisation

Signature of President:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a cursive 'L' and a horizontal line.

Date of Approval by the Committee: **19th July 2024**

This policy is to be reviewed very three (3) years.



CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF COMPLAINT

Date Complaint Received: / /		Complaint Method: (Circle method) Letter Phone In Person Email Other:	
Complainant's Details: Name: Address: Phone: Email:		Role/ Status in Sport: (Circle) Administrator (volunteer) Parent Athlete Spectator Coach/ Assistant Support Person ¹ Employee (paid) Official Other:	
Details of Complaint:	Time:	Date:	
	Location: Describe what Occurred:		
Expected Outcome from this Complaint:			
Informal Formal Mediation SALAA			

Name of Person complaint about	
Role/ Status in Sport:	Administrator (volunteer) Parent Athlete Spectator Coach/ Assistant Support Personal Employee (paid) Official Other:
Witness(es): (If more than 3, attach details to this form)	Name (1): Contact Details: Name (2): Contact Details: Name (3): Contact Details:
Interim action taken: (if any)	
SALAA Contacted:	Who: When: How:
Mediation:	Finding:
Action taken:	
Completed by:	Name: Position: Signature:
Signed by:	Complainant:

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF COMPLAINT RECORD OF MEETING



Date/ Time of meeting:

Location of meeting:

Attendees: {Include full names and titles of attendees)

Purpose of meeting:

Discuss options for resolving issues

Actions taken to date: (eg: Mediation)

Future actions:

Signature of President:

Name:

Signature:

Signatures of other attendees:

Name:

Signature:

Name:

Signature:

Name:

Signature:

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION



Complainant' Name: (if other than the child)		Date Formal Complaint Received: / /
Role/ Status in Sport:		
Child's Name:		Age:
Child's Address:		
Complainants reason for suspecting abuse: (eg: observations, injury, disclosure)		
Name of person complaint about:		
Role/ Status in Sport:	Administrator (volunteer)	Parent
	Athlete	Spectator
	Coach/ Assistant	Support Personal
	Employee (paid)	Official
	Other:	
Witness(es): (If more than 3, attach details to this form)	Name (1):	
	Contact Details:	
	Name (2):	
	Contact Details:	
	Name {3):	
	Contact Details:	

<p>Interim action taken:</p> <p>(if any)</p>	
<p>Police Contacted:</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p> <p>How:</p> <p>Advice provided:</p>
<p>Government Agency Contact:</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p> <p>How:</p> <p>Advice provided:</p>
<p>Action taken:</p>	

SALAA Contacted:	Who: When: How:
Completed by:	Name: Position: Signature:
Signed by:	Complainant:

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF CHILD ABUSE - RECORD OF MEETING



Date/ Time of meeting:

Location of meeting:

Attendees: (Include full names and titles of attendees)

Purpose of meeting:

Discuss options for resolving issues

Actions taken to date: (eg: Mediation)

Future actions:

Signature of President:

Name:

Signature:

Signatures of other attendees:

Name:

Signature:

Name:

Signature:

Name:

Signature: