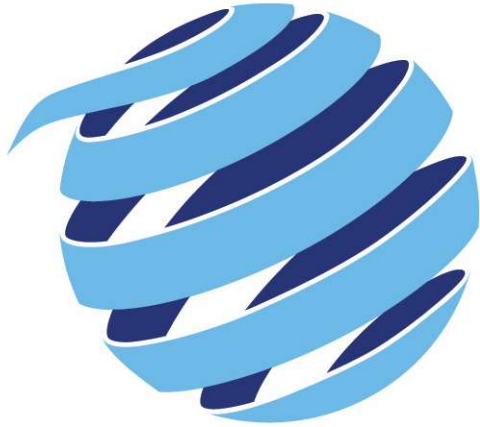


SOUTHERN BRANCH INC



**FOOTBALL
NSW
SOUTHERN
BRANCH**

COMPLAINTS POLICY

SOUTHERN BRANCH INC COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy Directive is intended to assist people to effectively manage complaints made by members of the organisation. The Policy establishes a standard approach to complaint handling to support timely, efficient and fair management of complaints.

SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

SBI are committed to:

1. Respectful treatment of people making complaints.
2. Providing people wishing to make a complaint with access to information about the complaints process.
3. Good communication with people making a complaint.
4. Taking ownership of the way complaints are managed and ensuring people managing complaints are supported.
5. Timeliness with respect to acknowledgment and resolution of complaints.
6. Transparency about the complaint management process.

We are committed to fair and effective complaint management in accordance with the following principles:

- Complaints are acknowledged and responded to promptly and with sensitivity.
- Complaints are assessed and dealt with fairly and effectively.
- People making complaints are provided with information about the outcome of their complaint.
- People making complaints will not suffer any detriment because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

1 Background

Complaints provide an important opportunity to identify problems and improve service. These procedures are intended to:

- Enable committee members to respond to complaints in a timely and effective manner.
- Improve service delivery and strengthen relationships.
- Provide a standard approach to complaints handling.

2.1.1 Respectful Treatment

SBI will treat people who make a complaint with courtesy and respect. It is expected that people making complaints will treat SBI members with, fairness and respect. SBI committee will protect the identity of people making complaints where practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by SBI as permitted by relevant privacy laws. People who make complaints will not suffer any detriment because of having made a complaint.

2.1.2 Good Communication

SBI will acknowledge complaints as soon as possible, and within 5 days of receipt of the complaint. SBI will keep people informed about the status of their complaint at regular intervals and will provide information about the outcome of the complaint.

2.1.3 Taking Ownership

SBI will provide a person making a complaint with contact details for a contact person or team, who is responsible for management of the complaint.

2.1.4 Timeliness

SBI will manage complaints as quickly as possible. If there are delays in the process, SBI will provide information to the person making the complaint about the delays. SBI will aim to resolve complaints within 35 days from the date the complaint is received.

2.1.5 Transparency

Records of complaints are kept by those dealing with them, to enable review of individual cases, to identify trends and risks and to report on aggregated complaint information.

2.2.1 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

2.2.2 Complaints to be managed by frontline staff

Any committee member could receive a complaint during their activities. Where committee members have the skills, experience and authorisation to resolve complaints at the first point of contact, escalation of complaints can be avoided. A person receiving a complaint aim to manage the complaint at the point of first contact, and to resolve the concern in the same interaction where possible. Many straightforward complaints can be resolved by:

- An acknowledgment of the person making the complaint's perspective.
- An explanation or the provision of further information, and;
- The person making the complaint indicates their satisfaction with the resolution of the matter. Where a complaint can be quickly resolved, it may be possible to do so during the first interaction. If a person making a complaint requests to make it formal, staff must assist the Complainant, make their complaint by forwarding the complaint to the committee.

2.2.3 The benefits of offering an apology at an early opportunity

Sometimes a prompt and sincere apology can be very effective. It will often avoid the escalation of a dispute and the significant cost in time.

3.1 Receiving Complaints

SBI will accept complaints made in person, in writing, by email or referred by another organisation. As far as possible, anonymous complaints will be managed in the same way as other complaints.

People wishing to complain are encouraged to provide contact details so that they can be provided with information on the management of their concerns and details about the complaint can be clarified.

Because a complaint could be made to any committee member, all staff who deal with players, parents and club members should be able to:

- Accept a complaint in a respectful manner.
- Register the complaint appropriately to the committee.
- Provide advice on what action can be taken to resolve a complaint. Depending on the nature of the complaint, staff may:
 - Offer an apology.
 - Provide an explanation of the situation.
 - Encourage the person making the complaint to discuss their concerns with the relevant person (coach, member etc.)
 - Speak to the relevant person on behalf of the person making the complaint.
 - Provide information about the complaint handling process.
 - Refer the complaint to an appropriate person within the organisation.

3.2 Keeping records about complaints

It is important that records about complaints are kept. This serves several purposes:

- It enables the organisation to accurately measure complaints and evaluate responses.
- It enables the organisation to review what type of complaints are most received.
- It enables complaint history to be tracked. Minor complaints will require brief documentation.

3.3 Acknowledgment of complaints

3.3.1 Complaints to be acknowledged within 5 days

Complaints must be acknowledged, either verbally or in writing, within 5 days of receipt. A complaint should be acknowledged in writing either email or text. The person receiving the complaint must encourage and assist the person to make their complaint in writing to facilitate clear communication during the complaint management process.

3.3.2 Information to be included in acknowledgment of complaint

Where possible, when acknowledging the complaint, the person making the complaint is to be provided with information about:

- Contact details of the team managing the complaint.
- The issues to be managed.
- The complaint management process – including the expected timeframes.
- When the person making the complaint is likely to next be contacted. For further information or resolution.

3.4 Assessing complaints

An assessment process is vital to effective complaint management. The complaint is to be assessed and prioritised according to the issues raised. The assessment process must –

- Clarify the issues in the complaint to ensure that it is directed to the appropriate area (or areas) for management.
- Identify and escalate serious complaints as required.

3.4.1 Identify Issues

The person assessing the complaint is to clearly identify the issues to be addressed. The person making the complaint is to be contacted at this stage to ensure all relevant issues have been understood and to advise them of the issues which will be addressed in the complaint management process.

3.4.3 Identify individuals involved

The key people involved in the complaint ought to be identified during the assessment, including all individuals involved in an incident which has been the subject of a complaint. Complaints may involve multiple individuals. Early communication with all parties is essential to obtain all relevant information to enable effective assessment of the complaint.

3.5 Addressing the complaint

After assessment, a decision must be made as to how the complaint will be managed. Options may include:

- Providing information, an explanation or an apology to the person making the complaint.
- Meeting with the person making the complaint to discuss the matter further.
- Gathering additional information in relation to the complaint.
- Investigating the allegations made in the complaint.

3.5.1 Investigating a complaint

Not all complaints will require an investigation. Many complaints can be resolved without an investigation. The process will depend on the nature of the complaint. Investigations will constitute a fact-finding process to determine the facts of the complaint and what action may be appropriate. The steps in the investigation process may include:

- Clarifying issues for investigation, if any.
- Collect relevant information.
- Identify relevant witnesses.
- Conduct interviews.
- Analyse and review information obtained.
- Prepare report.

3.5.3 Possible outcomes for complaint process

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the decision about the outcome of the complaint may be made by an individual or team investigating. The person managing the complaint will recommend an appropriate outcome after consideration of the available information. Possible outcomes of a complaint process may include:

- Offering an apology.
- Offering face to face, meeting for the person making the complaint with relevant people.
- Waiving fees.
- Making changes to a policy/procedure, process or system where appropriate.
- Providing education to members.
- No further action.

3.6 Finalising the complaint

Following the consideration of the complaint and any investigation of the issues it raises, the person making the complaint will be advised that the matter has been finalised. Information about the outcome of the complaint will be provided to the person making the complaint where appropriate and may include:

- An apology.
- Any action taken because of the complaint.

3.6.2 Complaints to be finalised in writing where appropriate

Except when a complaint is resolved at the first interaction, it is usually appropriate to notify the person who made the complaint about the finalisation of the matter in email form.

3.6.3 Delays in finalising a complaint

Where a complaint is unable to be resolved within 35 days, regular communication with the person making the complaint becomes important in preserving the person's confidence in the process. A progress update should be sent, including:

- An apology for the delay.
- An explanation for the reasons for the delay.
- An expected timeframe for when the complaint will be finalised.

3.7 After the complaint is finalised

It is important to provide feedback to members about finalised complaints. Learning from the experience, can avoid repetition of problems. The complaint manager must ensure that the actions taken in managing the complaint are documented and that complaints data is available to ensure transparency and accountability.

4 ONGOING OBLIGATIONS

4.1 Performance Indicators

SBI must try and answer complaints using the following the following indicators:

- Acknowledge receipt of each complaint within five calendar days.
- Finalise the outcome of each complaint and advise person making the complaint of outcome within 35 calendar days.

4.2 File Maintenance and record keeping

SBI must maintain accurate records about complaints.

4.3 Confidentiality

SBI committee members have ongoing responsibilities to maintain confidentiality about the complaint process, including after the complaint has been finalised. This requires

everyone involved in the complaint to ensure that personal or identifying information about the complaint is restricted to those who genuinely need to know as part of their role.

5.4 Continuous improvement

SBI is committed to improving the effectiveness of our complaint management system. To support this, SBI:

- Facilitates the making of and appropriate resolution of complaints.
- Implements best practice in complaint handling.
- Regularly reviews complaints data at a local level.
- Seeks and provides feedback to people making complaints and members following a complaint.
- May conduct reviews to evaluate complaint handling.