



Claregalway GAA

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Claregalway GAA and LGFA club Complaints Procedure:

This procedure is to be used in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Best Practice for Youth Sport and the guidelines for members, team Coaches and Officials contained in the GAA Code of Behaviour and Code of Best Practice in Youth in Sport.

This procedure is designed to provide guidance to Club officers, coaches, players and their families on the general principles, which apply in the operation of the Claregalway GAA complaints procedures.

These guidelines are not legally binding. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, which suggests a failure to perform a function or provide a service in line with stated policies and practices. It gives the Club the opportunity to put something right which has gone wrong or restore a service to the required standard. Complaints will ensure that faults and mistakes are acknowledged and that remedies are provided.

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice with young members. A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot always be given, as the welfare of the young person will supersede all other considerations. It is important that the rights of all concerned in the complaint are protected. All information gathered be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and will be discussed only with those who need to know. Giving information to others on “a need to know” is not a breach of confidentiality. All persons involved in a protection process (the player, the parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, officials and coaches) will be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

All information in relation to complaints will be stored in a secure place, with limited access only by designated people.

Anonymous complaints or rumours can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the Club members (particularly young members) is paramount. The information should be brought to the Children’s Officer. The information should be investigated and handled in a confidential manner.

Stages in the Complaints Procedure:

The vast majority of complaints are best resolved informally. If the complaint cannot be resolved locally then the following steps should be followed:

- Receiving a Complaint
- Appointment of an Investigation Committee



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- Complaint Procedure
- Sanctions
- Appeal Procedure Receiving a Complaint:

All complaints should be submitted in writing to the Club juvenile Chairperson, Club Secretary or the Children's Officer.

- The complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days of its receipt.
- The Mentor/Player/Parent/Guardian against whom the complaint has been made should be notified of the nature of the complaint by telephone and in writing.
- If a complaint made against the Club coach is of a serious nature, the coach should be asked to temporarily step aside during the investigation and a care taker coach should be put in place.
- If a complaint is of a suspected abuse (sexual or physical) the Statutory Authorities (TUSLA) should be contacted to receive professional guidance.
- All letters of complaint should be kept safely and confidentially.
- Letters of complaint remains the property of the Club. They will remain confidential and will not be read at a meeting or circulated to any person.

Appointment of Investigation Committee:

An investigation committee consisting of the club Juvenile Chairperson, the Children's Officer, Club coaching committee member plus an ordinary member of the Club (if required) will be set up. If any member of the investigating committee has a vested interest in the complaint, they must step aside from the investigation.

It is recommended that this committee is put in place at the beginning of the year.

The investigating committee will deal with all incidents of suspected misconduct including bullying, however, any complaint concerning child abuse will be referred, by the Claregalway Gaa club Designated Officer, to the appropriate Statutory Authorities.

Dealing with the Complaint

- On receiving a complaint the investigation committee will inform the individuals involved with details of the complaint being made.
- Each party to the complaint will be afforded the opportunity of providing a response verbally at a meeting with the investigation committee.
- If either party does not attend the meeting, they will be offered the opportunity of providing a response in writing.
- If either party fails to co-operate with the investigating committee, the investigation will continue.
- An underage player must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.



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- If a parent/guardian is party to the complaint, an underage player should be accompanied by an independent adult of their choice.
- In certain circumstances the investigation committee will enlist the assistance of professional help.
- In delivering its findings, the investigating committee will furnish a written report giving details of the procedures followed, investigation conclusions and recommendations or any actions to be taken. The written report will be signed by all members of the investigating committee. All parties to the complaint will receive a copy of the investigating committee's findings.

Sanctions:

- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the investigation committee will notify the member (verbally and in writing) of any sanctions or corrective actions being imposed and the reason why. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to his/her parents/guardian.

Appeals:

- If either party to a complaint is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation committee they have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of the investigation committee).
- All appeals should be made in writing within 7 days of the issuing of the investigating committees findings.
- At least one member of the Club Executive committee will be a member of the appeals committee.
- The appeals committee will have the power to confirm, set aside or change any corrective action imposed by the investigation committee. Having exhausted all procedures to resolve a complaint, if any party is still not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Galway GAA Children's Officer who in turn has the right to refer the matter to the National Children's officer.

Filing of Complaints:

All correspondence, reports, minutes and findings will be treated with confidence, securely filed and will remain the property of the Club.