NANANGO RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB INC

GRIEVANCE & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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1. Purpose

Nanango Rugby League Football Club Inc (NRLFC) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and positive environment for members, players, parents and carers, coaches, team officials, volunteers and other people involved with the Club.

This Procedure provides a practical process for receiving, managing and resolving complaints and grievances and supports the operation of Clause 16 of the NRLFC Constitution.

This Procedure must be read together with the Constitution, applicable Queensland legislation and applicable Queensland Rugby League (QRL) requirements.

If there is any inconsistency, the Constitution, legislation and applicable QRL requirements prevail.

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2. Scope

This Procedure applies to complaints and concerns relating to NRLFC activities, members, players, parents or carers, coaches, team officials, volunteers, Club officials and Management Committee members.

Complaints may include concerns about:

- conduct or behaviour;
- breaches of the Constitution, Club policies or codes;
- disputes between members;
- decisions or actions of Club officials;
- bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation;
- safety or welfare concerns; or
- other matters affecting the Club.

A formal grievance under Clause 16 applies only to a dispute under the Constitution between:

a) a member and another member;
b) a member and the Management Committee; or
c) a member and the Association.

Where a matter is subject to a specific disciplinary, appeal, QRL, safeguarding, statutory or other regulatory process, that process may apply instead of, or alongside, this Procedure.

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3. Principles

All complaints and grievances will be managed, as far as reasonably practicable, in accordance with the following principles:

3.1 Procedural Fairness

Each person involved will be given a reasonable opportunity to explain their position and respond to relevant allegations or information.

3.2 Impartiality

A person must not manage, investigate, mediate or determine a matter where they have a conflict of interest that may affect their impartiality.

3.3 Confidentiality

Information will be treated confidentially and only shared where reasonably necessary to manage or resolve the matter, protect a person, obtain advice, comply with law or QRL requirements, or conduct an appropriate investigation.

Confidentiality does not guarantee anonymity.

3.4 Respect

All people involved are expected to communicate respectfully and must not engage in intimidation, threats, harassment, victimisation or retaliation.

3.5 Good Faith

Parties are expected to participate honestly, reasonably and genuinely in the resolution process.

3.6 Safety

The Club may take reasonable immediate steps necessary to protect the safety or welfare of any person while a matter is being assessed or resolved.

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4. Making a Complaint

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing.

Where appropriate, the person receiving the complaint should:

- listen and establish the nature of the concern;
- identify any immediate safety or welfare concerns;
- explain the available options;
- encourage the complaint to be provided in writing where appropriate; and
- refer the matter to the appropriate person for assessment.

Complaints should ordinarily be directed to the President or Secretary.

If the President or Secretary is involved in the matter or has a conflict of interest, the matter should be referred to another appropriately authorised Management Committee member or an appropriately independent person.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where sufficient information is available to assess the concern.

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5. Initial Assessment and Resolution

Following receipt of a complaint, the Club will determine the appropriate pathway.

5.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate and safe, the Club may seek to resolve a complaint informally through discussion, clarification of expectations, an apology, agreed communication, changed arrangements, education or another agreed outcome.

Informal resolution should not be required where there is a serious allegation, significant power imbalance, safety concern or risk of victimisation.

5.2 Formal Complaint

A formal process may be appropriate where:

- informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate;
- the matter is serious or disputed;
- an investigation is required;
- there is a significant conflict of interest; or
- disciplinary action may be required.

The person managing the matter should ensure that relevant allegations are put to the person responding, relevant information is considered fairly, and each person is given a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

5.3 Formal Grievance Under Clause 16

Where a member initiates a formal grievance under Clause 16, the process and timeframes in Clause 16 of the Constitution must be followed.

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6. Formal Grievance Process

A formal grievance is initiated in accordance with Clause 16 by the member giving written notice of the dispute to the other party and, where required, the Management Committee.

The parties must make a genuine and reasonable attempt to resolve the dispute in good faith.

If the dispute cannot be resolved within **14 days** after the grievance is initiated, the aggrieved member may, within the following **21 days**, ask the Secretary to refer the dispute to mediation.

If mediation is requested, the Management Committee must refer the dispute to mediation within 14 days, subject to the Constitution and applicable law.

The parties should attempt to agree on a mediator.

Where the parties cannot agree:

- for a dispute between members, the mediator will be appointed by the Management Committee; or
- for a dispute involving the Management Committee or Association, an independent external mediator or mediation service will be used.

Any mediator must be impartial and must not have a personal interest in, or bias towards or against, any party.

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7. Representation and Protection

A member may appoint any person to act on their behalf in a formal grievance under Clause 16.

Each party must be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

Where a member has initiated a grievance against the Association, the Club must not take disciplinary action against:

a) the member who initiated the grievance; or
b) a member appointed by that member to act on their behalf,

in relation to the subject matter of the grievance until the grievance procedure has been completed.

This does not prevent reasonable action necessary for safety, safeguarding, compliance with law or QRL requirements, or action relating to unrelated conduct.

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8. Mediation

Mediation is intended to assist the parties to reach an agreed resolution.

The mediator must act impartially and provide each party with a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

Mediation may be conducted in person, by telephone or electronically where appropriate.

The mediator does not ordinarily determine who is right or wrong or impose an outcome unless the applicable process expressly provides otherwise.

If mediation does not resolve the dispute, the Club may take any further steps permitted by the Constitution, applicable law, QRL requirements or other applicable process.

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9. Outcomes, Records and Confidentiality

Depending on the circumstances, an outcome may include:

- no further action;
- an agreed resolution;
- clarification of expectations;
- an apology;
- changes to arrangements or procedures;
- education or training;
- disciplinary action where authorised;
- referral to QRL or another appropriate authority; or
- another reasonable and proportionate response.

The Club will keep appropriate records of formal complaints and grievances, which may include:

- the complaint or grievance;
- relevant correspondence;
- evidence and investigation records;
- mediation records;
- decisions or outcomes; and
- follow-up actions.

Records must be stored securely and accessed only by persons with a legitimate need to access them.

The Club will provide appropriate information about the outcome to the parties, subject to confidentiality, privacy and the rights of other people.

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10. External Referral and Safeguarding

The Club may refer a matter to QRL, the relevant rugby league governing body, Queensland Police Service, a government agency, dispute resolution service, tribunal, court or another appropriate authority where:

- the matter falls within another organisation's jurisdiction;
- external referral is required by law or QRL requirements;
- criminal or unlawful conduct is suspected;
- there is a serious safety or safeguarding concern;
- the Club does not have the authority or expertise to deal with the matter; or
- internal resolution is not appropriate or has been unsuccessful.

Nothing in this Procedure prevents or delays a referral where required by law or reasonably necessary to protect a person.

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11. Conflicts of Interest

Any person involved in managing, investigating, mediating or determining a complaint must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

A person with a conflict must not participate where their involvement may affect the fairness or impartiality of the process.

Where the President or Secretary is involved or conflicted, the Management Committee will appoint another appropriately authorised person to manage the matter and may appoint an appropriately qualified independent person where necessary.

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12. Roles and Responsibilities

Management Committee
Ensures complaints and grievances are managed appropriately and in accordance with the Constitution, this Procedure, legislation and QRL requirements.

President / Secretary
Ordinarily receive and administer complaints and formal grievances, unless involved or conflicted.

Appointed Management Committee Member / Independent Person
Manages matters where the President or Secretary cannot act impartially.

Investigator
Acts impartially, gathers relevant information and maintains procedural fairness.

Mediator
Acts impartially and in accordance with Clause 16 and applicable law.

Complainant and Respondent
Participate honestly and reasonably, provide relevant information, respect confidentiality and communicate respectfully.

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13. Review and Access

The current version of this Procedure will be made reasonably accessible to members and relevant Club participants.

The Management Committee will review the Procedure at least every **two years**, or earlier where required following:

- a significant complaint or grievance;
- a change to legislation;
- a change to QRL requirements; or
- a change to the Club's Constitution or governance arrangements.

The Management Committee may amend this Procedure provided any amendment remains consistent with Clause 16 of the Constitution, the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Qld), applicable regulations and QRL requirements.

Approved by:
Nanango Rugby League Football Club Inc Management Committee

Date Approved: 5th November 2026 by Special Resolution at AGM

Next Review: November 2028