



# Sutherland Sharks Football Club Complaints Policy

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## Introduction

This policy provides clear guidelines in process to manage complaints from any party to Sutherland Sharks FC (SSFC). Complaints will be dealt with in a systematic format, ensuring that the complainant is provided fair and reasonable information and opportunity.

## Policy Purpose

This policy is written with the express purpose of ensuring valid complaints are dealt with objectively, fairly and promptly. The policy is designed to ensure complaints are minimised and actioned in a fair and just manner for the complainant and the person/people being complained about.

The Constitution clearly articulates the outcomes in the event complaints are found to be fair, reasonable and valid.

## Vexatious and/or Vindictive Complaints

### Vexatious Complaints

Any complaint found to have vexatious implications will be subject to further action against the complainant. The complainant found making vexatious claims may be asked to meet with the Board of Management to explain why the complaint was made when untrue, and may be required to justify why they should not be expelled or suspended from the club for the false allegations and complaints.

### Vindictive Complaints

Any complaint found to be vindictive or vengeful will result in similar outcomes to the Vexatious Complaint. The use of inappropriate means to question or slur any person's character without provocation or reason will result in automatic suspension pending Board of Management review.

## Football Complaints

A clear process to manage any complaints regarding the football business of SSFC is established to ensure those aggrieved are offered an opportunity to voice their complaint.

The first point of complaint is to be undertaken verbally with the Team Manager. No other parties are to be privy to the information prior to the complaint being made; otherwise the complaint may be deemed unjustified or prejudice. The complainant must first approach the Team Manager to discuss their issue.

The Team Manager is then required to determine the validity of the complaint. Should the complaint warrant further action, the Team Manager determines the next step; the steps are:

1. A verbal discussion between the complainant and the subject of the complaint.
2. Whether the complaint should be formalised in writing.

Where the verbal discussion takes place, the Team Manager acts as mediator in the process. The Manager is required to be in attendance, but not to intervene after providing the complainant and the subject party with the details of the complaint. The Manager's role is to ensure the matter is conducted in a controlled and calm manner, looking for a satisfactory outcome.

In the event an outcome is reached, the Team Manager will document the complaint and outcome when next convenient and provide all documents to the Board of Management for records management purposes. The matter is then deemed closed.

Where the matter is seen as more serious, the Team Manager shall follow these steps:

1. Advise the Secretary of the complaint.
2. Request the complainant to put the complaint in writing.
  - 2.1. If the complainant will not place the complaint in writing, the complaint is deemed mute and deemed concluded.
3. Take receipt of the written complaint.
4. Provide the written complaint to the Secretary.

The Board of Management will then take carriage of the complaint from the Team Manager. The Board of Management will then determine what action will occur in accordance with the Constitution.

At no point, unless in breach of the Constitution or the Law will any party be stood down or alienated during the process of complaint management. Any breach of the law will be referred to NSW Police for further investigation.

Immediately after handing control to the Board of Management, the Team Manager will not discuss the matter with any other party or the complainant.

## Operational Complaints

Where any person or party have a grievance with the operations of the SSFC, all complaints are to be put in writing and addressed to the Secretary. Until such time as the complaint is received in writing, no action will occur.

Once received, the Board of Management will determine the necessary course of action for the complaint. Where the complaint relates to another person or party; that person or party will be provided a copy of the written complaint and offered twenty-one (21) days from that notice the opportunity to respond; applying fair natural justice to that party.

Upon receipt of any response, the information returned will be provided to the complainant party for their information with a fourteen (14) day period to review.

Should the complainant wish to continue the complaint after this process; the Board of Management will convene the necessary personnel in accordance with the Constitution.

Where the complainant indicates the withdrawal of the complaint; the Secretary will ensure the grievance is resolved and both parties are aware of the outcome with written confirmation. The secretary will document the process and ensure the entire information package is retained for information management and audit purposes.

## Behavioural Complaints

In the event person attending any SSFC playing, training or social event are found to have behaved inappropriately; the complaint will be referred directly to the Board of Management. In accordance with the Constitution, and assuring the person's involved are afforded natural justice; the Board of Management will undertake the review process in a fair and just manner for all parties.

Adverse findings against any persons will be penalised in accordance with the terms of the Constitution.

## Grievances

All grievances are to be provided in writing directly to the Secretary. Under no circumstances are the grievances to be discussed outside the realm of the written grievance. External discussion may lead to immediate dismissal of the grievance.

Grievances are subject to the same conditions as complaints; any inappropriate conduct determined in the grievance process will be subject to similar action.

## Disclaimer on Legal Action

SSFC will not be party to civil action taken by any party; nor will SSFC volunteer to represent either or both parties in the event any legal action/proceedings are initiated.

The SSFC will not be deemed liable for personal disputes between parties that may involve persons associated with the club. The Board of Management reserves the right to suspend parties engaging in legal action without due reason.

Any persons taking legal action against another party within SSFC must inform the Board of Management in writing as part of their proceedings process as a matter of courtesy.