



Ice Hockey New South Wales Complaints Handling & Disputes Policy

Policy Name:	Complaints Handling & Disputes Policy
Date of Approval:	19/05/2026
Policy Coverage:	All participants for harassment and discrimination, privacy and confidentiality, respect and responsibility, and alcohol policies.
Date of Review:	18/05/2026

1. Policy Statement

Ice Hockey NSW is committed to providing a sport environment that is *safe, fair, ethical, and consistent with national integrity standards*.

This policy establishes a *clear, accessible, and structured process* for managing integrity-related complaints and disputes across all affiliated clubs and Ice Hockey NSW operations.

All matters will be handled in accordance with:

- The National Integrity Framework
- Ice Hockey Australia Integrity Policy
- Sport Integrity Australia requirements

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all integrity complaints and disputes are:

- Managed consistently across clubs and state operations
- Resolved in a timely, fair, and impartial manner
- Escalated appropriately based on seriousness and jurisdiction
- Handled through a clear and accessible pathway

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Players (junior and senior)
- Coaches, referees, officials, volunteers
- Club executives and administrators
- Ice Hockey NSW staff and contractors
- All affiliated clubs and participants

It covers complaints relating to:

- Behaviour and misconduct
- Bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Safeguarding and welfare concerns
- Club governance or disputes
- Competition integrity (e.g. cheating, manipulation)
- Breaches of codes, policies, or rules

4. Key Principles

All complaints and disputes will be managed in accordance with:

- *Procedural fairness (natural justice)*
- *Impartial and independent decision-making*
- *Confidentiality where appropriate and lawful*
- *Timely and proportionate resolution*
- *Consistency across all clubs and levels*
- *Protection from victimisation or reprisal*
- *National alignment with Sport Integrity Australia frameworks*

5. Complaints Handling Pathway

STEP 1 – CLUB LEVEL (INITIAL RESOLUTION)

Complaints should first be raised with:

- Club Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO), OR
- Club Complaints Matrix / internal club process

Description:

This is the primary and preferred entry point for most issues. Clubs are responsible for managing minor or localised disputes.

Club responsibilities:

- Receive and document complaints
- Assess whether informal resolution is appropriate
- Resolve minor conduct or operational issues
- Escalate serious or unresolved matters

Exception:

If the complaint is about the club itself, proceed directly to Step 2.

STEP 2 – ICE HOCKEY NSW STATE LEVEL

Escalation occurs to:

- Ice Hockey NSW Executive Officer (or delegate Integrity Officer)

Description:

This stage provides *independent state-level oversight* where club resolution is not appropriate or not possible.

Ice Hockey NSW responsibilities:

- Register and acknowledge complaint
- Assess severity, risk, and jurisdiction
- Appoint independent investigator (if required)
- Manage or oversee investigation process
- Apply interim measures where necessary (e.g. suspension pending outcome)

Exception:

If the complaint involves Ice Hockey NSW itself, proceed directly to Step 3.

STEP 3 – ICE HOCKEY AUSTRALIA (NATIONAL LEVEL)

Complaints are escalated under:

- [Ice Hockey Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#)

Description:

This level is used for matters requiring *national governance, independence, or cross-jurisdictional resolution*.

Ice Hockey Australia responsibilities:

- Take carriage of the matter if required
- Appoint independent panels or investigators
- Determine findings and outcomes

- Issue sanctions or binding directions

STEP 4 – SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA (SIA)

Description:

SIA is the peak national sport integrity authority for serious or high-risk integrity matters.

This includes:

- Doping violations
- Match fixing or competition manipulation
- Corruption, fraud, or bribery
- Serious misconduct or criminal matters
- Major national integrity breaches

SIA responsibilities:

- Independent investigation
- Coordination with law enforcement where required
- Issuing findings, sanctions, or recommendations

6. Investigation Process (Ice Hockey NSW Managed Matters)

Where Ice Hockey NSW is responsible for managing a complaint, the following process applies:

1. Complaint received and recorded
2. Initial assessment (risk, severity, jurisdiction)
3. Determination of pathway (informal / formal / referral)
4. Investigation (if required)
 - Evidence collection
 - Witness interviews
 - Document review
5. Findings and determination
6. Outcome communicated to relevant parties
7. Appeal process (where applicable)
8. Case closure and secure record storage

7. Timeframes

Ice Hockey NSW aims to ensure matters are handled efficiently:

- Acknowledgement: within *5 business days*
- Initial assessment: promptly upon receipt
- Resolution: as soon as practicable depending on complexity
- External matters: subject to national or SIA processes

Delays must be:

- Documented
- Communicated
- Justified

8. Decision-Making

All decisions must:

- Be evidence-based
- Be free from bias or conflict of interest
- Be proportionate to the issue
- Align with national integrity frameworks

Possible outcomes include:

- No further action
- Informal resolution or mediation
- Education or corrective direction
- Warning or sanction
- Suspension or deregistration
- Referral to national body or SIA

9. Appeals

A party may appeal decisions on grounds of:

- Procedural unfairness
- New evidence
- Disproportionate outcome

Appeals will be heard by an *independent body not involved in the original decision*.

10. Record Keeping & Confidentiality

Ice Hockey NSW will:

- Maintain secure records of all complaints
- Ensure confidentiality is protected where appropriate
- Use de-identified data for reporting and governance
- Retain records in line with legal and regulatory requirements

11. Templates and Standardisation

To ensure consistent application across all clubs and state operations:

- Standard complaint reporting templates will be used where applicable
- Standard investigation templates will be used where applicable
- Standard outcome/decision templates will be used where applicable
- Standard reporting templates will be used where applicable

These ensure *uniformity, transparency, and national alignment*.

12. National Alignment

This policy is aligned with:

- National Integrity Framework
- [Ice Hockey Australia Integrity Policy](#)
- Sport Integrity Australia requirements

All clubs and Ice Hockey NSW personnel must comply with this framework.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure:

- Continued alignment with national requirements
- Operational effectiveness
- Continuous improvement of integrity systems

14. Definitions (Integrity Complaints & Dispute Resolution Policy)

Complaint: A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction made by a participant or stakeholder regarding the behaviour, actions, decisions, or conduct of an individual, club, or organisation involved in Ice Hockey NSW activities. A complaint may be verbal or written and may relate to integrity, conduct, welfare, governance, or competition matters.

Dispute: A dispute is a disagreement between two or more parties involved in Ice Hockey NSW activities that cannot be resolved informally and requires structured intervention, review, or determination under this policy.

Integrity Matter: An integrity matter is any issue that may impact the fairness, safety, ethics, or reputation of the sport. This includes but is not limited to misconduct, bullying, harassment, discrimination, safeguarding concerns, competition manipulation, or governance breaches.

Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO): An MPIO is a trained club-based person responsible for receiving, recording, and assisting with complaints at club level. The MPIO provides initial guidance to complainants and helps ensure appropriate escalation pathways are followed.

Club Complaints Matrix: A structured internal club process that outlines how different types of complaints are managed at club level. It defines whether a matter can be resolved informally, requires investigation, or must be escalated to Ice Hockey NSW.

Escalation: Escalation refers to the process of transferring a complaint or dispute to a higher level of authority when it cannot be resolved at the current level or when it exceeds the authority or capability of the club.

Ice Hockey NSW Executive Officer: The senior executive responsible for receiving and managing escalated integrity complaints at state level. The Executive Officer oversees investigations, ensures procedural fairness, and determines appropriate action or referral.

Investigation: An investigation is a structured process used to gather facts and evidence relating to a complaint. This may include reviewing documents, collecting statements, interviewing relevant parties, and assessing the information to determine findings.

Procedural Fairness (Natural Justice): Procedural fairness is the principle that all parties involved in a complaint must be given a fair opportunity to present their version of events, respond to allegations, and have their matter decided without bias.

Interim Measure: An interim measure is a temporary action taken to manage risk or protect participants while a complaint is being assessed or investigated. This may include temporary suspension, restriction from participation, or other protective conditions.

Outcome: An outcome is the final determination made after a complaint or investigation is completed. Outcomes may include no action, education, warnings, sanctions, suspension, or referral to a higher authority.

Sanction: A sanction is a penalty or corrective action imposed following a substantiated breach of policy or code of conduct. Sanctions are intended to address misconduct and may include suspension, fines (where applicable), or removal from participation.

Appeal: An appeal is a formal request for review of a decision based on grounds such as procedural unfairness, new evidence, or disproportionate outcome. Appeals are reviewed by an independent person or panel not involved in the original decision.

National Integrity Framework: A national set of policies and principles that govern integrity in sport in Australia. It sets minimum standards for safeguarding, conduct, complaints handling, competition integrity, and anti-doping compliance.

Ice Hockey Australia Integrity Policy: The governing national policy that outlines how integrity complaints, disputes, and disciplinary matters are managed within ice hockey in Australia. It provides national-level procedures and escalation pathways.

Sport Integrity Australia (SIA): The Australian government agency responsible for protecting sport integrity nationally. SIA manages serious integrity matters including doping, corruption, match fixing, and other high-level breaches.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality refers to the obligation to protect complaint-related information and ensure it is only shared with individuals who are authorised or directly involved in managing the matter.

Retaliation / Victimisation: Retaliation or victimisation refers to any adverse action taken against a person for making a complaint or participating in an investigation. This behaviour is strictly prohibited under this policy.

Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction refers to the level of authority responsible for managing a complaint (club, state, national, or Sport Integrity Australia). Jurisdiction determines which body is responsible for handling and resolving the matter.

Affiliated Club: An affiliated club is any registered club that is formally recognised under Ice Hockey NSW and participates in sanctioned competitions or programs governed by Ice Hockey NSW.

Participant: A participant is any individual involved in Ice Hockey NSW activities, including players, coaches, referees, officials, volunteers, and administrators.

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