

Irish Mountaineering Club
Complaints and Grievance Handling Guidelines
approved for use by the club on the 14th October 2020

Complaints and Grievance Handling Guidelines

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Complaints and grievance handling guidelines : introduction and overview

The guidelines have a foundation of several values or principals:

- Openness , candour and honesty.
- The bona fides and good intention of all parties will be assumed upon entering the process.
- All rights come with responsibilities.
- All perspectives can be challenged, everything can be improved and other perspectives can help improvements to happen.
- Openness , transparency and ease of working the guidelines.
- Opinions are just that ...opinions. Behaviours are the basis of dealing with an issue.

These guidelines are is subordinate to the constitution paragraph 5.6 and embodies the principles in that paragraph.

Should 5.6 be amended at any time in the future this process may need to amended to reflect the changes.

The Chair is the designated Process Manager who will operate the guidelines.

The over-arching goal of the guidelines are to allow resolution of an issue between or among members .

For purpose of clarity we must distinguish between a disciplinary and grievance / complaint .

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Characteristics of a Complaint / grievance issue.	Characteristics of a Disciplinary issue.
• It is about an issue between or among members. • A wrong considered as grounds for complaint, • These guidelines are typically initiated by the person or people who feels or believes they have been aggrieved. • The subject of the complaint or grievance will focus on behaviour perceived to be grounds for complaint. • Issues of diversity are not a basis for a complaint, e.g. personal style , gender , opinion, etc , etc. • Resolution is the primary goal in tackling an issue.	• It is primary and exclusively focused on a possible breach of club rules and / or the law of the land. • The committee must always assume innocence. • The constitution of the club in paragraph 5.6 forms the foundation for dealing with disciplinary matters. • While it may be brought to the attention of the Committee by a member or civilian, the process is typically initiated and handled by the Committee and other officers of the club. • In the event of a potential breach of the law of the land the Committee must immediately discharge their civic duty by handing over all information to An Garda Síochana. • We must also strive earnestly to terminate any matters which are blatantly vexatious, malicious or vindictive to or about a member.

Separately where there are any allegations that a member's conduct is or has been contrary to the interests of the Club, in breach of club rules or the law of the land then the committee shall manage the matter in line with paragraph 5.6 of the club constitution.

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To initiate the guidelines an Individual or group who wishes to raise an issue must speak to a member of the committee. That committee member will make a call whether it is a grievance or disciplinary matter (taking advice from the Chair / Secretary as necessary).

“Just as complainants deserve respect, everyone else must be treated with respect also. Therefore, complaints which are considered by the Committee to be malicious or vexatious or where false information is knowingly submitted will be dismissed.”

They will be told if the matter is grievance. If it is a grievance s/he will then move to step 1 and beyond. To begin they will be asked to specify in writing ...

1. Whom they believe has caused an issue?
2. When did that happen?
3. How the others have created an issue?
4. Why they believe the issue is not acceptable?

Participation by both parties is voluntary, but to be encouraged.

Progressing the matter must always begin with step one of the process and beyond as required.

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Draft Complaints and grievance process steps.

The following is the sequence of steps to be followed by a person or group with an issue to be resolved.

Step	What happens ?	Who's involved ?	Resolution and outcome
1	The person or people with an issue are actively encouraged to bring their issue to the attention of the other person or people, and to talk with those they believe have caused an issue. <u>It is intended that the vast majority of issues will be resolved at this level.</u>	Person or people with an issue and the others. Committee member who decides if the issue is grievance or disciplinary. If it is a grievance s/he encourages the parties to speak to each other. If it is a disciplinary it immediately is brought to the committee.	Issue is resolved to mutual satisfaction . OR if either are dissatisfied they can raise it to step 2 Duration of step 10 days
2	Only after step 1 the person / people who are dissatisfied can elevate to step 2 and then notify an officer of the club committee, who will facilitate conversations among those concerned.	Person or people with an issue and the others An officer of the club, not directly or previously involved.	Issue is resolved to mutual satisfaction . That solution is documented by the Officer. OR if either are dissatisfied they can raise it to step 3

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			Duration of step 10 days
3	In extraordinary and exceptional cases and only after step 2 the person / people who are dissatisfied can elevate to step 3. Two officers of the club committee will facilitate a conversation.	Person or people with an issue and the others. Two officers of the club (not previously or directly involved).	Issue is resolved to mutual satisfaction . That solution is documented by the Secretary & Officer. OR if either are dissatisfied they can raise it to step 4. Duration of steps 10 days
4	In very rare cases and only after step 3 the person / people who are dissatisfied can elevate to step 4. This ultimate step will only happen when all involved agree that step 4 is the ultimate and final step. All must agree that the decision of the Facilitators is final and binding on everyone involved. If not, the decision in step 3 is to be taken as full and final resolution.	Person or people with an issue and the others. The Chairman, President and Auditors of the club (not previously or directly involved) . In the event that these members of the club are directly involved or otherwise recuse themselves then other members	Everyone having pre agreed that the decision of the Facilitators are final and binding on everyone involved. Issue is resolved to mutual satisfaction .

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	The Chairman, President and Auditors of the club (not previously or directly involved) will facilitate a conversation. In the situation where one of the two parties will not agree to step four then the decision or outcome of step three will apply, thus also concluding the process.	and non-members of the club can be asked to facilitate.	That solution is documented by the Secretary. Duration of step 15 days. <u><i>This is the final step.</i></u>
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Constitution paragraph 5.6

The Committee shall deal with any allegations it receives that a member's conduct is or has been contrary to the interests of the Club.

The entire procedure shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The member's membership, or benefits of their membership, may be immediately suspended pending resolution of the issue, if such is deemed necessary to protect the interests of the Club.

A mediator may be appointed to attempt to mediate the issue, and a disciplinary panel may be appointed to adjudicate on the issue and recommend sanctions.

Mediators and disciplinary panel members need not be members of the Club and may not be members of the Committee, and shall carry out their duties fairly, courteously and discreetly.

Decisions shall be based on the balance of probability.

The Committee shall accept the decision of a disciplinary panel and implement its recommendations, except under exceptional circumstances. Sanctions up to and including expulsion from membership of the Club may be imposed.