

Dispute Resolution Policy for Northampton Hockey Club

Purpose

The purpose of this Dispute Resolution Policy is to provide a fair and efficient process for resolving disputes that may arise between members, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders of Northampton Hockey Club. The policy is intended to promote open communication, respect, and a commitment to resolving disputes constructively.

Scope

This policy applies to all disputes that arise in connection with the activities of Northampton Hockey Club. This includes disputes between members, staff, volunteers, and between Northampton Hockey Club and other stakeholders.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Dispute:** A disagreement between two or more parties that cannot be resolved through informal means.
- **Grievance:** A formal complaint made by two or more parties about an action or decision of Northampton Hockey Club.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A situation in which a person's personal interests conflict with their duty to act in the best interests of Northampton Hockey Club.

Procedures

Informal process

In most cases, disputes can be resolved informally through open communication and discussion. The parties involved in a dispute should first attempt to resolve the matter directly with each other.

Benefits of an informal process

There are several benefits including:

- *It is more flexible and can be tailored to the specific needs of the parties.*
- *It can be resolved more quickly than with a formal process*
- *It can help to preserve relationships between the parties.*
- *It can be more successful in resolving disputes than a formal process*

There are two different types of informal process available within the NHC Dispute Resolution Process

- **Negotiation:** This is the preferred first stage, and it involves the parties themselves trying to reach an agreement.
- **Mediation:** This is the second preferred form in which a neutral third party helps the parties to reach an agreement

The Informal Process

The IDR process typically involves the following steps:

1. The parties contact the club captain, or an Exec Committee member if not available or if the club captain is a party to the dispute. This person is referred to as the “Mediator”
2. The “Mediator” meets with the parties to discuss the dispute and to determine an informal approach is appropriate.
3. The parties exchange information about the dispute.
4. The parties try to reach an agreement, either on their own or with the help of the “Mediator”.
5. If negotiation or mediation is unsuccessful, either party may choose to request a formal hearing.

Tips for a successful informal process

- Be prepared to compromise.
- Be open to hearing the other party's point of view.
- Be respectful of the other party.
- Be honest and forthcoming with information.
- Be willing to work with the “Mediator”

What topics should we use an informal process for?

- Interpretation of club policies
- Personal relationship breakdown

What topics should we not use an informal process for?

- Allegations of dishonesty, discrimination or involving illegal activities
- Conflicts of interest where financial gain is alleged.

Formal Process

If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, the parties may pursue formal resolution through the grievance or complaint process.

Grievance Procedure

A grievance is a formal complaint made by members, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders of Northampton Hockey Club about an action or decision of Northampton Hockey Club. The grievance procedure is as follows:

1. **The member, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholder should submit a written grievance to the club secretary. The grievance should clearly state the nature of the complaint and the desired outcome.**
2. **The club secretary will review the grievance and may seek further clarification from the member or staff member.**
3. **The club secretary will convene a grievance panel to hear the grievance. The grievance panel will consist of three club members who are not directly involved in the dispute.**
4. **The grievance panel will hear written evidence from the party citing the grievance and from any other relevant parties.**
5. **The grievance panel will make a decision on the grievance and will communicate this decision to the member or staff member in writing.**
6. **If the member or staff member is not satisfied with the decision of the grievance panel, they may appeal the decision to the club executive committee. The executive committee will make a**

final decision on the grievance.

- 7. In cases where the dispute is about the implementation of a club policy the club secretary will determine which policy covers the dispute and that policy will be submitted as evidence together with statements from all parties**

Confidentiality

All information disclosed during the dispute resolution process will be kept confidential. This rule shall not apply with respect to safeguarding grievances which will be shared with England Hockey and/or the relevant safeguarding bodies as appropriate.

Appeals

Any party who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance or complaint decision may appeal the decision to the club executive committee. The executive committee will make a final decision on the appeal.

External Resolution

If a dispute cannot be resolved through the internal dispute resolution process, the parties may pursue external resolution through legal or other means.

Conflict of Interest

Any person or group who has a conflict of interest in a dispute shall disclose the conflict of interest to the club secretary as soon as practicable. A conflict of interest may include, but is not limited to, a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the dispute, or a relationship with a party to the dispute.

If a conflict of interest is disclosed, the club secretary will take appropriate steps to address the conflict, which may include disqualifying the person or group from participating in the dispute resolution process.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or as needed.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the club secretary.