



## Checklist for complaints handling process

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Complaints should be dealt with at the lowest level where possible i.e. Club or Zone level. Where possible all complaints should be dealt with via mediation within the Club or Zone.

Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant and directed to the appropriate level and person within Pony Club i.e. Club/Zone Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO), Secretary or President.

If a complaint is received check that –

- The complaint is in writing and signed by the person making the complaint
  - The complaint clearly identifies the nature of the complaint / reason for the complaint, and the desired action
  - If witnesses are named, ensure that the full names and contact details are provided
  - If not signed by the person making the complaint, advise that person of the protocol that needs to be followed – set the timeframe for correct protocols to be followed, i.e. 2 weeks from the date of request.
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- From a member re another member – direct the complaint to the Club MPIO, Secretary or President
  - From a member re another member of another Club – direct the complaint to the Zone MPIO, Secretary or President
  - From a member re a member of the Club executive – direct the complaint to the Zone MPIO, Secretary or President
  - From a member re a member of the Zone executive – direct the complaint to the State MPIO, Executive Officer or President
  - Referrals from Zone committees – to State MPIO, Executive Officer or President
  - Complaints can only be considered if from individuals regarding the behaviour of other individuals.

Suggested guidelines to then follow REGARDING TIMELINES -

- Write to the person/Club/Zone that the complaint is about, and ask them to reply to the alleged complaint with their version – set the timeframe for reply to be received, i.e. 14 days from the date of request. Give an outline of the nature of the complaint, if appropriate include a copy of the complaint.
- If there are witnesses (listed in the complaint) contact them ( in writing) for their version of the complaint allegations, ensuring that they are supplied with sufficient information to be able to respond – set the timeframe for witness reviews to be received i.e. 14 days from the date of request.

- If no response is received within the time set, (allow 50% extra time), then recommend to the executive that the complaint be reviewed.
- Evaluate the responses to determine if the complaint is trivial or vexatious in nature; if so recommend not to proceed any further.

### **Mediation**

- Offer mediation to both parties with a 14 day acceptance timeline. Where possible mediation should take place within 14 days of acceptance by both parties of the mediation process.
- The mediator must be acceptable to both parties and may be a member of Pony Club Association NSW. Mediation should be arranged at a suitably convenient venue for all parties. Mediation is to take place under strict guidelines as set out in the Pony Club Association of NSW Mediation Process guidelines.

If mediation is either not appropriate, or is unsuccessful, a Tribunal or Complaints Committee/Panel should be established. If both parties agree to the complaint being heard by the Committee/Panel, then it should meet to consider the matter within 21 days of such agreement.

- Members to the Committee/ Panel may be members of Pony Club Association NSW as long as they have not been involved as part of the mediation process. The Committee/ Panel to consist of up to 4 members including the President of the Club, Zone or Association.
- All information received in regard to the complaint should be forwarded to the Complaints Handler or Committee/Panel.

The relevant policies that must be considered when dealing with complaints are:

- PCA NSW Constitution
- PCA NSW Code of Conduct and policy handbook 2012
- PCA members protection policy
- Mediation Process Guidelines