



# POLICY STATEMENT

## Complaints Policy

Policy  
Number  
**GN03**  
February  
2017

Amicable relationships between all club members, parents, employees, contractors and the public are essential for a positive environment. The Orewa SLSC Complaints Policy, and related procedures, ensures that complaints are managed through a consistent and transparent process. This will promote clear communication and processes for resolution of potential conflict. All complaints will be responded to promptly, fairly and in good faith; bearing in mind that the people involved are volunteers.

Anyone with a concern or complaint is encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the person involved as soon as possible in order to prevent the issue escalating unnecessarily. All such discussions should be amicable and not confrontational in nature. All parties are reminded to keep issues factual.

If direct discussion with the person involved with the issue is not successful, then the matter should be raised to the attention of the Chair of the relevant operational committee. Any member of an operational committee or of the Board can direct complainants to the correct Chairperson.

The Chair will identify the nature of the complaint based on the seriousness of the allegation, potential harm or danger to members, public or property and activate the complaints procedure in the necessary manner.

In most instances, complaints will be resolved by the Chair of a relevant committee without the requirement to refer the complaint to the Chairperson of the Orewa SLSC Board. The most serious of complaints will be referred to the Chair of the Board who will follow the requirements of this policy and any subsequent procedures.

Complaints or allegations made publicly, for example via social media or other public forum, by any member that have the potential to be harmful to the reputation of Orewa SLSC, the matter will also be deemed as a serious complaint. Complainants in this situation will be informed of the complaints policy and requested to follow the required procedures. The Board will be informed of any potential risk to the Surf Club i.e. contractual/employment, reputation or financial issue. In these situations, relevant external agencies may also need to be contacted.

Note: Members that repeatedly use public forums to air grievances or harm the reputation of the club, it's members or employees/contractors may be subject to the Club's Disciplinary Policy.

There is an expectation that until an investigation of a complaint has been made that all parties involved will treat the matter in confidence (including the Board, all members and employees/contractors).

**Adopted:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line.

Club Chair Feb 2017

## **Complaints procedures**

- Members, Parents or Public with concerns should approach the person directly in the first instance, at an appropriate time to discuss the issue.
- If the concern is not resolved, the appropriate committee convener should be approached by either party. There should be on-going consultation between the committee Chair, person involved and complainant to resolve the situation.
- If the concern is still not resolved, the Board Chair will then become involved.
- If the concern is related to the management or organisation of the club, the Board Chair should be contacted in the first instance.

## **Serious complaints procedure**

- Normal procedure is for the Chairperson of the Board to pass any complaint on to the Committee Convener, prior to discussion by the Board, so the contents can be verified, or investigated.
- Written complaint documents must be:
  - Signed and received in hardcopy; or
  - Signed, the document scanned and sent electronically as an e-mail attachment.

Note: Anonymous complaints cannot be followed through; however they may invoke an investigation of some type depending on the seriousness of the allegation.
- If the complaint is against a Committee Chair, it should be directed to the Chairperson of the Board, who will inform the Committee Convener of the nature and basis of the complaint.
- If the complaint is about the Orewa Board, or a member of the Board, it should be directed to the Chairperson of the Board in the first instance. The Board may seek assistance from Northern Region Surf Lifesaving in activating the Orewa Judicial Panel/Process.
- If a member makes a complaint against another member the Committee Chair will investigate and meet with involved parties. Where possible both parties will meet together and agree on resolution or future actions. If the complainant does not wish to be identified the Committee Chair is required to provide any evidence or feedback to the member named with confirmation of the result of the meeting.
- If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily with the Committee Chair, the written complaint should be sent to the Chairperson of the Board. The Board may seek assistance from Northern Region Surf Lifesaving in activating the Orewa Judicial Panel/Process.
- The complaint will be tabled for 'in committee' discussion, at a special Board meeting if required and a course of action determined. Any member against whom a complaint has been made must be given a right of reply and a fair hearing. In certain circumstances, which require a high degree of confidentiality, discussions with a limited portion of the Board may be necessary.
- Employees or contractors will be advised if the complaint involves either discipline or competency proceedings as well as their right to request representation at any stage.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes / decision(s) in writing.
- Where a complaint is formally investigated, minutes of all meetings will be taken and any arrangements or actions will be recorded in writing.
- Where any complaint is raised against a member under the age of 18 a parent or guardian will be required to be present during any discussions of the matter



# OSLSC Complaints Procedure Flowchart

