



# Complaints Management Policy and Procedures

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The Emerald Warriors RFC welcomes comments, suggestions and complaints about its performance, management, events, conduct of its members, and general responsibilities. This feedback may come from members of the club, members of other rugby clubs, match officials, families and friends, our sponsors, and members of the general public. The Emerald Warriors welcomes all feedback and regards complaints as opportunities for the review of the general management of the club and its practices and procedures which may result in the identification for areas of improvement and development.

The Emerald Warriors RFC wishes to resolve complaints in an effective and timely manner, and adopts an early resolution approach to complaints wherever possible. When addressing a complaint, the Emerald Warriors will keep the complainant informed of how the complaint is being dealt with in line with the timeframes outlined below. The Emerald Warriors RFC will acknowledge mistakes and will put matters right wherever possible.

All members of the Emerald Warriors RFC are required to conduct the business of the club and themselves in a manner which represents the club in a positive and professional manner. Members of the club must act at all times in accordance with the club's disciplinary policy. The Emerald Warriors RFC will make every effort to ensure that all parties are treated fairly, that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and the complainants are not prejudiced in

### **1. Who can complain?**

Anyone directly affected by the manner in which the Emerald Warriors RFC carries out its business (or anyone acting on behalf of the club), may make a complaint under this policy document for the management of complaints.

### **2. What can you complain about?**

It is important that potential complainants recognise that the Emerald Warriors RFC has a policy document in place titled "*Club Discipline Code of Practice*". This document refers to the operation of the club's disciplinary committee, a sub group of the club's general committee. The "*Club Discipline Code of Practice*" allows for various matters to be referred to the disciplinary committee; however, does not facilitate for concerns or complaints from any persons other than the club's committee, Team Captain(s), the IRFU, Leinster Branch IRFU, IGRAB or any other associated bodies. Therefore the purpose of this complaints management policy is to empower key stakeholders and to create an unambiguous process for making of a complaint and its follow up management by the club.

Complaints can be made regarding any issue of concern which relates to activities of the Emerald Warriors RFC. Vexatious complaints will not be processed and the complainants in such cases will be informed of this outcome. The outcome of any complaints process may involve a referral to the disciplinary committee by the complaints officer for follow up. If the complaints officer is involved in, or is the subject of, the complaint being raised, or if a conflict of interest has been established, then the complaint shall be managed by another representative of the club's main committee. This applies to conflicts of interest which may arise at any stage outlined in this policy document.

### **3. How to make a complaint**

The Emerald Warriors RFC would like to resolve any issue as quickly as possible to everyone's satisfaction. The club would like to highlight that all persons have a responsibility to attempt to resolve minor issues or concerns locally and at the time of their occurrence. If this is not possible then you can make a complaint by one of the following two options:

- a. A complainant can email [complaints@ewrfc.ie](mailto:complaints@ewrfc.ie)
- b. A complainant can speak directly to the Vice President of the club who will be appointed as Complaints Officer for each season

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the concern arises. Complaints must be made to the club within three months of the date of the concern arising. In exceptional circumstances, if a complainant can demonstrate that they only became aware of the circumstances relating to the complaint in a timeframe in excess of this period, or if the President of the club deems it to be of interest to do so, this time limit can be extended to six months. All complaints will be handled in a sensitive manner.

### **4. Early resolution**

The Emerald Warriors RFC will aim to resolve the majority of complaints through an early resolution process. This is an immediate or informal process whereby a complaint can be dealt with to the satisfaction of all parties quickly and without recourse to one of the two stages of complaint resolution. In the unlikely event that this is not possible, the complaints process is outlined below.

### **5. Stage One**

When a complaint cannot be resolved through an early resolution process, it becomes a 'Stage One Complaint'. The Emerald Warriors will acknowledge a complaint which is at this stage within ten working days of receipt. There may be a requirement for follow up with the complainant or further investigation to help with enquiries and this may involve meeting with the complainant in person to discuss the complaint.

Once the person(s) following up on the complaint on behalf of the club fully understand the matter and how the complainant would like to see it resolved, the club will respond to the complainant within 40 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. The club will outline what has been done and how it intends to resolve the complaint. If there is any reason why the complaint cannot be resolved in this timeframe, the complainant will be notified of this. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this process they must notify the club formally within 10 working days. The complaint then becomes a 'Stage Two Complaint'.

## **6. Stage Two**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision reached at Stage One, they must inform the club formally in writing. The formal communication from the complainant must clearly state the reason(s) for the dissatisfaction and the expectations for how they would like to see the complaint resolved.

The club will acknowledge receipt of the complainant's formal communication within 10 working days. The President of the club will then examine the details of the complaint and the resolution suggested at Stage One. Once again, the complainant may be contacted to gain a greater understanding of the matter and may be asked to attend a meeting. The complainant must contribute to this effort if the Stage Two complaint is to be progressed. The President of the club may also review any documents and speak to any other parties involved. This process may take up to 45 working days and the complainant shall be notified of the outcome of this process once it has been completed.

## **7. Recording and reporting of complaints**

It is important for the club to identify areas for learning and development from complaints received which can facilitate improvement and reduce the likelihood of recurrence of issues giving rise to the complaint. As a result, the Emerald Warriors RFC will maintain a record of all complaints received and the outcomes of the complaints management process. This includes all complaints resolved through early resolution or through Stage One and Stage Two processes. The complaints officer will report to the committee of the club on a regular basis in relation to the management of complaints received.

## **8. Data protection**

All personal information received by the Emerald Warriors in relation to a complaint shall be stored in accordance with data protection legislation and the club's data protection policy. We endeavour to manage all complaints in a confidential manner, though in the event of criminal matters or legal obligations the content may be referred to other parties.